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In This Issue:

2000 LEGISLATURE CONVENES,

BONDING PLANS, AND TEST TROUBLES

HF2476-HF2741

SESSION Weekly

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AT ISSUE: TRANSPORTATION — The long, sometimes strange debate over light-rail transit continues at the Capitol and the courthouse.

HISTORY — Gov. Floyd B. Olson advocated the switch to a unicameral Legislature in his 1935 inaugural address, but Olson, who was himself a third-party insurgent, made his advocacy of a one-house system seem like a polite suggestion.

POLICY — Lawmakers this week heard two experts debate over the safety of genetically altered foods.

PEOPLE — Participants in the YMCA's Youth in Government program prove there are plenty of students interested in serious societal issues. The program teaches students the nuts and bolts of the lawmaking process.

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On the cover: Speaker Steve Sviggum prepares to convene the 2000 House of Representatives.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Action begins at gavel

The 2000 session is expected to be brief but busy, much like the opening day, which included votes on two controversial matters



Rep. Joe Opatz (left) listens to debate while Rep. Matt Entenza and Rep. Ann Lenczewski confer on the House floor the first day of session.

By JON FURE

With one successful year of tri-partisan government behind them, House members started the 2000 Legislative Session on Feb. 1 with the solemn reminder of a member lost and raucous debate regarding standardized testing and prayers on the House floor.

Moments into the first floor session, Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) introduced a measure to throw out the writing tests taken by Minnesota 10th graders before they could be sent to be scored.

The writing test is part of the state's Graduation Standards program, which means students must pass before they can get a high school diploma.

Reuter said some 10th graders had objected to the test question, which asked them to write about one thing they would change about themselves.

He asked lawmakers to suspend normal rules and proceed with a vote on his proposal immediately, instead of allowing it to be referred to the House Education Policy Committee to begin the committee process. But Reuter failed to persuade a two-thirds majority of his colleagues that such urgency was needed.

On the prayer issue, Reuter said House rules that require prayers to be nondenominational

and to "respect the diversity" of the members of the House are impossible to follow. No one prayer could possibly reflect the many different beliefs of the House members, he said.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) said people who are invited to give a prayer on the House floor have for years been sent a letter asking them to try to keep their statements nondenominational in nature. The House rules adopted in 1999 simply reflect the standard practice, she said.

"It is not a gag; it is a request to please be mindful of the fact that there is diversity in this body," she said.

Reuter's amendment to alter the House rules, so they would only say that each session would begin with a prayer by the chaplain, failed to win enough votes.

While the 2000 Legislative Session began with little fanfare and an unusual amount of action, there was time to reflect on the loss of a Capitol fixture.

House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) noted the absence of Rep. Willard Munger with a moment of silence. Munger, the longest-serving member of the House, first elected in 1954, died in July 1999.

Newly elected Rep. Dale Swapinski (DFL-Duluth) will be serving the remainder of Munger's term.

House members applauded as Swapinski was introduced, and he said, "I feel honored and privileged to sit in this seat that was so ably filled by Willard Munger for many, many years."

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) praised Munger's important contributions to the state and invited members and public to a memorial service in honor of Munger planned for Feb. 7.

As it turns out, the first day may be a harbinger of what comes this year. The 2000 session is expected to be brief but busy.

The primary function will be to decide how

To our readers:

Welcome to the second year of Minnesota's 81st Legislative Session. It's the 17th year of publication for *Session Weekly*, and you may notice some changes.

First, let's talk about what hasn't changed. We will continue to bring you complete, no-nonsense coverage of House committee meetings and floor action. And handy sections such as the Bill Introductions and the Committee Schedule can be found, as always, in the back of the magazine.

The changes that have been made — some subtle, some not-so-subtle — are intended to make the publication more informative, easier to use, and more attractive.

The Highlights section, which is consistently the best-read part of the magazine, will continue to provide concise, straightforward reports on all sorts of bills.

A new section we've added, called At Issue, will offer in-depth stories on major initiatives under consideration. This week, the section includes pieces about the governor's bonding proposal and light-rail transit.

To help you find the information you need, we've added an in-depth Contents section that will be on page 2 in every issue. It will offer quick access to a list of the subjects covered in Highlights each week and of all the other articles and information.

We have made several other editorial and graphic changes in the publication that we hope will make it more appealing to our readers.

Many of the ideas for changes in *Session Weekly* were taken from the survey of readers conducted at the end of the 1999 session. Thanks to all those who replied. We hope you are pleased with the magazine.

We welcome your comments and suggestions. Please call us at 651-296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550 if you need answers to general questions or assistance in following the legislative process.

—LeClair G. Lambert



Depressed no more

A 70-year-old report shows many concerns remain, though economic conditions are wildly different

to deal with another projected budget surplus and how much money to borrow for capital projects. But lawmakers likely will also act on measures to protect families from repeat sex offenders and decide whether a proposal to reduce the size of the Legislature should appear on the ballot in the November election.

Plans for dealing with the projected budget surplus were not discussed on the House floor on the first day of session, but House Republicans are proposing tax cuts and another rebate as their major agenda for the session.

"As long as the state continues to take more money from our families than it needs, Republicans will continue proposing tax cuts," Sviggum said.

The proposed tax cut would reduce the percentage of state income tax charged to each bracket: 0.75 percent in the middle bracket and 0.5 percent in the upper and lower brackets.

House Republicans are also proposing another sales-tax rebate, appropriations to reduce property taxes, economic development programs for rural communities, and one-time spending for road and bridge projects.

The recent abduction and murder of Katie Poirier has influenced several crime prevention proposals. Funding a statewide computer network that will prevent criminals from hiding by changing their name or using aliases and other proposals will be introduced and referred to as "Katie's Law."

The main function of the 2000 session will be to determine how much money the state should borrow by selling bonds to pay for capital projects. Gov. Jesse Ventura has recommended that the state should only sell \$400 million in general obligation bonds. That number is based on the average size of bonding bills in the past 15 years.

Ventura's bonding proposal also includes revenue from \$34 million in user-financed bonds, \$27 million from the trunk highway fund, and \$1 million from the general fund. The proposal also would cancel \$37 million that has been previously authorized for capital projects but has not been spent.

The governor's plan would spend the funds to improve public buildings, natural resources, or other infrastructure areas like roads and water treatment facilities.

The House Capital Investment Committee, chaired by Rep. Jim Knobloch (R-St. Cloud), will be putting together an omnibus bill with input from the other House finance committees. The committee's task will include proposing a total amount to be bonded and a list of specific projects to be funded.

All in all, it appears the 2000 session should be one featuring debate on a variety of issues of significance to many Minnesotans. 🐾

In the late 1930s, Minnesota went looking for answers to economic problems that had gripped the state — and the nation — for the entire decade.

A special commission created to study the state's economic woes came up with a list of solutions that — unlikely as it may seem after the boom of the late 1990s — included many ideas still advocated by some political leaders today.

The House passed a resolution in 1937 that created the commission to examine the factors slowing commercial and industrial development in the state. Two years later, the commission issued a report titled "There is No Lack of Markets."

The title reflected the commission's conclusion that it wasn't a lack of consumer need that was hindering economic recovery. Rather it was the absence of purchasing power and the disparity between producers and their ability to get fair market value for their goods.

In the report, the commission took great lengths to make it clear that the downswing in the state's economy was a direct result of the Great Depression, which had devastating effects nationwide. Therefore, the report said, complete recovery in Minnesota could not occur until the nation's economy strengthened.

The commission noted that Minnesota's economy during the Depression declined at a sharper rate than the rest of the nation but also was recovering at a quicker rate. Minnesota's recovery was due in part to the relative strength of the state's leading industries — meatpacking, flour milling, news printing, book printing, and the production of liquor.

But something else was holding Minnesota's recovery back.

"America has the manpower, machines and natural resources, skill and brains," the report said. "Americans know how to produce. Our factories, mines and farms are the most highly developed in the world. But Americans cannot buy the goods they produce. We do not have sufficient buying

power. Wages and farm prices are too low."

Although Minnesota was a state that depended heavily on its agricultural resources, the commission said, income from agriculture in 1935 accounted for only 18 percent of the total annual income of the state's people.

To remedy the lack of purchasing power, the commission recommended that the state move to guarantee farmers fair prices for their goods. The commission also cited the growing control of corporate farming as harmful to the Minnesota farmer.

"During the Depression, the position of the farmer has become worse," the report said. "The food trusts, with the power of monopolistic control, have protected their profits at the expense of the producer."

The commission made other recommendations aimed at increasing consumer buying power. It called for the state to uphold labor's power to bargain for a fair wage and to develop a tax system based on the ability to pay.

The state also needed to develop a system of long-term planning and managing the state's resources, the commission found. Conservation of the state's timber, water, and soil was key, the report said, because "the industries most important to the industrial future of the state are those based on our natural resources."

Using tax concessions to attract industry ultimately was ineffective, the commission concluded, because such moves only transferred Minnesota's unemployment problem to neighboring states.

"Since Minnesota sells a large percentage of its industrial products outside its border we do not gain when increasing unemployment cuts into this outside market," the report said.

Seventy years later, Minnesota is in good times, with unemployment low and consumer spending high. But the issues of concern in late 1930s — from the plight of the family farmer to the economic competition from neighboring states — continue to draw debate at the Capitol.

★ **CONSUMERS**

Tornado victims hit twice

Two years after a tornado devastated St. Peter, the town's residents are still reeling, in part due to unscrupulous contractors who took people's money and didn't complete the job, said Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter), who has proposed a bill to protect homeowners.

Storm testified in favor of the bill (HF2563) before the House Civil Law Committee Feb. 2. The committee took no action on the bill, but the proposal is expected to come up again during the next few weeks.

Storm shared horror stories about a contractor who collected money from St. Peter-area homeowners, then did not pay subcontractors. The subcontractors then placed mechanic liens on the homeowners, who thought they had finished paying for the repairs.

"It's taken two years, with no resolution," she said.

Jerold Lucas, a St. Peter attorney, told the committee that one particular contractor conducted dishonest deals with

15 homeowners in the area. The contractor eventually went bankrupt, but the mechanic liens were already placed on the homes, Lucas said.

"It was a nightmare," Lucas said. "It is a time warp. They couldn't get out of it."

Current state law says a builder, material supplier, or subcontractor can place a mechanic lien on property if he or she is not paid for work done on the property.

The bill would create stiffer penalties for violators, said St. Peter resident Jerry Yushta, a police officer. In the St. Peter case, the contractor was charged with a gross misdemeanor for each of the 15 cases.

Yushta said the contractor should face felony charges for the amount of money he took from the homeowners.

Storm said the contracting industry helped draft the bill's language.

"They are eager to get rid of bad contractors, too," Storm said.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) liked the bill, but he questioned why the proposal only applies to residential construction.

"There is no harm to the homeowner to having this uniform (for all construction)," Bishop said.

★ **CRIME**

Capitol security needs help

The Capitol complex might need a makeover in the next few years to prevent possible acts of terrorism or dangerous incidents, according to a recent report on complex security.

Nicholas V. O'Hara, superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, told the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 3 about the planned upgrades to the Capitol that feature metal detectors, X-ray conveyor belts, and fewer entrances accessible to the public.

"This is a managed approach to access, not a restriction of access," O'Hara said, explaining that people will still be able to enter the Capitol.

The report was initially released on Jan. 17. The proposal recommended by the task force would cost the state \$3.07 million. O'Hara presented four different protection packages, ranging from \$1.8 million to \$6 million.

O'Hara said the Legislature should create a Capitol complex security oversight committee, which would be responsible for the development and implementation of security measures.

The plan would require employees to carry color- and access-coded cards to move throughout the Capitol complex. Vendors and other people who have business at the Capitol would be issued temporary identification cards, the proposal states.

There are currently 37 doors providing access to the Capitol. Under the proposal, the public doors would be reduced to seven. In total, there would only be 14 public doors between the Capitol, Judicial Center, and State Office Building, the report recommends.

O'Hara suggested the state increase security for the governor by assigning additional state troopers to the governor's residence. Additional troopers should be assigned to follow the governor, the lieutenant governor, and legislative and judicial officials, O'Hara said.

In addition, Capitol security should have a

uniform look so they are recognizable to the public, but distinguishable from other uniformed officers.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) objected to the outfit changes, saying it is better for people to think Capitol security guards are police officers. Skoglund suggested that people are less likely to commit a crime when they think an officer is nearby.

The \$3.07 million proposal includes \$1.67 million for screening devices and the access card system and \$1.4 million for additional troopers, staff, equipment, and training costs.

The committee took no action on the task force's recommendations.

Prison projects pitched

Repairs to aging facilities and new construction to handle emerging mental health and high security needs are the focus of the Department of Corrections' capital budget for 2000.

Department officials presented their bonding requests to the House Judiciary Finance Committee Feb. 1.

Initially, corrections officials requested \$25.6 million in bond funds for 2000. Gov. Jesse Ventura recommended funding for \$19.5 million, leaving two of the department's major initiatives unfunded — a vocational building at the Red Wing facility and an activities building at Willow River.

Several of the state correctional facilities are old and deteriorating, said Dennis Benson, deputy commissioner of corrections. The project requests for this year reflect that, and many of the concerns have been problems for several years.

Benson also said problems are approaching the point where the facilities will no longer be in compliance with state fire and building codes if they continue to deteriorate.

One project would fix the sanitary and storm sewer systems at the Faribault prison. A former state hospital, the medium-security prison for men is more than 100 years old. Recent tests show that high, unsafe levels of fecal coliform have contaminated the nearby Straight River. Cost of the sewer project is \$10.6 million.

Officials have also proposed moving the current health services department at the maximum-security Stillwater prison into the former laundry area, at a cost of \$1.8 million. The health facility is now located outside the secure parts of the prison, which requires staff

**HOUSE
COMMITTEE
PROFILE**

Civil Law

Chair: Smith
(R-Mound)

Vice Chair: Seifert, J.
(R-Woodbury)

Minority Lead: Carruthers
(DFL-Brooklyn Center)

Members: 16
(9 R, 7 DFL)

Scope: Reviews all areas of Minnesota's civil laws, including family law, personal injury law, probate, landlord-tenant, nuisance law, and data privacy statutes.



During the Department of Corrections presentation before the Judiciary Finance Committee, Jim Bruton, warden at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Oak Park Heights, points out features of a proposed addition of 60 cells to house the worst of the worst inmates.

to transport inmates outside for medical care and increases risk, said David Crist, warden at Stillwater.

Ventura also recommended \$1.8 million in funding to repair the crumbling 85-year-old prison yard walls that surround the Stillwater facility.

Also among Ventura's recommendations is \$855,000 to help build a high-security, self-contained unit at Oak Park Heights prison to handle inmates who are a risk to themselves, other inmates, and staff. Most of the \$13.9 million total cost is being paid by the federal government.

Two other projects backed by Ventura would renovate the food service building at Minnesota Correctional Facility-Lino Lakes for \$3.9 million and renovate a cottage at Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing for mental health needs at a cost of \$801,000.

The committee is expected to send its entire judiciary finance bonding plan to the House Capital Investment Committee in late February.

Probation database planned

The state Department of Corrections has developed a pilot project to integrate probation data statewide in the ongoing effort to create a single criminal justice information system in the state.

The department presented its project to the House Judiciary Finance Committee Feb. 3.

The project would take data about current and former probation cases and place it on a secure Internet site accessible by law enforcement personnel around the state.

Each user would have an identification number or name and password to access the

system. It would be available only to law enforcement, said Dennis Benson, deputy commissioner for the department.

An official could search the database by using a person's first and last name or several other identifying factors, including driver's license number or social security number. In addition, any aliases someone has used would also be available.

For example, an officer makes a traffic stop and finds out the driver of the car is named John Smith. The officer suspects Mr. Smith has been drinking and checks his driving record. The database also would allow the officer to see if Mr. Smith is on probation for a previous drunken driving violation that may include a "no drinking" provision.

The project is still in development stages. The department has been working on it for the past 12 to 18 months.

Benson did not know exactly how much the project would cost. He did say about \$200,000 had been transferred from the state Department of Public Safety for the project. He said he suspected it would cost more.

Minnesota prison costs high

Minnesota spends about \$85 per inmate, per day to run the state prison system, corrections officials said at a Jan. 27 joint meeting of the House Judiciary Finance Committee and Senate Crime Prevention and Judiciary Budget Division.

The committees held the interim hearing to discuss ways of cutting operating costs in the correctional system. Concerns were initially raised after a 1996 Bureau of Justice Statistics report listed Minnesota as the most

expensive state, spending \$104 per day, per inmate.

Corrections officials testified that since the 1996 report, several changes have been made to help lower the per diem costs to about \$85 a day on average.

A chart prepared by the department shows the lowest per diem for 1999 was \$75.55 a day at the Stillwater prison and the highest was \$137.96 a day at Oak Park Heights prison.

David Crist, warden of the Stillwater prison, testified that because Minnesota incarcerates the most serious offenders, costs are going to be higher.

Currently, the state has about 120,000 people on probation. Most state prisoners have committed crimes against people, not property crimes.

Oak Park Heights prison, the state's super-maximum security facility, takes the worst of the worst and costs the most per day to operate, Crist said

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) said he wanted more information about how Minnesota compares to other states regarding operating costs and costs per inmate. Fiscal analysts for both the House and Senate said statistics found in the annual corrections yearbook are typically the most reliable, though it's important to note how the figures are calculated.

For example, the 1996 report included overall prison operating costs, including administrative positions.

"Any way you calculate it, we are extremely expensive," Kelly said.

Members of both committees asked corrections officials to provide more information about how Minnesota's costs compare to other states.

The committees also briefly discussed ways to cut costs, including privatizing canteen services in the prison.

Tracking criminals statewide

Developing an integrated statewide law enforcement database is a key priority, said the head of the state's Department of Public Safety during a Jan. 6 joint hearing of the House Crime Prevention and Judiciary Finance committees.

"It's clear as a bell this issue is the most important in criminal justice," said Charlie Weaver, commissioner of the department. "The governor is focused like a laser on this issue."

The interim hearing centered on an issue expected to be discussed during the 2000 Legislative Session. Many people believe that law enforcement would be aided by a better way of tracking criminals through the different jurisdictions in the state.

Officials want to avoid situations where a lack of information allows a criminal to slip through the cracks. Say a suspect picked up on misdemeanor charges in Martin County has a warrant for his arrest on a more serious charge in Ramsey County. If the Martin County officials don't know about the warrant, the suspect will soon be back on the street. A statewide tracking system would ensure the information would be available.

Weaver described a Hennepin County project that will link computer systems from the county courts, county attorney, sheriff, and probation offices. The pilot project will serve as a model for the state. Establishing other pilot projects through state grants would be the next step, Weaver said.

Officials have not yet determined how much such a statewide system would cost the state. The department plans to coordinate the formation of a group to explore alternative technologies and offers from vendors.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) asked if Gov. Jesse Ventura will support funding for an integrated system, even though the governor has said he will back only emergency funding measures this session.

Weaver said it would be premature for the administration to support funding without knowing what the actual costs will be.

★ DEVELOPMENT

Housing, history get support

Bonding recommendations totaling \$6.5 million greeted the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee at its first meeting Feb. 2.

The recommendations were part of the governor's capital budget plan for 2000. The requests before the committee equal just 37.5 percent of the total requested by the state Department of Commerce, the Housing Finance Agency, and the Minnesota Historical Society.

Among the governor's recommendations are \$2 million for loans to local government for publicly owned transitional housing for low- and middle-income people. Gov. Jesse Ventura's plan also calls for \$2.5 million for the energy investment loan program administered by the Department of Commerce, which provides loans to public schools, cities, and counties to implement energy-efficient projects.

The governor is also requesting \$1.75 million for the Historical Society for statewide asset preservation efforts along with \$250,000 to restore furnishings in the State Capitol in preparation for the building's centennial celebration in 2005.

Finally, the governor is requesting funding for a variety of wastewater treatment projects, Clean Drinking Water Act projects, and other environmental programs.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), the chair of the committee, said that along with the governor's proposals, the panel will consider many of the 62 projects requested by local jurisdictions that were not included in the governor's capital investment requests. Those projects total more than \$407 million.

McElroy said that the committee would hold a hearing for any bill whose author has requested a hearing, on the condition that the project met the Nov. 1 deadline for submissions and has a Senate companion bill.

He said one exception to these guidelines would be a potential request from the City of Minneapolis for money for the Guthrie Theater project. That project is expected to come before the Legislature this year, although a request has not yet been made.

★ EDUCATION

Writing test stands, for now

An "urgent" attempt at revising a controversial statewide 10th-grade writing test fell short during the first day of the 2000 legislative session, and will now be taken up by the House Education Policy Committee later this month.

The bill (HF2720) will now travel through the regular committee process, after a motion to accelerate a vote failed.

The statewide writing test, taken by Minnesota sophomores during the last week of January, is required as part of the state's Graduation Standards program.

Some students and their parents objected to the test, which asked students to write an essay about one thing they would like to change about themselves.

Many people feel the question was inappropriate because it touched on issues of self-esteem. Even Christine Jax, commissioner of the state Department of Children, Families and Learning, suggested the question may have gone too far.

Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) introduced a bill Feb. 1 that would order destruc-

Committee deadlines for 2000 session

Each year the House and Senate set deadlines by which most bills must be heard in a committee and forwarded through the process.

Committee deadlines for this year will be officially determined by a joint House-Senate resolution. While that resolution still must be formally approved, it is expected to contain the following deadlines and language further defining each deadline.

The first committee deadline will be **Friday, March 3**. By that date, bills must pass out of necessary policy committees in their house of origin.

The second committee deadline will be **Friday, March 10**. By that date, bills other than those containing appropriations will have to be passed out of all policy committees in the both the House and the Senate.

The third deadline will be **Friday, March 17**. All omnibus finance bills will have to pass out of committee by that date.

Of course, there are exceptions to the deadlines. The taxes committees and rules committees in both bodies are exempt. And a bill can be heard after the deadlines if the rules committee in either body grants its permission.

tion of the current test, require students to be retested by answering a different question, and demand legislative approval of future test questions.

"I don't think I need to remind you that this question went too far," Reuter said.

Reuter moved that the House suspend normal rules and allow members to vote on passage of the measure without first requiring the bill to pass through committee.

He argued the House needed to vote on the bill right away because the state was ready to send the tests to be scored. Delaying action, he said, would cost the state additional money to re-administer the test at a later date. The motion to suspend the rules, which required a two-thirds majority to pass, gained only 63 of the 90 votes it needed.

Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake), chair of the Education Policy Committee, urged members to vote against a suspension of rules. Mares said it was only fair that the bill be heard by committee so that the public could have a chance to give its input.

Several members agreed that the question went too far, but were adamant the bill should

Progress Report

BILL: HF2720

SUMMARY: Requires destruction of Graduation Standards writing test given to 10th graders and retesting of all students

ACTION: House rejected procedural move to pass immediately Feb. 1

UP NEXT: Referred to House Education Policy Committee

SENATE: Awaits hearing in Senate Children, Families & Learning Committee

travel through the committee process where the public could comment.

Auditor eyes school finances

A legislative auditor's report released Feb. 2 says that Minnesota schools are in better financial condition than they were a decade ago.

And although more than one-third of the districts surveyed reported making cuts this year, the statewide teacher-student ratio is expected to hold at or near the level of the last academic year.

The School District Finances report, which polled 79 percent of Minnesota's school districts (accounting for 89 percent of public school enrollment), also indicated that more money is being received and spent on students than 10 years ago.

The growth in spending has largely gone for instruction or related activities, according to the Office of the Legislative Auditor, which produced the report.

To illustrate that point, John Yunker, project manager for the office, said more of the state's school districts have added new programs this year than have eliminated them.

But the report notes that the statewide average teacher salary has declined 4 percent since 1989.

The dip in average teacher salary over the decade can be attributed in part to a greater number of new teachers who enter at the lower end of the pay scale being hired to accommodate enrollment growth, Yunker said.

In a letter included in the report, Christine Jax, commissioner for the Department of Children, Families and Learning, said the report is both an accurate and fair portrayal of the trends in school district finance over the past decade.

"Although the report indicates there is no evidence of a statewide financial crises in K-12 education," Jax wrote, "we need to find ways to measure if Minnesota districts are making the most of current revenues, to tie spending to measures of student success, and to develop other accountability indicators to help guide districts and staff in making educational decisions."

The report did not purport to measure whether current education funding is adequate to educate students or whether the state's schools are making the most of the revenue they receive.

Vacancies may prompt changes

Alternative ways to train and compensate teachers were considered by the House K-12 Education Finance Committee during an interim hearing held Dec. 15, 1999.

Officials estimate there will be 5,000

teaching vacancies statewide for the 2000-01 school year, according to a report of the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning. By 2004, districts will need to replace a total of 24,500 teachers.

National and local experts who testified during interim hearings said teachers need more opportunities for career advancement in the classroom and further development. They also said colleges and universities that train teachers need to work more closely with classroom teachers.

"The days are gone when the people at the colleges and universities do the research and the people in the classrooms do the practical," said Michael Tillmann, executive director of the State Board of Teaching.

A bill (HF1324) sponsored by Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria) would establish grants for programs that link local districts with teacher training programs.

Local school districts could apply for one of five \$20,000 grants to begin a program that establishes those links by such methods as placing teaching students in K-12 classrooms, encouraging certified educators to teach courses, or encouraging post-secondary teachers to mentor.

Another bill (HF 1804), sponsored by Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins), would allow teachers to choose whether they are paid for a 9-month or 11-month calendar. Those choosing the 11-month calendar would be required to spend the extra time on staff development.

"Many of our best teachers are already working that time," Folliard testified. "But they're still being paid on a 180-day (9 month) schedule. I just don't think that's right."

The bills are expected to be considered by the K-12 Education Finance Committee during the 2000 Legislative Session.

Report says more info needed

A report presented to the House Education Policy Committee Feb. 3 concluded there isn't sufficient information to determine an acceptable standard for measuring overall school performance.

Submitted by the Department of Children, Families and Learning, the report said officials cannot recommend a sufficient definition for levels of pupil achievement and overall accountability.

The report also suggested that a study group continue to work toward developing a comprehensive model that not only holds students accountable for achievement but also identifies indicators that gauge the effectiveness of the system that supports continued student improvement.

"We don't feel it's fair to put all accountability on a student's back until we're able to further examine the impact a community's system of support has on that student," said Jessie Montano, assistant commissioner for the department.

Officials assembled a group of educators to assist in the development of policies that support a successful K-12 education system, Montano said. The group met over the past two months to review and discuss research and literature on educational reform and accountability, but could not reach a satisfactory conclusion.

The lack of a conclusion by the study group and the department, however, frustrated some

MINNESOTA TEACHER OF THE YEAR



House members cheer Minnesota Teacher of the Year Brett Smith during opening day proceedings in the House chamber Feb. 1. Smith, a teacher at O. H. Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi, is one of four finalists for the title of National Teacher of the Year.

lawmakers, including Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield). Tuma asked Montano precisely when the committee could expect to see a more decisive conclusion.

Montano was hesitant to give a definite answer and replied only by saying the department would continue to move forward as more data became available.

The department previously submitted recommendations in December 1998 defining state expectations for student achievement. Once adopted, the expectations were to be used by the state and school districts to evaluate if each school site met the performance standard for a particular year.

However, Montano said, shortly after Gov. Jesse Ventura took office in January 1999, the Legislature was asked to delay action on the recommendations and language contained in the report, and another report was ordered for submission by January 2000.

After presenting the most recent report, Montano offered to speak later that day with concerned committee members in private and take further comment back to the department for consideration.

★ EMPLOYMENT

Overview of job programs

Studying the state's employment and training programs is the first step toward improving workforce development efforts, an official from the Department of Economic Security told the House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee Feb. 3.

Jim Korkki, deputy commissioner with the department, said the state has had 27 consecutive months of unemployment rates below 3 percent. The department projects that by 2006, there will be just 337,000 workers for 416,000 new jobs.

The study was required as part of last year's omnibus economic development law. Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) sponsored the original legislation calling for the report.

It marks the first time the state has ever looked at all the workforce development programs as a whole.

"It was never the intention to ax programs," Gunther said. "It was the hope to provide legislative oversight for dollars paid by taxpayers. We can look at ways to consolidate some of the programs to serve the people of Minnesota better."

Korkki said the study examined programs helping individuals assume jobs or advance in the labor market. But, he said, the information in the report is not comprehensive because the data collected was self reported, was not verified by an outside entity, and involved

certain data privacy restrictions. The study looked at 78 programs administered by 14 state agencies and three federal agencies.

Those programs received \$632 million in state funds, including \$500 million from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, and \$255 million in federal funds.

Officials from the Department of Trade and Economic Development presented an overview of another study required by the 1999 omnibus law, examining the state's marketing plan for trade, tourism, and economic development activities.

Steve Markuson, the director of the Office of Tourism, said the study found the state spends less than \$10 million, or less than one-tenth of one percent of the state budget, annually on economic development marketing.

Markuson said the study concludes that an integrated marketing approach between various state agencies and organizations will increase Minnesota's competitive position in the marketplace.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Ventura's bond plan questioned

The debate over how much money to spend on the environment-related capital projects began Feb. 2 in the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

The panel heard an overview of Gov. Jesse Ventura's \$462 million capital budget plan, which includes \$125 million for projects related to agriculture, pollution control, outdoor recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, and other programs affecting the environment.

Several lawmakers objected to the amount of money that would be available under Ventura's plan.

State agencies requested a total of \$1.5 billion for capital projects. Under the governor's proposal, most of those requests would be denied, which Rep. Jean

Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) said would create a backlog of maintenance projects that will need to be done in the future.

"How long will it take us to get out of that hole?" she asked. Repairs that are ignored tend to get worse — and more costly to fix — she added.

Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul) questioned the logic of the governor's proposal, which is based on the average amount that has been bonded in each of the last 15 years. The amount of money to be bonded traditionally has been based on a percentage of general fund revenue, Osthoff said.

To maintain the state's bond rating, the state should spend less than 3 percent of its total general fund revenue in a biennium on debt service. Under that guideline, the state could authorize more than \$1 billion for fiscal years 2000-2001, Osthoff said.

One consequence of the governor's proposal is that a project to clean up the Minnesota River would be only partially funded. Wagenius pointed out that the state is eligible for \$163 million in federal matching funds, but only half of that could be collected under the governor's plan.

To be eligible for the entire \$163 million, the state's contribution would have to be \$70 million. The state has already allocated \$10 million for that purpose, and the governor's proposal is to spend another \$25 million.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), chair of the committee, said he plans to begin hearing proposals soon from other House members on environmental projects that could be included in the House version of the bonding bill.

DNR supports license fee hike

A proposal to raise hunting and fishing license fees has the backing of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which needs revenue to restore programs and staff.

"This is not a total solution to the crisis in funding," Deputy Commissioner Steve Morse said. "But it is important we do something this year."

The issue was debated during an interim hearing of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee held Jan. 11. Lawmakers are expected to take up the matter again during the 2000 session.

The DNR is seeking a \$1 increase for fishing licenses, a \$2 increase for small-game licenses, and a \$3 increase for firearms deer licenses. The Senate passed a similar proposal during the 1999 session, but it failed to pass the House.

HOUSE COMMITTEE PROFILE

Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Chair: Holsten (R-Stillwater)

Vice Chair: Hackbarth (R-Cedar)

Minority Lead: Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul)

Members: 13 (8 R, 5 DFL)

Scope: Reviews and recommends funding for environment and natural resources-related programs. Oversees the budgets of agencies including the Department of Natural Resources, Pollution Control Agency, Office of Environmental Assistance, Minnesota Zoo, Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources, and the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

Under the proposal, the state would provide \$1 in additional support for every \$2 raised by the fee increase. The department estimates the fee increases would raise \$6 million.

The last hunting fee increase came in 1991, and the last fishing fee increase was passed in 1997.

Morse said fishing and conservation groups support the proposed fee increases. The additional revenue will go toward restoring cuts in jobs and programs.

Officials estimate the unreserved fund portion of the larger Game and Fish Fund will have a negative balance in 2003. The Game and Fish Fund is created through the license fees.

Morse said Gov. Jesse Ventura supports the proposed fee increase, but even with the additional revenue, the department still falls short of proper funding levels for its fish and wildlife programs.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), committee chair, said that the issue will be a major focus this session.

"Hopefully this committee and others in the House and Senate will bring up awareness (of the need for additional DNR funding)," he said.

Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus) said it would be difficult to support the DNR's proposal because it doesn't provide a long-term solution to the lack of funds.

"This is a two year, short-term fix. It is not solving anything," he said.

★ GOVERNMENT

No consensus on House prayer

House rules regarding the prayer that opens each floor session, a matter of emotional debate last year, made an encore appearance Feb. 1, the first day of the new session.

Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) introduced an amendment to the Permanent Rules of the House that would have eliminated language calling for "a nondenominational prayer by the chaplain that respects the religious diversity of the House."

In its place, Reuter sought to install wording simply requiring "a prayer by the chaplain." But his effort did not win enough support on the House floor. The amendment got a 69-63 majority of votes, but it failed to muster the two-thirds support (or 90 votes) needed.

The references related to religious diversity were added to the House rules during the 1999 session. House leaders said the memos sent to visiting chaplains have long included such provisions, and by putting them in the rules, the practice was simply made official.

The matter was raised after a choir

performing as part of opening day events last session sang a song including references to Jesus Christ.

In debating the issue Feb. 1, Reuter said the new rule inhibits free speech and expression.

"If we tried to pass this as a law," he said, "it would be unconstitutional."

Reuter, who left the Republican Party after the end of the 1999 session, noted the displeasure some expressed about seeing the matter raised again, but he said he felt it was important to revisit.

"This is the last remaining thing for me to fix of my legislative career," he said.

Several other lawmakers argued in favor of the proposed amendment. Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) said the existing rule does not allow people to hear the unique beliefs of others or to express their own religious values.

"We need to learn to respect that diversity and to allow people to experience that," he said.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) proposed an amendment that would have removed only the word "nondenominational" from the House rules. That amendment failed by a margin of 110-20.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

State must get more into jobs

Despite research indicating an increase in the percentage of Minnesota welfare recipients who are employed, a report presented to the joint Legislative Audit Commission

Jan. 27 suggested that the state must do more to help traditional welfare recipients.

The report found that compared with most other states, Minnesota has more generous welfare assistance levels and eligibility criteria, with less severe imposed sanctions, but also lower participation rate by welfare recipients in work-related activities.

According to the report, in welfare households where at least one adult was eligible to work, fewer than 50 percent of them were working or involved in work-related activities such as school. That could prove to be a problem for the state in the future, said Legislative Auditor James Nobles.

Minnesota could suffer financial penalties from the federal government if it fails to show that at least half of its welfare recipients are participating in work-related activities in 2002, Nobles said.

A work-related activity, according to the report, includes schooling, job searching, or actual employment.

The report suggests that lawmakers should use up more of the federal money the state receives for programs to remedy the weak statistics. By July of next year, Minnesota expects to have \$164 million in reserve.

Information provided by the Department of Human Services suggests the state has extra money because it continues to receive \$267 million per year from the federal government even though caseloads have declined.

The report also suggests the state impose stronger sanctions for people who aren't making sufficient progress toward joining the workforce by their established deadline. In

WELFARE PROTEST



JoAnn Gonzalez, right, holds a friend's grandchild as another participant carries a sign in protest to welfare changes during a rally in the Capitol rotunda Feb. 1. Protesters expressed opposition to the five-year lifetime cap on welfare eligibility.

July 1997, the state limited welfare recipients to 60 months of eligibility. Currently, the stiffest penalty the state can impose on recipients making little progress is a 30 percent reduction of benefits.

Proposals for job-training programs, housing stipends, and other services to plug the gaps in the state's welfare program are expected to surface in both the House and Senate this legislative session.

★ IMMIGRATION

Information on illegal employment

Immigration and Naturalization Service officials (INS) would gain access to more state records, under a bill approved Feb. 2 by the House Civil Law Committee.

The bill (**HF2522**), sponsored by Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound), would allow immigration officials to obtain employment records from the state Department of Economic Security.

The bill will stay within the committee for now and is expected to be rolled into an omnibus data practices bill later this session.

Charles Midby, special agent in charge of the regional INS office, told the committee he investigated an area employer last year that had several illegal immigrant employees. Midby said he tried to get employment records that showed the employer knowingly hired the illegal immigrants, but the Department of Economic Security refused to turn over the records.

"We decided to proceed without the more serious charges because we couldn't get the information," Midby said.

The company was still fined, but without the serious penalties that could have come with more information, he said.

Rick Caliguirri, budget coordinator with Department of Economic Security, said the information his agency collects is private and nonpublic, and the INS does not have statutory authority to gain the information.

The bill would allow agents access to it.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) expressed concern about the proposal and questioned how it would be known if immigration officials are investigating a company.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) asked if economic security officials can call immigration agents when they suspect illegal immigrants are working for a company.

"Is whistle-blowing going to get a [department] official in trouble?" Skoglund asked. "I think some of them are afraid. Are they in trouble?"

Caliguirri assured Skoglund that no state employees would be in trouble, nor have any employees been disciplined in the past for

reporting information to the immigration service.

The bill would also allow immigration agents to gain access to employment records without the consent of the individual employees.

Currently, the Department of Economic Security is allowed under statute to disseminate the information to the departments of Revenue, Labor and Industry, and Trade and Economic Development.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Assessments for rural addresses

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved a bill Feb. 2 to allow counties to use special assessment procedures for address signs related to 911 emergency services.

In recent years, many rural residents received street addresses for the first time as a result of enhanced 911 services. Many of the costs of implementing that service were paid for by telephone surcharges.

Terry Overn, Le Sueur County auditor, said the costs of house signs cannot be assessed under current law. Special assessment can only be used for county state-aid highways, county highways, waterworks, and sewer systems.

Overn said the average cost of the special assessment in his county would come to around \$25 per household. He said rural residents see the benefit of having a street address as opposed to a route or box number for police, fire, and ambulance services.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield), who is sponsoring the bill (**HF2549**), said the assessment is akin to a user fee because residents benefit from the 911 services.

"Most of the rural residents I know want the signs. They appreciate them," Tuma said.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) said she was concerned that the bill would result in an increase in property taxes and that the state should assist in helping to pay the costs because it initiated the move to street addresses.

The bill was referred to the House Taxes Committee.

Mandatory bike registration

A House committee approved a bill (**HF2489**) that would allow municipalities selling impounded bicycles to require purchasers to register the bikes.

The registration fee is currently \$9 for a three-year period.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), the bill's author, said the measure is in response to a recommendation of a bicycle theft task force he serves on. He said there are an increasing

number of "strong arm" thefts occurring in Minneapolis where riders are literally shoved off their bikes by a thief.

Skoglund said in such instances that it is difficult for a bike owner to prove that the bicycle belongs to him or her and not the perpetrator. He said the aim of the legislation is to return bicycles to their owners, as well as prevent thefts from occurring in the first place.

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved the bill Feb. 2 and sent it to the House floor.

State mandates, local strains

Local government officials often complain about mandates from higher levels of government, especially when the higher level doesn't help pay for the costs of complying with the mandate.

A recent report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor found that the state has several ways to resolve such conflicts between state and local governments, but they are seldom used.

The report was presented to the joint Legislative Audit Commission Jan. 26.

One method involves local fiscal impact notes that give lawmakers accurate information on the potential costs passed down to municipalities in order to comply with the pending legislation. The chair or ranking minority member of the House or Senate tax committee can request a local fiscal impact note from the state Department of Finance.

However, only eight local fiscal impact notes have been prepared in the last two years.

A 1997 law requires the department to prepare a biennial local fiscal impact summary report that specifies local governments' costs of complying with state mandates. The department's first report is expected in September.

Another option is for sponsors of pending bills to be asked to provide a "mandate explanation," which must have seven specific types of information: policy goals of the bill, performance standards that allow flexibility for compliance, how those standards govern staffing and other administrative requirements, revenue sources, reasons why voluntary compliance won't work, input from affected agencies regarding their ability to implement the proposed mandate, and feedback from local government officials in developing the proposed mandate.

Many of those subjects are discussed during hearings on pending legislation, but according to the report, specific documents with all of that information have not been requested or prepared. Mandate explanations can be requested by a chair or ranking minority member of any legislative committee.

Yet another remedy is to acquire a variance from a state agency, available for such things as child care licensing rules or water quality standards. Also, a local unit of government can apply for a waiver through the Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation, or it can request a state agency to amend or repeal a rule through a petition process.

The report recommends that legislators use the remedies already available, rather than trying to develop new ones.

★ RECREATION

Good marks for running parks

Increasing demands for services at state parks have caused Department of Natural Resources officials to make some tough choices.

The Office of the Legislative Auditor recently evaluated the DNR's process of making those choices and released a report on its findings.

The joint Legislative Audit Commission discussed the report Jan. 26.

According to DNR surveys, park visitors have consistently expressed satisfaction with campgrounds, hiking trails, cleanliness of facilities and other features of the parks. The report found that the DNR does a good job in balancing its priorities among the various areas of park management: maintaining park facilities, providing educational and recreational programming, and preserving the state's natural resources.

The DNR has rational standards for setting

priorities, such as ranking capital improvement projects and soliciting public input for programming decisions, according to the report.

However, the report also listed some areas that could be improved.

One concern is that preserving natural resources is a lower priority than maintaining campsites and providing educational or "interpretive programming." That programming includes presentations or tours given by naturalists, publications that teach park visitors about natural resources or environmental problems, and many other types of programs.

Bill Morrissey, director of the DNR's Parks and Recreation Division, said that while preserving natural resources is important, it does not draw as much reaction from the public as a decision to save money by closing a campground for the fall or spring seasons.

Morrissey added that the division has increased spending on preserving resources over the last 15 to 20 years. Pine trees were removed from Itasca State Park that were at-risk for spreading disease, for example. Controlled burns to restore pine forests and harvesting native prairie seed are other examples of the division's resource management programs, he said.

Some of the funding for preserving natural resources comes from sales of merchandise and equipment rental in parks. That money goes into a revolving fund, the Working Capital Account, which is spent on resource management and interpretive programs.

Another concern is that assessing the condition and estimating repair costs of state-

owned buildings has been inconsistent. The DNR is adding a new database for building maintenance, which is expected to improve that concern.

Also, the report recommends that the DNR continue including estimates of future operating costs of new buildings in its biennial budget requests.

★ TAXES

Closing a tax loophole

A change clarifying the assignment of non-business income for non-Minnesota residents is one of the provisions in the Department of Revenue's policy bill this session.

Department officials presented an overview to the House Taxes Committee Feb. 3 of two bills proposing technical, administrative, and policy changes in the state's tax laws.

The provision is a response to a Minnesota Supreme Court ruling last year that held that the term "compensation for labor or personal or professional service" did not include wages paid to an executive for managerial or administrative work.

The court ruling meant that the plaintiff in the case, Victor Benda, a Texas resident, did not have to pay taxes on wages he earned while in Minnesota.

"I am offended that Mr. Benda was able to get away with that," Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair, said.

The proposed change would replace the terms "labor or personal or professional services" with the word "wages" and thus would require wages earned by all employees for work in the state to be assigned to Minnesota.

That way, Minnesota could collect income tax on the wages.

Jennifer Engh, deputy commissioner of the department, said the change would result in a \$2.3 million revenue gain for the state.

The committee took no formal action on the bills, but Abrams said they would be considered as part of the omnibus tax bill this session.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Transit demands growing

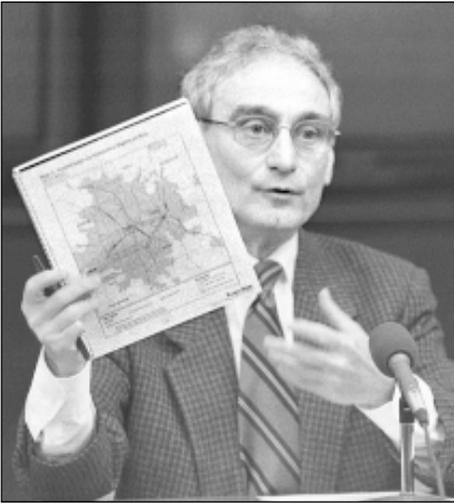
The Twin Cities region should double its fleet of buses in the next 20 years to keep up with the area's transportation needs, said Nacho Diaz, transportation planning director for the Metropolitan Council.

Diaz testified before a joint meeting of the House Transportation Finance and Transportation Policy committees Feb. 2. He said doubling the number of buses and creating dedicated

CELEBRATING PUBLIC SERVICE DAY



Stearns County Commissioner Rose Arnold waves to her fellow public servants after being acknowledged by Speaker Steve Sviggum during ceremonies in the House chamber Feb. 3. Commissioner Arnold sent the speaker a letter that initiated "Celebrating Public Service Day," which brought county, city and school board members to the Capitol to meet with their legislators.



Metropolitan Council Transportation Planning Director Nacho Diaz presents an overview of the Met Council's 2020 Transit Master Plan before a joint meeting of the Transportation Policy and Transportation Finance committees on Feb. 2.

roads for buses could keep 200,000 vehicles off the packed highway system each day.

"The Twin Cities continues to grow rapidly," Diaz said. "But that leads to transit problems."

There are 250,000 bus riders each day now, Diaz said. He hopes to increase that number to 500,000 riders over the next 20 years.

The state would need to invest \$440 million by 2010 in buses to double its numbers, according to a transit report. There also would be additional operating costs of \$70 million per year, the report states.

To obtain more riders, the state must strengthen its current bus system, develop a network of dedicated transit corridors and promote development along those corridors, Diaz said.

A dedicated transit corridor, involving both light-rail lines and roads exclusively for buses, would speed passengers to their destination.

Along with more buses, the state must provide more garages, more park and ride locations, additional transit stations, and other passenger amenities, Diaz said.

Ted Mondale, chairman of the Metropolitan Council, told lawmakers he hopes that two, possibly three, dedicated busways can be built during the next 20 years. There are no plans for light-rail lines outside of the Hiawatha Corridor, he said.

There are currently 100 miles of congestion on metro highways, Mondale said.

"To do nothing now will ensure 300 miles of congestion in the future," he said. "We know congestion is getting worse."

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska), who chairs the transportation finance committee, questioned the funding requests for Minneapolis.

"We're putting a lot of resources back into an area that lost population," Molnau said.

Suburban road funds uncertain

Areas throughout the state need more money for transportation infrastructure improvements, state and local officials said at a joint meeting of the House Transportation Policy and Transportation Finance committees Dec. 6, 1999, at the Woodbury City Hall.

Several local officials testified at the interim hearing in favor of full funding for the project to reconstruct the Wakota Bridge on Interstate 494 between Newport and South St. Paul so it has four lanes of traffic heading both eastbound and westbound. The plan also calls for the widening of U.S. Highway 61 from four lanes to six lanes through Newport.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) estimates the cost of the project at \$168 million, nearly \$50 million more than original numbers. The increased costs have prompted the department to propose scaling back the project and delaying several portions until additional funding is found.

Supporters stressed the importance of moving ahead with the entire project now.

"The individual parts of the project are too integrated with each other to remove them individually," said Craig Yolitz, chairman of the I-494 Wakota Bridge Coalition.

St. Paul Park Mayor Donald Mullan said the project is essential to his community because of safety issues. Gas tankers traveling from the Ashland-Marathon Petroleum refinery use the city streets to avoid traffic bottlenecks, he said.

For Newport, the project affects both safety issues and concerns over the long-term viability of the city, said Mayor Tim Geraghty.

"With a half-build, 800 gas tanker trucks will still rumble by our elementary school daily," he said. "Residents and businesses will still lose time, money and accessibility within our own community."

★ VETERANS

WWII memorial must wait

The House narrowly defeated a proposal Feb. 3 to override Gov. Jesse Ventura's line-item veto of \$150,000 to plan and design a monument to honor Minnesota's World War II veterans.

The vote was 79-53 in favor of the override, but a two-thirds majority is needed to override a veto — 90 votes in the House and 45 votes in the Senate.

The override motion was made by Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls), who had sponsored the legislation that was vetoed from last year's bonding bill.

"It's a disgrace," Anderson said. "It's a

disgrace that we do not have a World War II memorial in this state."

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) urged House members to support the override, especially because Ventura had stamped the bill with a picture of a pig, calling it a pork-barrel project.

But House Majority Leader Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) and Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud), chair of the House Capital Investment Committee, promised Anderson that his proposal would be included in this year's bonding bill.

Pawlenty said there is no reason to override the veto, which would be an "affront to the governor," and that they should instead try to negotiate with him and persuade him not to veto the proposal this time.

"We owe (World War II veterans) this, and we will deliver it to them," Pawlenty said. "It's just a matter of a few weeks away."

In order to override a governor's veto, the motion must pass through both the House and the Senate by a two-thirds majority. The Legislature successfully completed one override during the 1999 session — for the first time since 1982.



As the 2000 Legislative Session begins, the House includes 70 Republicans, 63 DFLers, and one Independent. The Senate has 41 DFLers, 25 Republicans, and one Independent.

The makeup of the House of Representatives changed slightly during the interim.

Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) left the Republican Party shortly after the conclusion of the 1999 Legislative Session and declared himself an Independent.

Later, the longest-serving member of the House, Rep. Willard Munger (DFL-Duluth), died at age 88. A special election to fill his seat was won by Rep. Dale Swapinski (DFL-Duluth).

A modest proposal

The governor's bonding plan is relatively lean, and some lawmakers fear it ignores critical needs

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

Two years ago, Gov. Arne Carlson responded to the projected \$1.3 billion surplus by proposing a \$1 billion capital projects budget.

This time around, it's a new governor and an even bigger surplus. But Gov. Jesse Ventura has taken a different approach than his predecessor, submitting no supplemental budget request and a \$462 million capital budget, which lawmakers are calling "thin."

Ventura's plan adheres to the promise he made last year that he would not recommend more than \$400 million in general-fund backed bonding for 2000. He received requests for more than \$1.5 billion in capital improvements, not all of which would be financed with general obligation bonds.

The governor's plan centers on investment in state government infrastructure, specifically repairs for aging facilities. But he also places emphasis on bonding for higher education and K-12 education projects.

Leaders from both the Republican and DFL caucuses in the House say the governor's requests are low, especially considering the projected \$1.6 billion surplus and Minnesota's strong bond rating.

Some also want to pass supplemental budget appropriations this year, something Ventura has said he won't support.

Ventura's plan technically calls for \$499 million in new projects for the state. However, through cancellations of old projects worth about \$37 million, the total new spending in his capital budget is \$462 million. Of that figure, \$400 million would be financed through general obligation bonding, \$1 million through the general fund, \$34 million through user-financed bonds, and \$27 million from the trunk highway fund.

Just as the heft of Carlson's bonding plan raised a few eyebrows two years ago, current legislative leaders are concerned about how small Ventura's proposal is.

"It's something that we'll be using as a guide," said House Speaker Steve Sviggum

(R-Kenyon). "Two years ago, the bonding bill was huge. It was bloated. ... This time around it is very thin."

Preserving buildings and roads

Ventura has proposed more than \$65 million for state facilities for asset preservation or to fix those currently out of compliance or dangerously close to violating various building and safety codes.

Two such projects involve crumbling walls around the yard at the state prison in Stillwater, estimated to cost \$1.5 million, and the replacement of the storm sewer at the Faribault prison at a cost of \$10.6 million.

The governor has also recommended funding to relocate several state offices that have

outgrown their facilities or can no longer use their facilities.

Among those is the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension building and laboratory, which is currently located in a former Department of Transportation garage. Ventura has recommended \$58 million to construct a new facility in St. Paul.

In addition, the governor is recommending bonding \$11 million to acquire property for future state development on the Capitol complex.

The governor's plan also provides funding grants to political subdivisions including regional jail facilities, a sports complex in Duluth, several Minneapolis park projects, and an events center in St. Cloud.

However, another major part of the governor's plan calls for \$30 million for local bridge repairs and replacement. Last year, Ventura line-item vetoed \$10 million for bridge repair.

Higher education

Ventura's plan calls for a total of \$118 million for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

Foremost among his recommendations is the governor's support of the new biology research



The Arts Building on the West Bank campus of the U of M would be replaced under the governor's bonding recommendations, which include a total of \$54 million for the university.

facilities at the U of M. Under his plan, \$35 million would help finish the Molecular and Cellular Biology Building on the Minneapolis campus. Another \$10 million would match a private donation for the Microbial and Plant Genomics Building on the St. Paul Campus.

The governor has also proposed \$30 million for infrastructure and preservation work on the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities campuses.

In addition, MnSCU would receive \$34.3 million for additional science labs at Normandale Community College, remodeling for the science and general education buildings at North Hennepin Community College, and a new information center and remodeled library at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

The governor's goal, his plan says, is to support the state of the art research at the U of M and help MnSCU campuses prepare college and corporate customers with the technical skills they will need in the coming years.

Agriculture and the environment

Various projects, including an initiative to clean up the Minnesota River, are part of Ventura's proposed \$122 million for the environment.

The state has until Sept. 30, 2002, to come up with a required match to receive \$163 million in federal funds to retire 100,000 acres of flood-prone marginal cropland in the river's watershed.

To that end, the governor has proposed about \$36 million for easement programs that would pay farmers to agree not to farm certain marginal agricultural land.

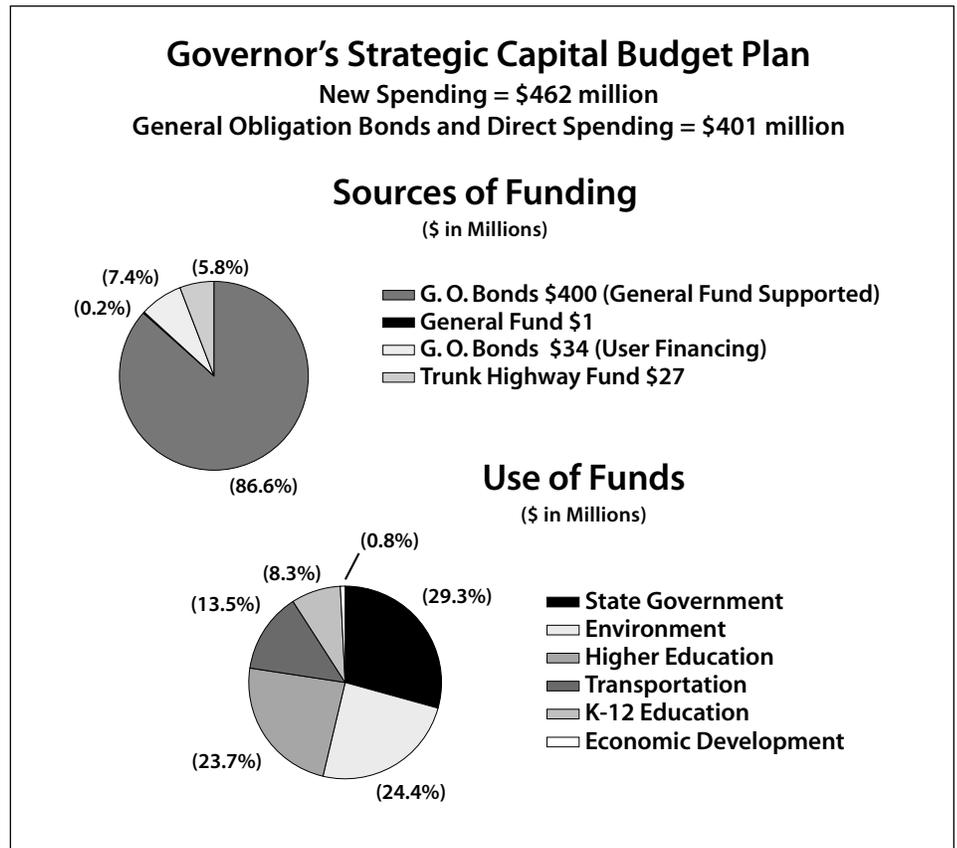
In addition, Ventura has recommended funding of \$26 million for water management issues. Among the programs is a loan program for local communities to improve wastewater and drinking water. Another loan program would help restore lakes, rivers and streams, and groundwater aquifers.

The governor has also recommended funding of more than \$14 million for state parks, trails, and forests.

K-12 initiatives

Primarily funded through local property taxes, K-12 initiatives are often minor parts of the capital investment proposals. However, two prominent projects are highlighted in the governor's plan.

Ventura wants \$34 million for investments in several K-12 facilities that have demonstrated critical needs. Among projects identified as critical are a new middle school in Cass Lake, an elementary school in Caledonia, and both a middle and elementary school in Red Lake.



Sources: House Fiscal Analysis; Minnesota Strategic Capital Budget Plan: Executive Summary.

The Ventura administration is also considering a proposal for an enhanced financing program for the next operating budget that would help schools better address their facility needs.

The governor also is seeking \$17.7 million to complete the East Metro Magnet School in St. Paul. According to the plan, the school is designed to expand voluntary desegregation in participating school districts.

In addition, the plan calls for \$3 million to plan a west metro magnet.

Republican and DFL plans

Even though higher education projects comprise nearly 25 percent of the governor's bonding recommendations, leaders in both the House Republican and DFL caucuses say it's not enough.

Sviggum said there are a number of critical facility needs beyond what the governor has recommended that need the Legislature's attention.

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) agreed that the governor's proposals fall far short of the goals his caucus has.

"Certainly we see great needs in the higher education systems, especially when our businesses are looking for skilled workers to fill jobs in the state," he said.

Both men also agreed the lack of a supple-

mental budget request from the governor's office will make things tight this session. Republicans have already proposed spending \$400 million on transportation projects.

Pugh also discussed critical bridge and highway repairs.

Both Sviggum and Pugh also said there needs to be more of a balance in the bonding bill between metro area projects and those benefiting Greater Minnesota.

Though both party leaders say the Legislature will weigh the governor's requests heavily, they're concerned that too many important projects will be sacrificed if constraints are too tight.

"To get the concerns that we're talking about in education and higher education would squeeze out other projects," Pugh said.

At the same time, Sviggum said, he's well aware there have to be limits because bonding bills are especially difficult to pass if they are too high or too low.

"It's just like a family budget," he said. "Sometimes you need a repair. . . but you can't always do them all in the same year." 🙏

Bumpy ride

The long, sometimes strange debate over light-rail transit continues at the Capitol and the courthouse

By DAVID MAEDA AND MICHELLE KIBIGER

Debate over light-rail transit will likely flare up during the 2000 session, in light of a cost-benefit analysis and a legislator's lawsuit against Gov. Jesse Ventura and his administration.

Several committee hearings held during the interim may have set the tone for the debate, with lawmakers and administration officials clashing verbally over strategies for public transportation.

In addition, some legislators see light-rail transit as a metropolitan issue that conflicts with other transportation needs in Greater Minnesota. They're concerned that the light-rail project is going to eat up the money for highways in need of repair elsewhere.

"The lives we're going to trade away in my district for a train to nowhere is completely unacceptable," said Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) at a hearing of the House State Government Finance committee Nov. 15. (U.S. Highway 14, which statistics show is one of the more dangerous roads in the state, runs through Reuter's district. Many in southern Minnesota want state funds to improve the highway.)

Officials from the Minnesota Department of Transportation presented a cost-benefit analysis of the Hiawatha Corridor light-rail transit project at the November meeting.

The rail line will include stops along Hiawatha Avenue between downtown Minneapolis, the University of Minnesota campus, the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, and the Mall of America. Current estimates say the project will cost about \$548 million to construct, with much of the funding coming from the federal government.

According to the Transportation Department cost-benefit study, which includes operating, maintenance, and other costs up through 2028, the project will cost \$765 million. The benefit gained is estimated at \$379 million.

Therefore, the state will likely spend twice as much as it gets in benefit from the project, according to the study.

Benefits include saved time, reduced vehicle

and bus accidents, and lower auto emissions, as well as reduced infrastructure expenses and lower parking and vehicle ownership costs based on the assumption that more people will live within the urban core because of the transportation options available.

The Legislature has provided \$100 million for the project, or roughly 20 percent of the overall construction cost. The federal government will pay for 50 percent, and the remaining 30 percent will come from Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Airports Commission.

The controversy regarding the project stems from steadily increasing cost estimates for light rail. When the Legislature first considered the project in 1998, cost estimates were \$401 million, said Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) at the November hearing. Last session, costs were estimated at \$446 million. Now, officials say, it will cost \$538 million to build the light-rail line.

State law requires that when any project costs more than \$5 million to construct, it must undergo a cost-benefit analysis and the benefit must outweigh the cost. If the project does not achieve at least a one-to-one ratio, then the project will not go forward, unless the governor finds that the project is the most effective way to achieve a prescribed goal.

After the study was completed, Transportation Commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg sent a letter, dated Oct. 28, 1999, to Gov. Jesse Ventura asking him to deem the project as the most effective way to begin developing a regional multi-faceted transportation infrastructure, including both buses and trains.

Ventura has signed a letter saying he agrees that it is.

Nevertheless, members of the committee expressed their concerns about the project and its trend toward higher costs.

Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview) said he is concerned that the Transportation Department has not been forthcoming with information.

Bob Winter, an engineer with the Transportation Department, testified that throughout the process, officials have been giving legislators project estimates in 1997 dollars to maintain consistency. In other words, inflation and other factors that increase costs were not figured in until now.

Krinkie's concern about the lack of openness and information regarding the project prompted him to file a lawsuit in Ramsey County, demanding that the governor and Commissioner Tinklenberg comply with the state law.

Krinkie, chair of the State Government Finance Committee, filed the lawsuit as a citizen, not in his capacity as a legislator. In the same capacity, several other lawmakers have signed on to the lawsuit, filed Dec. 29, 1999. They are paying for the legal expenses out of their own pockets.

Despite the controversy over the Hiawatha project, many legislators say it's a worthy idea to pursue.

"The only problem with the project is that we're probably doing it 20 years too late," said Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) at the November hearing.

Kahn also said other cities are leading the way in using light rail to cut congestion. It's only a matter of time before Minnesota should be considering a system that serves the entire metropolitan area, she said.

But lawmakers have also heard from several light-rail critics, including Jonathan

"It is time to demystify this and separate the myth from the facts."

—Jonathan Richmond of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University

Richmond of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, who summarized his 18-month study of light-rail projects across the country at the Dec. 7 meeting of Krinkie's committee.

Richmond said research shows most light-rail projects are built without proper study of alternatives and proceed with little assessment in how the rail systems perform. In the projects he examined, Richmond told lawmakers, light rail has made little contribution to total trans-

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Bread & butter issues

Biotechnology experts debate safety of genetically altered foods as part of Capitol Forum series

By CHRIS VETTER

The farming sector in Minnesota has adopted biotechnology, or genetic engineering, as a necessary way to produce a higher yield and prevent insects from destroying the crops.

But questions over whether genetically altered foods are safe and healthy linger in the minds of many consumers.

Two doctors familiar with biotechnology discussed the issue Feb. 2 for the first event in the annual Capitol Forum series at the Minnesota History Center. House and Senate members were invited to listen to the discussion and ask questions.

Dr. Michael J. Phillips, executive director for the Food & Agriculture Biotechnology Industry Organization, said genetically altered food is completely safe. Currently, 75 to 80 percent of processed food is bio-engineered, he said.

Phillips said legislators must base any bill

include enhanced nutritional value — more vitamin A or iron — or exclude allergenic substances, making the food safe for people who have allergies, Phillips said.

While Phillips touted the products as a breakthrough for farmers and safe for consumers, Dr. Rebecca Goldberg from the Environmental Defense Fund, questioned the potential unintended side effects of biologically engineered foods. She referred to a May 1999 *Time* article, which detailed how pollen from a genetically-altered plant was killing caterpillars.

“With biotechnology, we’re bringing in lots of new things that have never been in the food supply,” Goldberg said. “Regulatory decision-making cannot be just about science. And that’s where the value of constituents come in.”

Goldberg said she expects constituents will prompt lawmakers to propose food-labeling

“I can assure you . . . if we did not have access to this biotechnology, our bad year this year would have been even worse,” Phillips said. “Farmers are very eager to have access to those products.”

Goldberg countered, saying the genetically altered crops don’t do Minnesota farmers any good if foreign markets like Japan or Europe refuse to buy them out of fear.

Phillips said much of the fear in Europe is unfounded. He said Europe does not have an equivalent to the Food and Drug Administration, and that those nations have been hit by bad foods, like beef tainted by the so-called “Mad Cow Disease,” which have made people unnecessarily leery.

Goldberg questioned whether biotechnology foods from foreign countries could be dangerous for Americans. Phillips said there is no need to worry.

“No country can import food into our country that is any less safe than what we have in our country, by law,” he said.

There is a potential harmful side effect to the environment as well as to people, Goldberg said. For instance, genetic crops could cross-pollinate with adjacent natural plants. Goldberg fears weeds or insects could become resistant to the altered gene.

Phillips said cross-pollination is not a concern because pollen from corn only travels a few feet, so it is not spreading to other fields.

Many legislators spoke highly of the forum. Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) said genetics in food is nothing new.

“This provides information to help legislators relate to the issues and understand the issues,” Ness said.

Rep. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley) said many people believe this is just a rural issue, but he had many people talk about biotechnology at a recent town meeting.

“People in the suburbs are interested in what type of food comes out of Greater Minnesota,” Chaudhary said. “We legislators have only gotten the first taste of this huge topic.”

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters), a farmer, questioned whose scientific results the legislators should listen to. He said the genetic industries are far ahead of universities in providing information on genetics.

The forum was sponsored by the Blandin Foundation and leadership of both the House and the Senate. A second forum about biomedicine policies will be held Feb. 9 at the Minnesota History Center. 📍



Dr. Michael Phillips (left), from the Biotechnology Industry Organization, and Dr. Rebecca Goldberg, of the Environmental Defense Fund, debate the merits of genetically engineered crops.

proposals on facts, not fears from constituents.

“You must begin with a foundation,” Phillips said. “And that foundation must be science.”

Biotechnology is the scientific manipulation of living organisms at the molecular genetic level, according to a summary report. Common biotechnology products include a strain of corn resistant to the European corn borer, which eats the corn stalk, and soybeans that are resistant to commercially produced herbicides.

Future genetically altered foods could

legislation for biotechnology foods. Phillips said such a measure is unnecessary. If a company thought it would be profitable to label food as non-altered, it would do so, Phillips said.

Goldberg strongly disagreed, noting that all ingredients in food are listed.

“You can read all the things,” she said. “People want to know what is in their food. It’s a problem.”

However, Phillips contended that genetics has helped farmers cope with the lagging agricultural economy.

Is less more?

The long history of the unicameral issue in Minnesota includes a Depression-era push by a third-party maverick

BY JON FURE

In the 1930s, proposals to reduce the size of the Minnesota Legislature were among the many ideas to help the state cope with the Great Depression.

While the nationwide economic problems of that era influenced Nebraska's switch to a unicameral Legislature, the concept didn't catch on in Minnesota.

Gov. Floyd B. Olson, a member of the Farmer-Labor party, advocated the switch to a unicameral Legislature in his 1935 inaugural address.

"I am heartily in favor of a unicameral Legislature and I recommend that you submit a proposal to the people of the state for the

establishment of that form of Legislature with a maximum membership," Olson said, sounding something like the current occupant of the governor's mansion.

But Olson, who was himself a third-party insurgent, made his advocacy of a unicameral legislature seem like merely a polite suggestion.

"During past sessions of the Legislature many members of those bodies have informed me that the work of the Legislature is very difficult because of the excessive number of members in both Houses," he said.

"Accepting that as an existing fact, I hope I am not overbold in suggesting to you that in a program of reduction in the agencies of government by you, your attention should first be directed toward reduction in the numbers of your own membership."

The debate of the 1930s was just a part of the issue's complex history in Minnesota and elsewhere. Whether the public is better served by a one-house legislature is a question that has been considered long before Minnesota became a state.

Olson saw a move toward unicameralism as part of a larger effort to increase the efficiency of government. He urged the Legislature to examine the structure of government carefully.

"There will be bills introduced in this session of the Legislature for the purpose of either reducing or abolishing various state departments and bureaus," Olson said. "You have my assurance that I will cooperate with you in every way in such an endeavor, where no useful public service is crippled or eliminated."

Although the governor supported a one-house legislature, it wasn't at the top of his list of proposed reforms.

Instead, Olson urged the Legislature to increase relief appropriations for drought-stricken farmers and unemployed people. He also advocated redistributing wealth by reforming the tax system.

Blaming large industries for the Depression, Olson sought to increase taxes on iron ore, chain stores, and other industries.

Olson also said that the cause of the Depression was not overproduction, but that massive unemployment and low wages for common laborers had led to "underconsumption."

"We believe in restoring prosperity by restoring the purchasing power of the men at the bottom," Olson said.

In the 1935 Legislative Session, a few bills were introduced that would have changed the Legislature from two chambers to one, but none of those bills made it to Olson's desk. One such proposal, sponsored by Rep. John W. Cox of Becker and Rep. John J. White of Ogilvie, sought to create a one-house Legislature composed of an equal number of men and women.

In the early days of Minnesota's statehood, leaders chose a bicameral system because of its success elsewhere, according to *The Debates and Proceedings of the Minnesota Constitutional Convention*, an 1857 report by Francis H. Smith.

Minnesota's Territorial Legislature in the 1850s was patterned after Wisconsin's bicameral system, one that had prevailed in all other states at that time.

In fact, the state's early leaders did not devote much energy to other models for the Legislature. They focused on the pressing matters of resolving statehood issues on the threshold of the Civil War.



Gov. Floyd B. Olson, a popular speaker among students, addresses a crowd at the University of Minnesota.

Congress gave the Minnesota Territory permission to become a state in 1857. Minnesotans were concerned with all of the nationwide questions surrounding the threat of war, as well as basic questions with becoming a state, such as determining the state's boundaries, choosing the site of the state capital, and designating public lands for railroads and a university.

But even before statehood, the state's two major political parties were jockeying for the right to control the Legislature. Even though a slight majority of Republicans had been elected, both parties alleged the other committed election fraud.

Delegates from both parties met July 13, 1857, in St. Paul to write the state's constitution. But each party refused to recognize the other, so they organized separately and each party wrote a separate state constitution.

However, neither side disputed the idea of a two-house system. Both constitutions specified there would be both a House of Representatives and a Senate.

There were other differences between the two documents, but the two sides ultimately worked them out to form the state's first constitution, and Congress approved Minnesota's statehood May 11, 1858.

The makeup of state legislatures proved to be a fundamental question during the forming of the United States. Most colonies were influenced by the two-chamber system of British Parliament, where one chamber represented a wealthier class than the other chamber that represented the common people, according to *The Unicameral Legislature*, a 1938 book by Alvin W. Johnson.

However, Pennsylvania and Delaware had unicameral Legislatures as colonies, and they remained so after the United States was born. The practice was short-lived, though, as both states switched to bicameral legislatures by 1790.

Vermont also was admitted as a state with a unicameral legislature in 1791, but it switched to a bicameral system in 1835.

Georgia had a bicameral Legislature as a colony, and then it switched to unicameral after it ratified the U.S. Constitution. But like Pennsylvania and Delaware, Georgia adopted a new state constitution in 1790 that made the Legislature bicameral.

Many related issues influenced those changes. The rapid increase of immigrants in each state caused larger cities to be disproportionately represented compared to rural areas. Voting districts were re-apportioned to reflect the changing populations, and the two-chamber concept was designed to foster good law-making decisions while accommodating the volatile electorate.

Members in one chamber, for example, would be elected to longer terms than members of the other body. Then the chamber with longer terms would, in theory, make decisions with a great focus on statewide impact.

In some states, members of that "upper" chamber, as the House of Lords in British Parliament was sometimes called, would be appointed instead of elected, or would be elected on an at-large basis instead of by district. Members of the other "lower" chamber would serve shorter terms, and each member would be chiefly concerned with the needs of his particular district.

Also, the right to vote and to run for public office in some states was only given to men based on the amount of land they owned. In many states, two chambers had different eligibility rules based on land ownership, so that each chamber would be responsive to a different social class.

In Virginia, for example, Thomas Jefferson objected to the state's system because no difference was apparent in the two chambers of the state legislature. Both chambers served the same electorate, which he said was "superfluous."

That same argument lies at the heart of today's unicameral debate. The current Minnesota system is set up so that members of the House and Senate represent the same districts. The senator represents all 66,000 people in the district and two House members split those constituents.

In Minnesota's recent history, questions about the purpose of the bicameral system and about the size of the Legislature have often been debated. But none of those proposals have passed the Legislature or been put before voters. 🗳️

Nebraskan gets into the act

Proponents of a unicameral Legislature brought in the best advocate they could find — former Nebraska Congressman George Norris, who led the successful initiative campaign to change the Nebraska Legislature from two chambers to one in 1934.

Well, it wasn't the real Norris who came to St. Paul. It was current Nebraska state Sen. David Landis, a historical reenactor who has served in his state's unicameral Legislature since 1978.

Landis, decked out in period dress, played the role of Norris during a Feb. 1 event at the Capitol. And he explained the virtues of a one-house system.

"I believed it would be simpler for the voters to follow," he said. "They could see and understand what their elected officials were doing on their behalf and how successful they were."

Under the bicameral system in Nebraska, conference committees were used as a convenient excuse for lawmakers who were trying to halt bills that were popular with their constituents but were opposed by lobbying groups with a lot of money, Landis said.

It allowed lawmakers to tell their constituents, "We did the right thing," only to have the bill die in the conference committee.

Nebraska's initiative and referendum laws were a crucial factor in the state's switch to a unicameral model. Those laws allow citizens to place proposed changes in state law on the ballot.

According to Landis, Norris "wore out two sets of tires" while driving around the state urging voters to support the unicameral initiative.

During the campaign at that time, Norris told audiences that the two-chamber system of U.S. Congress was designed as a compromise between large and small states, but that the model doesn't serve a purpose on the state level.

Nebraska voters approved the initiative by nearly



Historical reenactor and Nebraska state Sen. David Landis performs a program on the history of the unicameral Legislature in his state.

93,000 votes. The system seems to be there to stay, Landis said, because no initiative has yet been placed on the ballot to switch back to a bicameral legislature.

Hands-on government

Program gives students a chance to see the legislative process from the inside

By DAVID MAEDA

If all your news about today's youth culture came through the mass media, you would think the kids are only interested in trading Pokemon cards, listening to Britney Spears, and learning history by watching Regis Philbin's "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?"

But as the participants of the YMCA's Youth in Government program prove, there are plenty of students also interested in deeper societal issues.

Nearly 1,500 high school students from throughout the state participated in a model legislative session Jan. 13-16. The program, which begins in the fall, teaches the students the nuts and bolts of the lawmaking process — from participating in mock caucuses, to holding committee hearings, to passing bills on the House and Senate floors.

Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer used the model session to stress the importance of getting involved at an early age and staying involved.

"The Constitution says we have a government of the people," she said. "You are the people. Therefore, you are the government. It is your government, and it is important to make a life long commitment."

Reg Pelowski, who was elected by his peers to serve as the speaker of the House, said that one of the most beneficial outcomes in his five years in the Youth in Government program is that his perspective on issues and his point of view have been broadened.

"Most of the people in my neighborhood have views that are similar to my own," he said. "It's been great to get to work with people with different points of view from all over the state."

Pelowski, who is from White Bear Lake, is the nephew of Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona). The younger Pelowski said that while he isn't sure he wants to follow his uncle into politics, his experience has prompted him to want to learn more. He plans to study political science in college next year.

Pelowski said the students work hard on researching the topics for their bills and that the program tends to attract the more serious students. "We get to meet a lot of great people here," he said.

Orville Lindquist, the state program

director, said the students take their participation seriously, researching and proposing bills that they believe can actually improve a problem in their community.

"A lot of the bills have meaning to them or their families," Lindquist said.

Lindquist said that during the nine years he has participated in the program he recalls a couple of student bills that led to actual

(State Targeting Accessible Recreation Trails), is well underway. According to the DNR, about 65 state trails have been surveyed. Work on a portion of the Old Logging Trail in Wild River State Park measuring 2.6 miles has been completed. Design work for building accessible trails has begun in six other state parks including Jay Cooke and William O'Brien.

This year students saw a variety of areas to examine and highlight. Among them were the state's abortion laws, a publicly funded baseball stadium, and animal protection laws.

While many of the bills have local implications a few attempted to address broader social issues.

Rich Ahn, a Hastings student, said he researched a bill in Michigan to help him come up with his proposal to make it mandatory that welfare recipients be drug-tested to remain eligible for benefits. Ahn said that as he researched the topic he became more and more convinced of the importance of finding ways to break the poverty cycle in this country.



Melia Garza, a junior at Lakeville High School, and other participants in the annual YMCA's Youth in Government Model Assembly are "sworn in" as members of the House of Representatives during opening day ceremonies in the House chamber on Jan. 13.

legislation being drafted and passed into law.

One was a 1995 bill sponsored by Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) that required the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a five-year plan to construct or modify trails in state parks to allow accessibility for handicapped people. The measure was eventually passed as part of that session's environment omnibus bill.

The initiative, known as Project START

Lindquist said that it is refreshing to see the students come in with a determination to learn how they can participate in the process to make a real difference. He said that the program not only teaches them how to get involved, but also helps them establish some long-term relationships with colleagues throughout the state.

"They get to meet a lot of people, and we want them to have a good time," he said. 🐼

Tuesday, Feb. 1

HF2476—Orfield (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) nonprofit agency teaching service credit purchase authorized for a certain member.

HF2477—Mulder (R) Civil Law

Conciliation court provided jurisdiction in actions against foreign and domestic corporations if the plaintiff resides in the county.

HF2478—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Re-employed annuitant earnings limitation eliminated for retirees serving as substitute teachers.

HF2479—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) improved money purchase benefit program savings clause extended to eligible members.

HF2480—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) benefit coverage adjusted for extracurricular activity management compensation amounts and rule-making required.

HF2481—Carruthers (DFL) Civil Law

Government data copy charges modified, copyright limited, local government private or confidential data dissemination authority limited, monitoring of citizens prohibited, data practices compliance officers required, and remedies provided.

HF2482—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Minneapolis Police Relief Association members provided optional future coverage under the public employees police and fire plan.

HF2483—Erickson (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Pollution Control Agency termination of the Mille Lacs water resources agreement required.

HF2484—Kahn (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Unicameral legislature provided with 135 members, governor selection authorized, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2485—Erickson (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

American Indian tribes prohibited from making political contributions with funds derived from casino operations.

HF2486—Murphy (DFL) Crime Prevention

Fleeing a peace officer crime clarified to include tribal officers.

HF2487—Solberg (DFL) Taxes

Sales tax rebate filing deadlines extended and money appropriated.

HF2488—Tingelstad (R) K-12 Education Finance

School facility commissioning cost information inclusion in the indoor air quality review and comment process required.

HF2489—Skoglund (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Political subdivisions authorized to require registration of impounded bicycles upon sale.

HF2490—Skoglund (DFL) Crime Prevention

Predatory offender registration law expanded to include additional offenses.

HF2491—Skoglund (DFL) Crime Prevention

Kidnapping statute of limitations lengthened.

HF2492—Skoglund (DFL) Crime Prevention

Kidnapping statute of limitations modified.

HF2493—Skoglund (DFL) Crime Prevention

Kidnapping statute of limitations eliminated.

HF2494—Knoblach (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Local property tax and sales tax referenda provisions modified, reports to the campaign finance and public

disclosure board required, public expenditures to advocate tax increases prohibited, and ballot preparation guidelines provided.

HF2495—Gleason (DFL) Education Policy

Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission exhibitions not qualifying as State High School League activities repealed.

HF2496—Davids (R) Commerce

Department of Public Service abolished, and powers and duties transferred.

HF2497—Rifenberg (R) K-12 Education Finance

Independent School District No. 299, Caledonia, maximum effort capital loan authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2498—Seifert, M. (R) Commerce

Barber shop registrations fees exception provided.

HF2499—Rifenberg (R) Commerce

Mortgage registry tax exemption provided for agricultural loans.

HF2500—Krinkie (R) State Government Finance

Light-rail transit project contract requirement language modified and usual state procurement laws explicitly required.

HF2501—Lieder (DFL) Transportation Finance

Local bridge rehabilitation and replacement federal funding matched with state transportation bonds, and money appropriated.

HF2502—Wenzel (DFL) Transportation Policy

Trunk Highway No. 371 portion known as the Brainerd bypass designated as C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway.

HF2503—Carruthers (DFL) Crime Prevention

Misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor offenses provided increased maximum fines.

HF2504—Erickson (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Private nonprofit organizations provided funding to perform functions

on behalf of communities of color, conforming changes provided, and money appropriated.

HF2505—Leppik (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period.

HF2506—Hackbarth (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Blaze orange requirements modified.

HF2507—Carruthers (DFL) Commerce

Auto insurance wage loss reimbursement coverage age threshold reduced for retirees.

HF2508—Schumacher (DFL) Education Policy

Metro area school district definition clarified.

HF2509—Skoe (DFL) Taxes

Local government aid base increased for eligible cities.

HF2510—Davids (R) Commerce

Governmental cable operators regulated.

HF2511—Anderson, I. (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Partisan office candidates allowed to include a part of the name of a major political party on the nominating petition.

HF2512—Greiling (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Minnesota State Retirement System General state employees retirement plan (MSRS-General) late disability benefit application authorized for an eligible former member.

HF2513—Vandevveer (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

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

HF2514—Rifenberg (R) Taxes

Dependent education expense amount, maximum education credit amounts, and income limits annual inflation adjustment provided.

HF2515—Solberg (DFL)
Commerce
Independent School District Nos. 508, St. Peter, and 316, Greenway-Coleraine, authorized to create school banks for educational purposes and sunset eliminated.

HF2516—Smith (R)
Crime Prevention
Harassment definition and provisions modified relating to restraining orders.

HF2517—Haake (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local governing body members prohibited from serving on city charter commissions.

HF2518—Haake (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State employee government efficiency suggestion program developed, income tax checkoff provided, and money appropriated.

HF2519—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
MinnesotaCare notice period reduced for persons ineligible due to income limits and private health insurance coverage information requirement expanded.

HF2520—Wagenius (DFL)
Education Policy
Parents' right to know; parental and employee notification of pesticide application at schools required.

HF2521—Hasskamp (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Township of Lake Edwards name changed to the township of Lake Edward.

HF2522—Smith (R)
Civil Law
Federal Immigration and Naturalization Service provided access to economic security data on specific individuals or employers under investigation.

HF2523—Harder (R)
Taxes
Bleacher safety materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2524—Folliard (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Air toxics reduction plan and greenhouse gases reporting required.

HF2525—Biernat (DFL)
Education Policy
Satisfactory student performance on statewide assessment tests required for grade promotion.

HF2526—Biernat (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to all Minnesota residents and filing time specified.

HF2527—Biernat (DFL)
Civil Law
Sole physical custody of a child modification standards altered.

HF2528—Koskinen (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Periodic background checks of rental property managers conducted by the bureau of criminal apprehension.

HF2529—Johnson (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Reduced class size and full-day kindergarten programs provided increased funding, and money appropriated.

HF2530—Murphy (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislative commission on pensions and retirement actuarial cost allocation modified.

HF2531—Greiling (DFL)
Commerce
Minnesota nonprofit employee benefit plan created and money appropriated.

HF2532—Kielkucki (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Five star school accreditation program established and money appropriated.

HF2533—Kielkucki (R)
Crime Prevention
Correctional fees allocated and probation officer salary state reimbursement pro-ration eliminated.

HF2534—Davids (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Root River Trail designated as a dogsled route.

HF2535—Sykora (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Shorewood authorized to establish wards and elect city council members by wards.

HF2536—Sykora (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Excelsior, Shorewood, Deephaven, Tonka Bay, and Greenwood authorized to establish an area fire protection district.

HF2537—Gleason (DFL)
Taxes
Nontaxable social security and disability income included in the sales tax rebate calculation.

HF2538—Kelliher (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission authority modified related to natural resources administered lands.

HF2539—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Wildlife management area designation orders rescinded.

HF2540—Clark, K. (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to eligible taxpayers and filing dates specified.

HF2541—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to eligible dependents and persons over age 65, filing dates extended, and money appropriated.

HF2542—Gleason (DFL)
Taxes
1999 sales tax rebate extended to dependents.

HF2543—Gleason (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, teachers retirement fund association prior service credit purchase authorized.

HF2544—Lieder (DFL)
Taxes
Agricultural relative homestead definition expanded to include grandchildren.

HF2545—Tingelstad (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School facility continuous indoor air monitoring required, portable classroom use limited, and operating capital revenue portion reserved for facilities purposes.

HF2546—Kielkucki (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Nonprofit adult day training and habilitation, and daytime developmental achievement center services for children programs provided limited liability.

HF2547—Lieder (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 914, Ulen-Hitterdal, K-6 school building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2548—Anderson, I. (DFL)
State Government Finance
Virginia to International Falls fiber optic cable project appropriated money.

HF2549—Tuma (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Eligible county enhanced 911 program expenses special assessment procedure authorized.

HF2550—Storm (R)
Civil Law
Private college campus security personnel authorized to receive telephone access to motor vehicle registration information.

HF2551—Dawkins (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) police and fire plan benefits salary credit specified, and department of public safety payments required.

HF2552—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
County stream maintenance program grants provided and money appropriated.

HF2553—Seifert, J. (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Supportive housing and managed care pilot project appropriated money.

HF2554—Sykora (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Adult basic education performance accountability system created and data sharing provided.

HF2555—Carruthers (DFL)
Civil Law
Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.

HF2556—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Telecommunications access grants for schools continued funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2557—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Secondary vocational education funding reinstated and money appropriated.

HF2558—Ness (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Career and technical agricultural education program funding authorized, and money appropriated.

HF2559—Howes (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Inland water sunken logs recovery provided.

HF2560—Kubly (DFL)**Taxes**

Yellow Medicine County law enforcement and family service center construction materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2561—Kahn (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

DNA; first and third degree criminal sexual conduct cases authorized to proceed without a named defendant when identifying DNA evidence exists.

HF2562—Rest (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Juvenile court records availability modified for child protection background checks.

HF2563—Storm (R)**Civil Law**

Mechanics' lien requirements and procedures modified, penalties and civil cause of action provided, and attorney fees authorized.

HF2564—Workman (R)**Transportation Policy**

Public utility facilities relocated due to light rail construction entitled to expense reimbursement from the state.

HF2565—Workman (R)**Transportation Policy**

Public utilities incurring relocation expenses due to light rail construction prohibited from ratepayer cost recovery.

HF2566—Greiling (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) eligible administrative error interest charges refund provided.

HF2567—Greiling (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Gifted and talented programs established as permanently funded components of general education revenue, and money appropriated.

HF2568—Clark, K. (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Youthbuild; adultbuild program and demonstration project created in conjunction with youthbuild to provide job training and affordable housing development, and money appropriated.

HF2569—Kielkucki (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

School food service appropriation provisions modified.

HF2570—Bradley (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.

HF2571—Carruthers (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Convicted or charged felon name change standards provided, marriage license application notice required, criminal records expungement provisions clarified, and penalties imposed.

HF2572—Tuma (R)**Transportation Finance**

Deputy registrars of motor vehicles filing fee increased.

HF2573—Holsten (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Natural resources local initiative grants, parks, and recreation areas appropriated money.

HF2574—Howes (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Cass Lake rest area and interpretive center construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2575—Howes (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 115, Cass Lake, maximum effort capital loan approved and money appropriated.

HF2576—Tuma (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Rice County joint powers board grant provided for Dundas to Faribault Milltown trail acquisition and betterment, and money appropriated.

HF2577—Westfall (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Pelican Rapids library improvement grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2578—Tuma (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College capital improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2579—Lieder (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Fisher K-12 school building and community center construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2580—Kubly (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission grant authorized for the Minnesota River tourism initiative, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2581—Clark, K. (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Ovarian cancer blood test screening and healing touch therapy health plan coverage required.

HF2582—Tingelstad (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Rice Creek Regional Trail in Anoka County previous capital improvement appropriation provisions expanded.

HF2583—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Koochiching County Minnesota cold weather testing center construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2584—Wenzel (DFL)**State Government Finance**

Minnesota military museum improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2585—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Minnesota-Ontario legislative commission authorized and money appropriated.

HF2586—Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

Vending machine items sales tax exemption provided and products specified.

HF2587—Westfall (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) improved money purchase plan annuity election authorized for an eligible teacher.

HF2588—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Monarch designated as the state butterfly.

HF2589—Smith (R)**Civil Law**

Health care provider action expert review certification regulated.

HF2590—Seagren (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

K-12 education code modified.

HF2591—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Koochiching County economic development commission created.

HF2592—Winter (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Health care facilities provided automatic annual inflation adjustments and additional rate increases provided.

HF2593—Haake (R)**Commerce**

Boats permanently moored on Lake Superior, St. Croix River, or Mississippi River authorized on-sale liquor licenses.

HF2594—Murphy (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) specified formula annuity percentages increased.

HF2595—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded to include Medicare enrollees under age 65 and money appropriated.

HF2596—Hasskamp (DFL)**Commerce**

Auto insurance mandatory wage loss coverage modified relating to disabled persons.

HF2597—Abeler (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Secondary vocational education funding reinstated and money appropriated.

HF2598—Abeler (R)**Education Policy**

School districts allowed to dispose of surplus computers.

HF2599—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Public employees police and fire plan one-time special optional annuity election authorized for specified former consolidation account retirees.

HF2600—Tunheim (DFL)**Taxes**

Family farm corporations and partnerships specified shareholders authorized to reside off the homestead property.

HF2601—Howes (R)**Taxes**

Counties with more than one gaming casino provided modified aid payments.

HF2602—Howes (R)**Civil Law**

Water buoy placement civil liability immunity provided.

HF2603—Hackbarth (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Disabled hunters use of motorized vehicles authorized in wildlife management areas.

HF2604—Hilty (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Northern Technology Initiative, Inc. created.

HF2605—Wenzel (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Higher education retirement specified vendor contracts extended, supplemental retirement plan participants prior service credit purchase authorized, and maximum contribution limits increased.

HF2606—Hilty (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) prior service credit purchase authorized for an eligible member.

HF2607—Fuller (R)**Commerce**

State university proximity statutory restriction exemption provided to Bemidji for an on-sale liquor license.

HF2608—Westerberg (R)**Taxes**

Telecommuting expenses income and franchise tax credit provided for employers.

HF2609—Peterson (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Physician licensure requirements modified.

HF2610—Boudreau (R)**Crime Prevention**

Criminal vehicular operation definition expanded.

HF2611—Dehler (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Community and technical college resident tuition rates provided to non-residents and contract requirements specified.

HF2612—Cassell (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

School administrator and teacher recruitment effort appropriated money.

HF2613—Boudreau (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Big Woods Heritage Forest established through specified county board resolutions.

HF2614—Kahn (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Genetically modified organism use regulated.

HF2615—Larsen, P. (R)**Taxes**

Child passenger restraint systems sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2616—Dawkins (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Youth works grant funds authorized to be used for percentage of administrative costs, other costs designated, and money appropriated.

HF2617—McElroy (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Joint standing committee system adopted by the Legislature and conference committee appointment procedure modified.

HF2618—Storm (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) contribution provisions modified for interfaculty organization member employees and year-round professional teachers organization officers.

HF2619—Murphy (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Public employees post-retirement health care task force created and specified supplemental plan contributions authorized.

HF2620—Bakk (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Archery bow transport by boat and bowfishing permits authorized for persons with physical disabilities.

HF2621—Folliard (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

School district health and safety program expanded to include student and staff safety plans, and money appropriated.

HF2622—Tingelstad (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Homeless and runaway youth initiative created; and street outreach, drop-in services, basic center shelter, and transitional living programs established.

HF2623—Anderson, B. (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Infant inborn metabolic defect testing and follow-up program expanded to include medium chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency, rules amended, and money appropriated.

HF2624—Anderson, B. (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 728, Elk River, debt service levy rate provided.

HF2625—Anderson, B. (R)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Buffalo community center grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2626—Kelliher (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board flood mitigation grant provided for Lake of the Isles, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2627—Luther (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Failure to provide proof of automobile insurance penalties increased.

HF2628—Tingelstad (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Plumbers required to be licensed in all cities, new installation inspection requirements established, fees charged, and restricted master plumbers licensed.

HF2629—Tingelstad (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

K-12 educational facilities indoor air quality standards provided.

HF2630—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Minnesota organ procurement organization capital improvements grant provided for organ, eye, and tissue donation initiatives; and money appropriated.

HF2631—Abeler (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

School district levy for crime prevention increased.

HF2632—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Nonprofit service dog organization grants provided, report required, and money appropriated.

HF2633—Luther (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

School health and safety program revenue eligibility expanded to include pupil and staff safety improvements.

HF2634—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Local Government &****Metropolitan Affairs**

Northern Itasca hospital district hospital board membership modified.

HF2635—Luther (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Driver's license applicants authorized to make a donation for public education and information on anatomical gifts.

HF2636—Mulder (R)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Lewis and Clark joint powers board grant provided for a rural water system, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2637—Chaudhary (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded and money appropriated.

HF2638—Buesgens (R)**Transportation Policy**

Motor vehicle registration information release fee exemption provided to towing companies relating to impounded vehicles and liens.

HF2639—Ozment (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

OSHA; occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens through sharps injury reduction standards established.

HF2640—Haas (R)**Taxes**

City base aid and maximum aid increased for eligible cities.

HF2641—Fuller (R)**Commerce**

School bank pilot project made permanent.

HF2642—Rhodes (R)**Jobs & Economic
Development Policy**

Bond requirement waivers provided for eligible job search firms that were formerly licensed employment agencies.

HF2643—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Clean health care services claims prompt payment required of health plan companies and third-party administrators.

HF2644—Carlson (DFL)**Commerce**

Continued employer-paid health insurance coverage provided for dependent spouses of retirees.

HF2645—Trimble (DFL)**Taxes**

Outdoor advertising devices considered taxable property.

HF2646—Trimble (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Metropolitan State University, St. Paul region campus, library construction provided; bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2647—Peterson (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Lac Qui Parle state park campground area developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2648—Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

Individual income tax rates reduced.

HF2649—Abeler (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Anoka-Hennepin Technical College facilities remodeled and repaired, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2650—Stanek (R)**Judiciary Finance**

State and local law enforcement computer controlled driving simulators previous grant appropriation eliminated.

HF2651—Tuma (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Legacy 2000; statewide natural resources projects provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2652—Goodno (R)**Commerce**

Border cities provided residential building energy code requirements exemption.

HF2653—Smith (R)**Education Policy**

Public school student conduct policy components modified.

HF2654—Seifert, M. (R)**Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**

Post-retirement earnings limitations raised for specified Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) plan participants.

HF2655—Leppik (R)**Crime Prevention**

Underage persons attempting to purchase alcohol or tobacco products with false identification provided increased penalties and driver license sanctions, and retailers authorized to seize false I.D.

HF2656—Wolf (R)**Commerce**

Auto glass repair and replacement regulated, rebates and incentives limited, and prompt payment required.

HF2657—Tomassoni (DFL)**Commerce**

Commercial establishments where wine is made for personal use and not for resale exempt from licensing requirements.

HF2658—Koskinen (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

MinnesotaCare: employer-subsidized health insurance options for eligible children provided.

HF2659—Koskinen (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Nursing facility salary adjustment per diem modified.

HF2660—Koskinen (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

County enhanced registration category required for exempt nonlicensed child care providers, county direct payments to licensed child care providers required, and unlicensed child care extended for one year to specified providers.

HF2661—Clark, K. (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Crime victims reparations not to be considered as assets for the purposes of determining medical assistance eligibility.

HF2662—Clark, K. (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Crime victim loss of income reparations time limit extended for those with continued disabilities.

HF2663—Carlson (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF2664—Gray (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF2665—Skoglund (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Firearm hunting license certification that the holder is eligible to possess a firearm required.

HF2666—Mullery (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Crime of contributing to the delinquency of a minor prosecution and penalty provisions modified, and sentencing guidelines aggravating factors specified.

HF2667—Mullery (DFL)**Governmental Operations &****Veterans Affairs Policy**

State government minority employee recruitment and retention plan required.

HF2668—Mullery (DFL)**Governmental Operations &****Veterans Affairs Policy**

Automobile insurance geographic discrimination prohibited within the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

HF2669—Mullery (DFL)**Taxes**

Sales tax rebate eligibility extended to Minnesota veterans home residents and money appropriated.

HF2670—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Family support grants and community-based waived services simultaneous receipt authorized for eligible individuals.

HF2671—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Mental retardation protection public guardianship responsibility transfer recommendations developed and legislative report required.

HF2672—Westerberg (R)**Civil Law**

School districts and their employees provided limited liability immunity for good faith use and sharing of juvenile data.

HF2673—Rest (DFL)**Local Government &****Metropolitan Affairs**

Political subdivision corporation creation standards established and existing corporations continued.

HF2674—Finseth (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Red River state recreation area established in Polk County, visitors' center and campground constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2675—Haas (R)**Commerce**

Vicarious liability insurance coverage for punitive and exemplary damages authorized.

HF2676—Carruthers (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Trucks transporting gravel required to adhere to hours of service regulations.

HF2677—Ozment (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Goodhue County nursing facility rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

HF2678—Nornes (R)**Family & Early Childhood****Education Finance**

Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) previous appropriations increased for transitional housing programs and emergency services.

HF2679—Sykora (R)**Family & Early Childhood****Education Finance**

Family homeless prevention and assistance program appropriated money.

HF2680—Jaros (DFL)**Governmental Operations &****Veterans Affairs Policy**

Political party treasurers authorized to sign political contribution refund receipt forms.

HF2681—Juhnke (DFL)**Taxes**

Manufactured homes low market value improvements property tax exemption provided.

HF2682—Hasskamp (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

Camp Knutson capital improvements grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2683—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations &****Veterans Affairs Policy**

Local police and fire consolidation accounts and the public employees police and fire plan merger ambiguities clarified.

HF2684—Wolf (R)
Commerce
Legislative electric energy task force sunset extended.

HF2685—Wagenius (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Survivor benefits extended for spouses of deceased Minneapolis Fire Relief Association members.

HF2686—Wolf (R)
Commerce
Legislative electric energy task force sunset extended.

HF2687—Wolf (R)
Commerce
Minnesota power plant siting act exemption modified for electric power generating plants.

HF2688—Broecker (R)
Judiciary Finance
Ramsey County Attorney's Office domestic assault and child abuse prosecution unit established, grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF2689—Solberg (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Itasca Community College engineering building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2690—Solberg (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Itasca County Taconite trail head building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2691—Dehler (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Town officer and employee personnel data classification provided.

HF2692—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Hennepin County nursing facility rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

HF2693—Luther (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Independent medical examination of automobile accident victim being treated by a chiropractor required to be conducted by a chiropractor.

HF2694—Ozment (R)
Commerce
Vasa Township detached banking facility authorized.

HF2695—Greiling (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Political party caucuses participating in the contribution refund program required to adhere to campaign contribution and spending limits, multicandidate party expenditures limited, and maximum refund increased.

HF2696—Greiling (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Political party independent expenditures on behalf of their own candidates limited in order to receive a public subsidy.

HF2697—Buesgens (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan council, parks and open space commission, sports facilities commission, and radio board abolished; powers and duties transferred; metropolitan wastewater control commission established; and money appropriated.

HF2698—Dorman (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Ethanol producer payment eligibility expanded.

HF2699—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Nursing facility operating cost reimbursement floor established.

HF2700—Davids (R)
Taxes
Electric generation peaking facility personal property tax exemption provided.

HF2701—Winter (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
K-12 education telecommunication access grants expanded and money appropriated.

HF2702—Osthoff (DFL)
Transportation Finance
St. Paul: new Maxson-Dale business center roads constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2703—Leighton (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Austin Riverside arena expanded and remodeled, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2704—Leighton (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Austin historic paramount atmospheric theatre restoration grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2705—Lieder (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Polk County regional jail facility in Crookston provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2706—Lieder (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Ada outdoor recreation complex developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2707—Juhnke (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Organization sponsored potluck event requirements modified.

HF2708—Nornes (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Adult basic education funding modified, policy review board established, and money appropriated.

HF2709—Koskinen (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Reduced class size and full-day kindergarten programs provided increased funding, and money appropriated.

HF2710—Koskinen (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Anoka-Hennepin Technical College facilities remodeled and repaired, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2711—Osskopp (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Mazepa dam removed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2712—Broecker (R)
Judiciary Finance
Private counsel retained for appeal or postconviction matters required to make transcript fee arrangements with the state public defender.

HF2713—Rest (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Funeral acts and services regulated, and preneed arrangement requirements established.

HF2714—Koskinen (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to eligible dependents and persons over age 65, filing dates extended, and money appropriated.

HF2715—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Lawful gambling tax rates reduced.

HF2716—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Tobacco settlement revenues credited to the health care access fund, provider premium tax modified, and contingent elimination of MinnesotaCare provider taxes created.

HF2717—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Commerce
Intrastate long distance call toll charges prohibited.

HF2718—McElroy (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Council-assembly state government established, metropolitan council composition modified, greater Minnesota regional council created, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2719—Lieder (DFL)
Commerce
Rental automobile insurance coverage regulated.

HF2720—Reuter (Ind.)
Education Policy
Current state test of the basic requirement for written composition destroyed, students required to be retested, and legislative approval of the test prompt required.

HF2721—Tunheim (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Lake Bronson State Park visitor's center renamed the Victor Johnson visitor's center and money appropriated.

HF2722—Tunheim (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Kittson County granted the authority to dissolve a town with less than five full-time residents.

HF2723—Ness (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
McLeod County authority to temporarily office in Glencoe Township extended.

HF2724—Ness (R)
Taxes
Local government aid base increased for eligible cities.

HF2725—Ness (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Dassel wastewater treatment plan expanded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2726—Ness (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Litchfield city library grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2727—Ness (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Dassel Historical Society ergot museum renovated, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2728—Paymar (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Inmates transitioned from punitive segregation confinement to the general prison population, disciplinary rules required, and felony sentence length extended to include disciplinary confinement periods.

HF2729—Anderson, I. (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Acquired natural resources land payments to counties increased, inflation adjustment provided, and consolidated conservation land titles conveyed.

HF2730—Dempsey (R)**Transportation Finance**

Port development assistance grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2731—Davids (R)**Commerce**

Motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors, and factory branches unfair practices regulated.

HF2732—Rostberg (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Home-sharing grant program extended and money appropriated.

HF2733—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Soccer; Amateur Sports Commission new facilities plan developed and implemented statewide, grants authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2734—Westfall (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Pelican Rapids natural resources district office provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2735—Lieder (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Agassiz Environmental Learning Center residential dormitory constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2736—Tunheim (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Roseau County nursing facility rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

HF2737—Solberg (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Municipalities and veterans' organizations authorized to donate to all public school programs and facilities.

HF2738—Mullery (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Peace officers authorized to transport alleged truants from home to school or truancy service center.

HF2739—Solberg (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Itasca County railroad authority grant, Itasca County highway improvement grant, and Nashwauk wells and wastewater treatment facilities construction grant provided; bonds issued; and money appropriated.

HF2740—Rest (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Charitable organization annual report filing extension granting authority provided to the attorney general.

HF2741—Dehler (R)**Civil Law**

Collections; creditors authorized to refer unsatisfied conciliation court judgments to the commissioner of revenue.

***Bill introductions from Feb. 3 were not available when this issue went to press. You can find them in the next *Session Weekly*.**



Right to farm?

Iowa case could put farmers in legal bind

Lawyers and officials in several states are keeping a close eye on court rulings regarding "right to farm" laws that could change the landscape of rural America.

Last February, the U.S. Supreme Court chose not to hear a case from Iowa that overturned the state's "right to farm" statute. The Iowa Supreme Court ruled the statute unconstitutional.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, states across the country enacted "right-to-farm" laws in response to pressures caused by suburban sprawl.

The laws were meant to protect farms by offering them a qualified defense to nuisance lawsuits by neighbors who objected to the smells and noise generated by farming activities.

In 1998, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that by uniformly protecting farmers from lawsuits, the law diminished the value of neighbors' land, allowing the taking of land without payment.

The court reasoned that the Iowa statute created what amounted to easements because it gave agricultural operations the right to do things that could affect neighboring landowners.

The law also prohibited those landowners from bringing a legal action against the agricultural operation, the court said. That meant Iowa farms could create a nuisance and neighbors could take no legal action.

The U.S. Supreme Court justices without comment refused to review the decision.

Agricultural groups have said that

similar "right to farm" laws in other states could now be invalidated. The precedent set by the Iowa ruling could stand because the Supreme Court refused to review the case.

Some experts say the issue could heat up as more and more people move to the fringes of suburbia and into rural areas, without thinking ahead about their farming neighbors.

Conflict between livestock producers and neighboring residents is increasing in many areas. New residential homeowners sometimes find the noise and odors produced by livestock operations offensive. Producers often feel that pressure to change their practices is unjust, in part because it comes from relatively new residents of their communities.

Schedule is subject to change.
 For information updates, call House Calls at **(651) 296-9283**.
 All meetings are open to the public.
 Sign language interpreter services: **(651) 224-6548 v/tty**.
 To have the House committee schedule delivered to your e-mail address, send an e-mail message to join-houseschedule@ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us or direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/scripts/lyris.pl?join=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

MONDAY, February 7

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Presentation of capital bonding requests, Elaine Timmer, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Human Services.
 HF2630 (Luther) Minnesota organ procurement organization capital improvements grant provided for organ, eye, and tissue donation initiatives; and money appropriated.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HFXXXX (Howes) Adds funds to the nearly-depleted Tourism Revolving Loan Fund.
 HF2725 (Ness) Dassel wastewater treatment plan expanded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2726 (Ness) Litchfield city library grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2727 (Ness) Dassel historical society ergot museum renovated, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 Report on fiscal reforms for the State Services for the Blind (SSB). Testimony from the Departments of Economic Security and Finance and SSB.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

Tour of MnDOT Waters Edge Building
 1500 West County Road B2
 Roseville, Minn.
 Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: Tour will depart from east side of State Office Building (outside of Secretary of State's office) at 8 a.m.

8:30 a.m.

NOTE TIME CHANGE GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF1250 (Kahn) State and local election voting age changed from 18 to 16, and constitutional amendment proposed.

Note: There will be a short video presentation.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF537 (Boudreau) Complementary and alternative health care freedom of access act adopted.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources bonding recommendations:
 NB-2 State park betterment and rehabilitation.
 NB-15 State park acquisition.
 NB-4 Trust fund lands.
 NB-1 Dam repair/reconstruction/removal.
 NB-3 Flood hazard mitigation grants.
 NB-8 SNAs and Prairie Bank.
 NB-12 Metro greenways.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Overview of workforce development programs in prisons, Department of Corrections.
 Bonding process overview, Department of Finance.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF2663 (Carlson) Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.
 HF2529 (Johnson) Reduced class size and full-day kindergarten programs provided increased funding, and money appropriated.
 HF1330 (Mahoney) Sober high school pilot program grants provided and money appropriated.
 HF2616 (Dawkins) Youth works grant funds authorized to be used for percentage of administrative costs, other costs designated, and money appropriated.
 HF2567 (Greiling) Gifted and talented programs established as permanently funded components of general education revenue, and money appropriated.
 HF1804 (Folliard) Licensed K-12 teacher staff development training opportunities and additional salary provided.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: Update on the property tax administrative process by the Department of Revenue.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: TANF overview: Brent Gustafson, Department of Finance; Cherie Kotlinek, Department of Children, Families and Learning (DCFL); Michael O'Keefe, Commissioner, Department of Human Services.
 Integration of early childhood initiatives, Karen Carlson, Assistant Commissioner, DCFL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: Presentation by Legislative Auditor: Report on State Mandates on Local Governments.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) presentation: description of the technology and its use by local governments; identification of issues.
 Other business to be announced.

Legislative Audit Commission

118 State Capitol
 Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Review of the Financial Audit Report on the Chicano Latino Affairs Council.
 Review of the Financial Audit Report on the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council.

CANCELED

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF2496 (Davids) Department of Public Service abolished, and powers and duties transferred.

Note: This bill will be heard on Wed., Feb. 9.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

7 p.m.

Joint HOUSE GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY/ SENATE ELECTION LAWS

200 State Office Building
 Chrs. Rep. Jim Rhodes,
 Sen. John Marty

Agenda: Joint unicameral hearing.
 HF159 (Sviggum); SF43 (Spear) Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

Note: Gov. Ventura will be testifying.

TUESDAY, February 8

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF2699 (Goodno) Nursing facility operating cost reimbursement floor established. HFXXXX (Seifert, J.) Nursing facility reimbursement increases.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF2820 (McElroy) Pilot projects funded to extend high-speed Internet access to businesses in areas not served by quality access to the World Wide Web. Continued discussion on the Inventory of Employment and Training Programs Report, Department of Economic Security.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: Continuation of Ombudsman for Correction presentation, David Larson, Ombudsman for Corrections and Diane Grindy, Assistant Ombudsman for Corrections. Department of Public Safety-MN Center for Crime Victim Services, Laurie Ohmann, Director of Center for Crime Victim Services. HFXXXX (Stanek) Training facilities; Testimony from Paul McCullough, Bloomington Police Department and Jerry Boespflug, Maple Grove Police Department. HF2650 (Stanek) State and local law enforcement computer controlled driving simulators previous grant appropriation eliminated.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: Y2K Final Report, Department of Administration. Update on income tax re-engineering, Department of Finance.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: School Safety Task Force update, Rep. Andy Westerberg. HF1502 (Rhodes) Bias crimes provided additional penalty enhancements. HFXXXX (Stanek) Department of Corrections; creation of law enforcement agency.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: HF2720 (Reuter) Current state test of the basic requirement for written composition destroyed, students required to be retested, and legislative approval of the test prompt required. Other items to be determined.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: SF83 (Stevens, Ozment) Wetlands regulations simplification and consolidation. Delete everything amendment. HFXXXX (Haas) DNR enforcement bill.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HFXXXX (Paulsen) Department of Revenue insurance tax recodification bill. Others may be added.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: Testimony on the poultry industry and avian pneumovirus.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knobloch

Agenda: Overview of the governor's 2000 Capital Budget Recommendations by the Department of Finance.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF2656 (Wolf) relating to consumer protection; regulating auto glass repair and replacement; and restricting certain rebates and incentives. HF2675 (Haas) authorizing insurance coverage for vicarious liability for punitive and exemplary damages. HF2719 (Lieder/Davids) regulating rental vehicle auto insurance coverage. Other bills to be announced.

2:30 p.m.

Liquor Subcommittee/COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Erik Paulsen

Agenda: Presentation by House Research on the restrictions of shipping liquor within the state. Discussion by proponents and opponents of direct shipment.

Note: This meeting was rescheduled from Jan. 19.

6 p.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF1769DE (Abeler) Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded and money appropriated.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: PERA-P&F; consolidation account merger technical corrections. PERA-P&F; consolidation accounts; modify survivor benefits.

HF2551 (Dawkins) PERA-P&F; purchase of salary credit by St. Paul police officer on intergovernmental transfer.

PERA local correctional plan; membership eligibility revision.

SFXXXX (Neuville) TRA; purchase of pre-age 25, pre-1957 teaching service credit.

HF2566 (Greiling) TRA; refund of interest charges caused by administrative errors.

HF2512 (Greiling) MSRS-General; authorization of late disability benefit application.

SF1846 (Pogemiller) MTRFA; membership for teacher union business agent.

HF2289 (Carlson); SF2121 (Junge) MTRFA; purchase of school social worker independent contractor service credit.

HF2476 (Orfield) MTRFA; service credit purchase for Loring Nicollet-Bethlehem

Community Center teaching service. Other items as designated by the commission chair.

WEDNESDAY, February 9

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF159 (Sviggum) Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Presentation of capital budget request for building occupied by the Department of Health (717 Delaware St.) given by David Johnson, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Health and Kath Ouska, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Administration. Presentation of capital budget requests given by the Veterans Homes Board.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF2682 (Hasskamp) Camp Knutson capital improvements grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2703 (Leighton) Austin Riverside arena expanded and remodeled, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2704 (Leighton) Austin historic paramount atmospheric theatre restoration grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2705 (Lieder) Polk County regional jail facility in Crookston provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2706 (Lieder) Ada outdoor recreation complex developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2739 (Solberg) Itasca County railroad

authority grant, Itasca County highway improvement grant, and Nashwauk wells and wastewater treatment facilities construction grant provided; bonds issued; and money appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: MnDOT bonding requests: local bridges; St. Cloud headquarters; Detroit headquarters; Moorhead truck station; Traffic Management Center.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF1865 (Pawlenty) Stay-at-home nursing mothers excused from jury duty. HFXXXX (Holberg) Revisor's bill. HF2527 (Biernat) Sole physical custody of a child modification standards altered. HF2555 (Carruthers) Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources bonding recommendations:
NB-5 Forest roads and bridges.
NB-14 State forest land acquisition.
NB-16 Forest recreation facility rehabilitation.
NB-10 Reforestation (governor zeroed out).
NB-6 Fisheries acquisition.
NB-7 RIM - fisheries improvement.
NB-9 Stream protection and restoration.
NB-17 Water access, fishing piers.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Overview of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities bonding requests and priorities.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF2569 (Kielkucki) School food service appropriation provisions modified. HFXXXX (Solberg) Greenway Schools. HF2579 (Lieder) Fisher K-12 school building and community center construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated. HF2633 (Luther) School health and safety program revenue eligibility expanded to include pupil and staff safety improvements. HF2621 (Folliard) School district health and safety program expanded to include student and staff safety plans, and money appropriated. HF2631 (Koskinen) School district levy for crime prevention increased.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: Childcare program integrity. Testimony from Dan Haley, Department of Human Services; Tom Guthery and Michael Kline, MN Fraud Investigators Association.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: HF590 (Anderson, B.) Private property rights protection act adopted. HF591 (Anderson, B.) Private property protection act adopted. HF2521 (Hasskamp) Township of Lake Edwards name changed to the township of Lake Edward. HF2722 (Tunheim) Kittson County granted the authority to dissolve a town with less than five full-time residents. Other business to be announced.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF2496 (Davids) Department of Public Service abolished, and powers and duties transferred.

3 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knobloch

Agenda: To be announced.

THURSDAY, February 10

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HFXXXX (Nornes) Nursing facility case mix and MDS assessment systems consolidated. HFXXXX (Howes) Senior Prescription Drug discount cards limited.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF2642 (Rhodes) Bond requirement waivers provided for eligible job search firms that were formerly licensed employment agencies. HF2839 (Storm) Providing funding for the e-Business Institute. HF2840 (Cassell) Providing support for the development of workforce identification systems.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: HFXXXX (Broecker) Regional jails. Testimony from Kevin Corbid, Association of Minnesota Counties and Gary Waller, Gary Waller and Associates, Inc. Overview of the courts budget, Sue Dosal, State Court Administrator.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF2500 (Krinkie) Light rail transit project contract requirement language modified and usual state procurement laws explicitly required.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HFXXXX (Stanek) Felony DWI.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: *Listening and Learning Report*, Lieutenant Governor Mae Schunk. Other items to be determined.

ENVIRONMENT &

NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF2505 (Leppik) Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period. HFXXXX (Swenson) State park boundary bill. HF2534 (Davids) Root River Trail designated as a dogsled route. HF2506 (Hackbarth) Blaze orange requirements modified. HFXXXX (Hackbarth) Archery bow fishing. HFXXXX (Bakk) Archery bow fishing. HF2559 (Howes) Inland water sunken logs recovery provided.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: To be announced.



NOTES

Gov. Jesse Ventura is the 38th person to serve as Minnesota's chief executive, but he is one of only a handful to hail from the suburbs. Ventura lists Maple Grove as his official hometown. Former Gov. Arne Carlson had a home in Shoreview. A look back shows only two other governors from suburbia. Harold LeVander and Harold Stassen both came from South St. Paul, a place with a history and personality that hardly fit the profile of a bedroom community.

More than a dozen governors came from either St. Paul or Minneapolis, and the rest came from towns all across the state — from Hibbing to Worthington and from Askov to Appleton. St. Peter has sent four governors to St. Paul — the most of any outstate town — but the last one served more than 90 years ago.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: HF2698 (Dorman) Ethanol producer payment eligibility expanded.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: Overview of the regional jail facilities capital budget request.

Overview of light rail transit by the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF2183 (Davids) Motor vehicle sales and distributions regulated, unfair practices specified, and civil remedy provided.

HF1394 (Pawlenty) Uniform commercial code secured transactions provisions adopted, and revised article 9 provided.
Other bills to be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

Immediately Following Session

**Elections & Rulemaking Subcommittee/
GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY**

400N State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Marty Seifert, Rep. Steve Dehler

Agenda: HF933 (Holberg) Legislative and congressional districts coordinated.
HFXXXX (Seifert, M.) Secretary of State's technical bill.
HF301 (Knoblach) Legislature size fixed after the 2000 census.
HF2570 (Bradley) Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.
Additional bills to be announced.

FRIDAY, February 11

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF159 (Sviggum) Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: Department of Human Services report on policy considerations for nursing facilities.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Note: The Health and Human Services Finance Committee will not meet today.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HFXXXX (Fuller) DWI recodification.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources bonding recommendations:
NB-18 Trail acquisition - Paul Bunyan Trail.
NB-19 Lake Superior safe harbors.
G-1 Metro regional parks capital improvement.
G-2 State trail connections.
NB-11 RIM Critical habitat match.
NB-13 RIM Wildlife development.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: Overview of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities bonding requests and priorities continued.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Note: Tax committee will not meet today.

Continued from page 16

sit ridership, has actually decreased the number of people riding buses, and has shown little effect on improving congestion or air quality.

He said supporters of light rail often base their support on the colorful role trains and street cars played in the nation's history.

"It is time to demystify this and separate the myth from the facts," he said.

Richmond said the political debate ac-

companied this decision making detracts from the facts. He said rather than politicizing the process lawmakers should look at the most cost-effective ways to improve transportation systems, which usually includes improving existing bus service.

Randal O'Toole, an economist from the Thoreau Institute, an environmental protection nonprofit organization, said that the

debate surrounding Minnesota's light-rail project is similar to others he has followed across the country.

"Minneapolis is suffering from a serious case of light-rail envy, a highly contagious disease of American cities which there is no cure," he said.

O'Toole described the "disease" as spending hundreds of million of dollars on "Disneyland-like rides"

that produce no benefit to communities.

He also said the Transportation Department's analysis was flawed because the benefits of light rail were accepted without asking whether the same benefits could be achieved through other means at a lower cost.

"Minneapolis is suffering from a serious case of light-rail envy."

—Randal O'Toole, the Thoreau Institute

What's on the Web

Session Daily is the new online companion to *Session Weekly* magazine, which is published by the nonpartisan House Public Information Office.

As the name suggests, the Web page offers news from the House on a daily basis, so you can stay on top of major events at the Capitol. Brief but informative updates about daily committee and floor action are posted before 8 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Session Daily includes the latest House committee schedule and offers links to useful resources, such as bill introductions and pages with information about lawmakers and committees. You can also view an archive of previous Session Daily postings.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota's budget

November 1999 forecast surplus for 2000-01 biennium, in billions	\$1.58
March 1997 Minnesota Planning projected state and local revenue shortfall for 2002-03 biennium, in millions	\$200
March 1997 Minnesota Planning projected state and local revenue shortfall for 2004-05 biennium, in millions	\$400
Percent probability that a U.S. recession will occur in late 2002	35
Total spending for 2000-01 biennium passed in 1999, in billions	\$23.6
Governor's 2000 capital budget plan for state construction projects, in millions	\$462
Amount to be financed with general obligation bonds (paid from the general fund), in millions	\$400
Amount spent in capital project law passed in 1998, in millions	\$999
Total financed through general obligation bonds, in millions	\$438
Total financed through general fund cash, in millions	\$500
Amount in 1998 bonding law for University of Minnesota construction projects, in millions	\$138.3
Amount for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, in millions	\$143.1
State correctional facilities, in millions	\$14.2
Amount in 1998 and 1999 bonding laws for Hiawatha Corridor light-rail transit project, in millions	\$100
Amount included in governor's 2000 capital budget plan for K-12 facility needs, in millions	\$34
Amount included in governor's 2000 capital budget plan to construct a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Facility in St. Paul, in millions	\$58
Current balance in state's budget reserve, in millions	\$622
Permanent income tax cuts passed by 1999 Legislature, in billions	\$1.3
State tax collections during fiscal year 1999, in billions	\$11.569
Total collected in income taxes, in billions	\$5.027
Total collected in sales taxes, in billions	\$3.849
Total collected in state license taxes, in millions	\$562
Total collected in cigarette taxes, in millions	\$190

Sources: *Minnesota Data Book for Legislators, 1999*, House Research Department; *Laws of Minnesota, 1998*; *Laws of Minnesota, 1999*; *Minnesota Strategic Capital Budget Plan: Executive Summary, 2000*, Office of the Governor; *Staying Within Our Means, 1997*, Minnesota Planning; January 2000 Economic Update, February 1999 Economic Forecast, and November 1999 Economic Forecast, Department of Finance.

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SESSION

Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

FEBRUARY 11, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 2



In this issue:

100 YEARS OF POLITICS

HATE CRIMES, FELONY DWI, AND MORE

HF2742-HF3301

SESSION Weekly

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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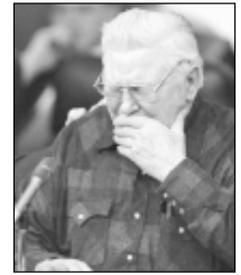
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On the cover: Gov. Jesse Ventura testifies Feb. 7 in front of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee in support of a unicameral legislature.

—Photo by Andrew Von Bank

Doctoring a drug program

A plan advancing at the Capitol would help more people to pay for prescription drugs that they need to survive

By MIKE DELARCO

Minnetonka resident Joann Grove, diagnosed with multiple sclerosis 20 years ago and unable to work for the past 10 years, simply cannot pay for all nine medications she has been prescribed.

“I have been prescribed Nuerontin, which helps dull some of the sharp pain that I feel in the side of my head because of the MS,” she explained in testimony submitted to the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee. “I do not take this drug as prescribed because I can’t afford the \$37 per month co-pay.”

Grove would benefit from a plan to make the state’s current senior prescription drug program available to more people, including disabled Minnesotans on Medicare.

The proposal, sponsored by Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka), was approved Feb. 8 by the committee.

Abeler’s bill would expand eligibility for the senior drug program by removing the age limit for recipients, doubling the limit on financial assets, and increasing the income limit to 300 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. The measure also proposes to change the name of the state’s senior drug program to simply the “prescription drug program.”

The existing program, which began in January 1999, has seen enrollment far short of projections. A significant portion of the money allocated to the program remains unspent, according to the Department of Human Services. That has opened the door for proposals to expand eligibility.

Abeler said his bill (HF1769) would provide the opportunity to receive aid to many more people in serious need.

Members of the committee heard about how many seniors and people with disabilities who do not currently qualify are being overwhelmed by prescriptions costs.

“We believe there are a lot of seniors, and even non-seniors in a traditional sense, that could be helped by this program, enabling them to per-

haps avoid financial disaster to themselves and the state,” said Dean Fenner, chair of the legislative committee for the State Board on Aging.

Medicare, a federal program that provides health coverage for seniors and people with severe disabilities, does not cover prescription drugs. The state program was created to try to fill that void.

Under the terms of Abeler’s bill, Medicare enrollees, regardless of age, would be eligible for the state’s drug program. That means disabled people on Medicare who are under the age of 65 could take part in the program.

The bill also would double the asset limit allowable for program eligibility to \$8,000 for an individual and \$12,000 for a married couple or family of two. The law allows an individual or family to have a home and one car without it being counted toward the asset limit.

The bill would set a sliding enrollment fee for individuals a certain percentage above the federal poverty level.

Currently, only people whose income is up to 120 percent of the federal poverty guidelines are

eligible. Under the bill, a sliding fee would be assessed for people whose income is between 120 percent and 300 percent of the guidelines. (Poverty guidelines vary based on the size of a household and income levels. The 1999 poverty level for a single person is \$8,240.)

Abeler’s bill comes at a time when public outcry over the high prices for senior prescription drugs is significant. In recent months, several local and national media reports have told of seniors traveling to countries such as Canada and Mexico to purchase drugs at a cheaper rate than they would have to pay in the United States.

Abeler said something needs to be done so seniors in Minnesota can afford to pay for prescriptions and still have money left over for living expenses.

Lawmakers in Minnesota are not alone in grappling with concerns about how to help seniors pay for prescription drugs. President Clinton, the U.S. Congress, and most state legislatures are attempting to tackle the problem as well.

Prescription drug plans now place among the top five priorities in more states than ever before, according to analysts with the National Conference of State Legislature’s Health Care



Bebe Rahman, right, of South Metro Human Services in St. Paul, testifies on behalf of Beatrice Anderson, who is mentally disabled, about the difficulty and costs of keeping her client on the medications she needs each day. A bill under consideration this year would include physically and mentally disabled people in a program that helps senior citizens pay for drugs.

Program in Denver.

So far, 29 states have senior pharmaceutical assistance programs on their legislative agendas for 2000, according to the organization’s research. Sixteen states currently have



Just in case

State prepared response to nuclear attack

programs to assist low-income seniors in paying for prescription drugs. Four of those states — North Carolina, Nevada, Delaware, and Maine — either expanded or adopted their subsidy programs last year.

Drug assistance plans on state legislative agendas this year mostly fall under three categories: bulk-purchasing arrangements, direct price controls, and subsidies.

Two other states join Minnesota in having current plans moving through the Legislature. Last week, the Kentucky House considered a bill to create such a plan. In the Virginia Assembly, Democrats have also proposed subsidizing drugs for the elderly.

Amid the abundance of plans to aid seniors in purchasing prescription drugs remains the question: Are 50 state plans better than one federal solution? According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), it's not an either-or situation. The organization says both levels of government must work together to ensure adequate coverage for seniors.

Several groups that represent retired people and elderly Americans testified at the Feb. 8 hearing.

"There's the idea that the programs in the states diminish the need for federal Medicare benefits," said Cheryl Matheis, director of state legislation for the AARP. "Programs in the states aren't going to be able to do the kinds of things that Medicare can do."

Jeff Trewhitt, spokesman for Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, said his trade group would prefer a solution at the national level rather than on a state-by-state basis.

"Doing business is difficult enough. If you've got 50 different laws, you've got a potential nightmare," Trewhitt said.

Many state legislatures disagree, however, and, like Minnesota, are active in creating solutions on their own instead of waiting for Congress to act.

Doug Davis, spokesperson for the Minnesota chapter of AARP, said data collected by the agency shows that three out of five seniors in the state need to buy prescription drugs and that drugs can cost seniors an average of about \$300 a month.

"We strongly support this bill and are very pleased that it proposes to raise the asset limit to allow more seniors to become eligible," Davis said.

Abeler's bill received the approval of the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee and was referred to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), chair of the finance panel, said his committee might not be able to support all measures called for in the bill, given the financial constraints placed upon the committee in a non-budget year. 

If the Cold War had erupted into a nuclear battle, Minnesota's governor would not have been at a loss for words. His response had been carefully scripted in advance.

A 1971 report prepared by the Civil Defense Division of the Minnesota Department of Public Safety included step-by-step instructions for the governor and other top state officials.

Scripts for emergency proclamations by the governor also were drafted and incorporated into the report.

The first such message began, "This is Gov. Wendell Anderson of Minnesota. I have announcements of the utmost gravity. Please listen carefully for the next few minutes. The information you hear may save your life and will help preserve this nation."

Those words were meant to be transmitted on the Emergency Broadcast System if diplomatic efforts had broken down during an escalating international crisis.

The roughly three-minute statement would have concluded with the following directive: "To all citizens, I appeal again. Prepare to take shelter. Listen to your radio. Follow the instructions of your civil defense authorities so you and your neighbors may survive this emergency."

The announcement to be made next, if a nuclear battle was under way, was brief and blunt.

"This is Gov. Wendell Anderson of Minnesota. You have just heard the attack warning signals that you [should] immediately take shelter from the threat of enemy attack," the script began. "Under the Minnesota Constitution and state laws, I now officially declare a state of civil defense emergency in Minnesota."

The scripts were just a part of a 33-page document called the *Governor's Manual for Civil Defense Emergencies*. The plan now reads like a relic from a different time.

The end of the Cold War has helped fears of nuclear war to fade from the forefront of the public's consciousness, but in the early 1970s, the threat of such violence seemed very real and urgent.

The report laid out three "readiness

conditions" — or levels of threat — and prescribed the appropriate responses at each level.

At the final step, when "hostile action" was imminent or already occurring on this continent, things would have gotten very serious in the governor's office.

The first thing the governor was advised to do at such a time was to move to an "Emergency Operating Center," where he could then oversee the state's response to the crisis.

Eight operating centers were listed in the document. The primary one was to be located in the sub-basement of the Capitol, but at the time the report was issued, no such facilities existed in the building. An alternate Capitol complex location — in the Transportation Building — was listed. Other designated centers were scattered around the state, in case the governor was traveling when trouble arose.

Instructions in the report called for the governor to immediately issue notice of a special session of the Legislature, if lawmakers were not in session at the time. The special session would have convened within 30 days, presumably as soon as it was safe and otherwise feasible, according to the document.

The report also included the line of succession to the governor's office. The list was eight people deep — from the lieutenant governor to the president of the Senate and on down — to assure that everyone would know who was next in line.

And the governor's office wasn't the only one to receive such treatment. The report also listed the line of succession for the director of the Civil Defense Division, the chief of the Highway Patrol, and other officials in similarly important positions.

Little attention was paid to the rank-and-file of the governor's staff. Their instructions were short and to the point.

If a crisis developed, they would have been required to secure all documents of "major consequence." Then they would have been told to fend for themselves, according to their "personal or family survival plans."

★ **AGRICULTURE**

Feedlot fines forgiven

Feedlot operators issued fines by counties for environmental violations would receive a break if violators use a large portion of the fine to correct the problem, under a bill approved Feb. 9 by the House Agriculture Policy Committee.

The bill (HF2798), sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), would require that 75 percent of a penalty imposed on a feedlot be forgiven if the operator of the lot puts the money toward work to mitigate the violation or for other environmental improvements.

The bill would especially help operators of small feedlots who happen upon bad luck, Ness explained.

Rep. Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda) expressed concern that under the bill repeat offenders would continue receiving breaks as long as they could demonstrate money was being used in some fashion for environmental improvements.

"I worry that we'd be encouraging lot operators to allow violations to occur again and again if they're able to continue to avoid stiff penalties simply by making improvements to the lot," Winter said.

Ness said it would be feasible to amend the bill later to make certain that repeat violators pay the full amount of the penalty.

The bill now moves to the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee for review.

A hold on feedlot rules

A bill that would temporarily halt the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's proposed changes to the state's animal feedlot rules

received the approval of the House Agriculture Policy Committee on Feb. 9.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Bob Westfall (R-Rothsay), would mandate that the agency's new feedlot rules could not be implemented or enforced before July 1, 2001. Doing so would allow legislators more time to speak with lot operators and address concerns that many farmers in rural Minnesota already have about the proposed changes, Westfall said.

Roger Gilland, a beef producer in southern Minnesota, said he feels it's unfair that feedlots keep getting the blame in cases of water pollution. Often, he said, it's wildlife or outside sources that pollute area rivers and streams.

Gilland proposed eliminating feedlot permit fees for large lots and stated "more rules don't necessarily mean more environmental protection."

Westfall said delaying changes to feedlot rules is necessary.

"I find, and many others find, the proposed rule changes to be controversial, hard to read and difficult to understand," he said.

But Gary Pulford, feedlot manager for the Pollution Control Agency, said a revision of the rules has been a long time coming. Current state rules governing feedlots are 20 years old, he said.

"A lot of work has been done within the agency over the past 10 months to get the rules to the point where they are now," said Pulford.

The bill now moves to the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee for consideration.

★ **CONSUMERS**

Alcohol by air mail

Whether Minnesotans should be allowed to have alcohol shipped directly to their homes was discussed at a Feb. 8 hearing of the House Commerce Committee's Liquor Subcommittee.

Under current law, it is illegal to have beer and liquor shipped directly to your house.

There is an exemption to the ban, in what's known as the "wine reciprocity law," allowing a person to receive up to two cases of wine from a winery per year. This exemption was put into place to allow people to order wine from wineries that don't sell their products via retail outlets.

The state has a three-tiered system separating manufacturing, wholesaling, and retailing of alcoholic beverages that was established after Prohibition. At the time, officials thought that integrating the three tiers would lead to aggressive promotion of alcohol, which in turn would lead to excessive consumption.

Jim Farrell, a lobbyist for the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association and the Minnesota Wine and Spirits Wholesale Association, said that because alcohol can be a dangerous substance, the state shouldn't change the direct shipments laws making alcohol more available for young people to obtain.

"It's a public safety issue," Farrell said. "Why make it easy to purchase beer and spirits?"

Farrell said that the one-on-one interaction with a clerk while purchasing alcohol is important to keep people under 21 from drinking. He said the state needs to collect more data to stay ahead of the increasing impact the Internet has on our economy.

Russell Turner, a biomedical researcher, said because youth prefer instant gratification, relaxing direct shipment laws is unlikely to have a significant impact on underage drinking in the state.

★ **CRIME**

Felony penalty for multiple DWI

Stiffer drunken driving laws could have prevented David Rossini from ultimately killing another person behind the wheel.

"It was not enough for me to lose my license," Rossini of St. Paul told the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 10. "I drove anyways."

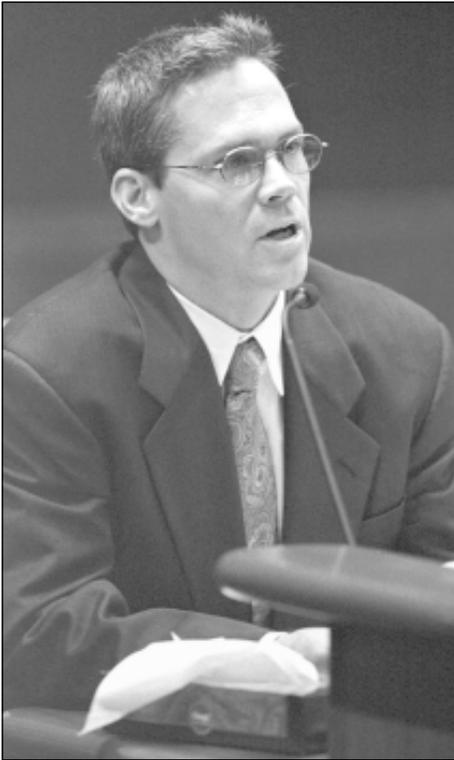
Rossini testified in favor of a bill (HF2745) that would make a person's fourth DWI conviction in a 10-year span a felony.

The committee approved the bill. It now goes to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

Fines, even jail time, did not stop Rossini from drinking and driving. He said he had his first DWI in 1979, followed by another in 1989. But the third offense landed him in jail. That came in 1993, when he was driving drunk when he killed another person.

"By the time someone has repeat DWIs like I did, it is clear the person has a problem," Rossini said. "I never said, 'Tonight, I'm going to kill someone with my truck.'"

Drunken driving laws are not working, says Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), bill sponsor



David Rossini, who has been convicted three times of DWI, testifies for a bill that would make a fourth conviction within 10 years a felony. Rossini's last conviction in 1993 came after a crash that resulted in the death of another person. Rossini's testimony came Feb. 10 before the Crime Prevention Committee.

and committee chair. Repeat offenders continue to amass DWI convictions, but never receive more than a gross misdemeanor conviction.

The bill would provide a mandatory sentence of five to seven years in prison, but a judge could reduce the sentence to six months in jail or in the workhouse, coupled with intensive supervision, including alcohol monitoring. If the offender then violates the provisions of the reduced sentence, he or she would go to prison.

Stanek, a Minneapolis police officer, says Minnesota must join the other 35 states that have felony-level offenses for drunken driving.

Minnesota has "revolving door defendants" who are unaffected by the current consequences of drunken driving, Stanek contends, which is why the stronger penalties are desired.

Another law change would alter the DWI forfeiture provision, allowing officers to seize a vehicle not owned by the violator if the vehicle's owner knew that the person did not have a license.

Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar said there are 102 people in that county with 10 or more drunken driving violations.

"We want them to know, 'Keep this up and you will go to prison.' That message is not out there now," Klobuchar said.

Stanek did not estimate the bill's cost to the

state or counties, who would pay for most of the treatment and probation services.

Easing up on clerks

A proposal to reduce the criminal penalty for selling tobacco to minors approved Feb. 4 by the House Crime Prevention Committee.

The bill (HF545), sponsored by Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey), would make selling tobacco to minors a misdemeanor rather than a gross misdemeanor.

The maximum penalty for a gross misdemeanor is up to a year imprisonment and \$3,000 fine. The maximum sentence for a misdemeanor is 90 days imprisonment and a \$700 fine.

"It just seems to me that the gross misdemeanor is overstepping the bounds," Solberg said. "It's over-punishment for a mistake."

The bill would do nothing to change the law prohibiting people under 18 from purchasing tobacco and tobacco-related devices, such as pipes or tobacco papers.

The proposal comes from constituents who are worried about the penalty leaving a scar on their record, Solberg said. The bill does not come from the tobacco industry, he added.

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland) agreed that the gross misdemeanor penalty, originally passed in 1989, is too harsh.

"We really did overdo this punishment," she said.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) questioned the measure, asking Solberg if reducing the penalty would give teens easier access to tobacco. McGuire suggested the committee adopt an enhanced penalty for repeat offenders, but she did not propose a formal amendment so committee members never voted on her proposal.

Solberg favored the enhanced penalty that McGuire suggested.

"If someone is doing it three or four times, it's probably not inadvertent," he said.

Larsen said stores are doing a better job of watching for minors.

"I don't think (this bill) takes away from the emphasis on retailers or clerks," Larsen said.

McGuire said it was not her intention to stop the bill from moving forward.

"I do know mistakes happen," McGuire said. "We want the penalty to fit the crime."

The bill now moves to the House floor.

New penalty for supplying alcohol

Supplying alcohol to people under age 21 should be allowed to be a cause of civil action as well as criminal penalties, said Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center).

Carruthers is sponsoring a bill (HF2555)

that would give people who were injured in any way by an underage drinker the option to sue the people who supplied the alcohol to that offender.

"There has just been huge problems with parents having parties and serving alcohol to people under 21, then the kids cause serious problems later," Carruthers told the House Civil Law Committee on Feb. 9.

The bill would pertain to people who do not have liquor licenses, so it would cover events like house parties. The bill would require the host to make reasonable inquiries into the age of any guests where alcohol is available.

The legislation would still allow parents to serve their under-age children under 21 alcohol in the confines of their own homes. But if the underage child is allowed to leave the home in an intoxicated state, that could be a cause of legal action.

Carruthers said he does not subscribe to the notion that it is better to have children drink at home rather than out with friends. However, Carruthers said many adults do share alcohol with their children, especially during religious activities.

Several committee members said they liked the bill, but questioned some of its language. For instance, Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud) wondered about the phrase "providing alcohol" and wondered if that could be misconstrued as merely having alcohol in the house.

Tom Brockway of St. Paul, whose son was killed in a New Year's Eve car crash in 1997, said the bill is needed. The accident occurred after the boy left a party where alcohol had been furnished by parents.

"A civil liability law . . . is certainly appropriate. It would couple well with the criminal liability," Brockway said. "If there's civil liability, it's not going to make anyone rich, but it will be one more thing to add as a deterrent."

The committee decided to lay the bill over until Feb. 16.

Restraining order bill advances

A bill that would eliminate filing fee waivers for restraining orders and give judges more discretion in which cases they hear narrowly passed the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 8.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) is sponsoring the bill (HF2516), which he said is advocated by many judges in the state.

Currently, low-income people can file a restraining order and have the \$120 fee waived. The bill would do away with such waivers.

The committee approved the bill after denying an amendment that would have retained the fee waiver.

"I'm shocked judges are complaining about workload," said Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) after the amendment failed. "It's like charging a fee for calling 911."

Sue Dosal, state court administrator, said there are too many people abusing the system. The state began tracking restraining order filings in 1992, when 4,800 were filed. The filing fee waiver was created in 1995. Last year, 8,800 retaining orders were filed.

Judge Gregg Johnson, who serves on the district court in Ramsey County, said he does not want to close the door on worthy filings, but he listed some examples of frivolous restraining order cases, such as one that was based on name-calling.

"When I'm spending half a day settling a case like that, it means a more serious case . . . can't get on the docket," Johnson said.

The court spends a great deal of money in subpoenas and the time of a judge and staff on these unnecessary filings, he added.

Skoglund and Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) questioned the statements about frivolous cases.

"I don't take these as trivial," Skoglund said. "I don't take these examples as next to nothing."

"I think we're doing victims a disservice," Paymar added.

Paymar argued that proposed language stating judges would not be required to hold a hearing when a matter has no merit would free up judges' time. The fee waiver could remain in the law, he said.

Smith said his bill would affect only cases involving someone being stalked or harassed by a stranger and would not include restraining orders filed in domestic abuse cases.

The bill also would expand the definition of harassment to include a single incident that has a "significant adverse effect" on the victim. The current law requires repeated offenses.

The bill now heads to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

Police seek training facilities

Several proposals to fund regional training centers for law enforcement and fire personnel were considered Feb. 8 by the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

The committee plans to make recommendations on the proposals and pass them along to the House Capital Investment Committee as part of the judiciary bonding bill.

Bonding requests for four training facilities were submitted, but Gov. Jesse Ventura did not recommend funding for any of them.

A bill (HF2885) sponsored by Rep. Rich

Stanek (R-Maple Grove) would appropriate \$3.22 million for a grant for the training center in Maple Grove and \$3.1 million for a grant to Richfield for the south metro training center.

The Maple Grove center has been in operation for police training since 1993. The money would help fund an expansion of existing facilities to accommodate firefighter training.

Ramsey and Washington counties requested \$5 million for an east metro training center. In addition, about \$20 million was requested for a southeastern Minnesota facility in Rochester.

Several law enforcement and fire personnel from the Rochester area said the project is especially important because individual departments don't have the resources for specialized training.

"We need to beg and borrow certain business buildings to train," said Steve Denny, fire chief in Stewartville.

The Rochester, Maple Grove, and Richfield facilities would all have indoor shooting ranges and computer simulators for both police situations and pursuit training. For firefighters, each facility would have a fire tower for burn training and hazardous materials training.

The Rochester facility would also provide detention training for jail and prison staff.

The Legislature still has to determine what is considered a matching grant under the program. Stanek's bill would require municipalities to match state grants with non-state funds. The Department of Public Safety, which would oversee the grant programs, has said spending on existing facilities does not count toward the matching funds.

Hennepin County Sheriff Patrick McGowan said that if the state does not count the money the county and the city of Maple Grove have already spent, then the county will turn down any state money.

Jail plan pitched

Several groups proposing regional jail facilities made presentations to the House Judiciary Finance Committee Feb. 10.

The committee plans to discuss all the proposals and make provisions for the ones they choose in one bill (HF2890), sponsored by Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada).

The groups submitting proposals for state bonds primarily represent smaller counties in Greater Minnesota. Gary Waller, former sheriff of St. Louis County who consulted for four of the groups, said it's important for the state to invest in regional jail facilities because state sentencing requirements contribute to the growth in jail populations over the years.

The regional jail concept merely allows for

smaller counties that have small jails or no jail the option to build a regional facility under a joint powers agreement. Officials say the regional jails cut operating and transportation costs. They also say more programs are available for inmates, because it's more cost-effective to provide them.

Scott Arneson, administrator for Aitkin County, said the central Minnesota project, involving six counties currently, would provide chemical dependency treatment, adult basic education, anger management training, sentence-to-serve, work release, and other functions that are simply too expensive on a county-by-county basis.

He also explained that the numbers of inmates the counties need to house in their facilities continue to grow beyond their capacity. And rural areas have a much more limited tax base to help pay for their growing needs.

Several projects have been proposed including cooperative efforts for central Minnesota, southeastern Minnesota, Tri-County jail in northwestern Minnesota, Ramsey County Regional Jail, south central Minnesota, and southwest Minnesota. Several rural counties and the White Earth Indian Reservation are also requesting money.

Many of the projects also include joint law enforcement facilities for county sheriff's departments and the police department with the county seat. They range in price, depending on the magnitude, from \$16 million for the central Minnesota project to \$51 million for Ramsey County.

DEVELOPMENT



E-businesses in rural Minn.

Training businesses in Greater Minnesota to use the Internet to be more competitive in the marketplace is the goal of a bill approved Feb. 10 by the House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee.

The bill (HF2839), sponsored by Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter), would make a one-time appropriation to Minnesota Technology Inc. for the e-Business Institute.

Jacques Koppel, president of Minnesota Technology Inc., said that the institute is a partnership between his organization and the University of Minnesota-Crookston. He said the appropriation request would be somewhere between \$1.2 million and \$1.5 million.

"Seventy-five percent of the companies in Greater Minnesota have under 20 employees," said Koppel, whose publicly funded organization assists companies in applying and developing technology. "Small companies are really at risk unless they maintain a competitive edge."

He said the institute does not provide technical training to small business management, but rather trains them to make management decisions regarding technology and how it can aid their business.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) said that because the institute plans to contract with the University of Minnesota, Crookston, to use faculty and students, the services should be provided for no charge.

"I know the University of Minnesota-Crookston has in its mission community outreach," Trimble said. "It bothers me to toss in dollars where people used to volunteer."

Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee) said getting Greater Minnesota connected to and using the Internet will help communities retain their population.

But Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said he doesn't believe the Internet is always the answer.

"No one is going to buy a pipe or a wrench from a store over the Internet," he said. "What we need is people out there working who need a pipe from the hardware store."

The bill now moves to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

Wiring Main Street businesses

The rapid development of the Internet has prompted a bill to help businesses in rural communities participate in the new economy.

The House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee approved the bill (HF2820), sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), on Feb. 8. The measure would provide \$1 million to the Department of Trade and Economic Development for grants to promote Internet access in rural Minnesota.

The grants would go directly to communities to develop training programs. McElroy said that eventually private companies would provide the new technology to rural Minnesota but that because of the region's economy it was important to speed things up.

"The purpose of this is to get things happening a little faster than they would happen without government," McElroy said.

The bill does not specify the grants must go for any new technology, and they can be used for established technologies such as fiber optic cable, McElroy said. However, the proposal does recognize an emerging technology, called multi-point microwave distribution.

The bill specifies that the grants could only be used for capital expenditures and not on planning costs. The maximum grant

ARTS AT THE CAPITOL



The Land of Lakes Choirboys from Elk River entertain legislators and arts advocates in the House chamber Feb. 10. The group is conducted by Francis Stockwell. The concert was part of Arts Advocacy Day activities.

for any single project would be \$250,000 or 25 percent of the eligible project costs, whichever is less. McElroy said this limit would create up to six grants from the appropriation.

He said that although \$250,000 will pay for only a fraction of the costs, the grants are meant to be catalysts, spurring activity that otherwise would not occur. He said because of the state's flat geography, Minnesota is ideal for many of the new wireless technologies and that a single tower could serve a radius of 25 miles and several communities.

The bill now moves to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

Upgrades at Camp Knutson

The House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee considered a bill Feb. 9 that would appropriate \$500,000 for Camp Knutson near Brainerd.

The bill (HF2682), sponsored by Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby), would provide money for new facilities and upgrades on existing facilities at the camp, which offers support and resources for children with disabilities and their families.

Joan Treichel, the parent of a 7-year-old deaf child, said the camp brings families together.

"It's just amazing to see families who come in scared — mostly the dads," she said. "Then they see other dads participating, and they do too."

Treichel said it is also significant for the families to see adult role models.

"Some families have never seen a deaf adult, and they wonder what is my child going to be

like? To be able to see successful deaf adults is an important thing," she said.

Rob Lane, the camp's program director, said the camp is geared towards children with a variety of different disabilities from those infected with HIV or AIDS, to those with Down syndrome, skin diseases, deafness, and autism.

The measure remains alive for possible inclusion in this year's bonding bill.

Steel mill money considered

A bill sponsored by Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) would provide \$44 million for road and infrastructure improvements in connection with a proposed steel mill in Itasca County.

The House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee discussed the bill (HF2739) on Feb. 9, and it remains alive for possible inclusion in this year's bonding bill.

Solberg said \$1 million was appropriated last session for the pre-design of the proposed steel mill that will be owned and operated by the Minnesota Iron and Steel Company.

Mary Ives, an Itasca County commissioner, said the project would have a significant economic development impact in the region. She said it is estimated there would be between 1,000 and 1,200 construction jobs.

The plant would use the direct reduction process that uses natural gas to reduce the iron ore.

John Lefler, president and CEO of Minnesota Iron and Steel Company, said the mill would generate \$30 million for the state a year and create jobs that would pay about \$25 an hour.

The nation's ergot capital

A bill sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) would forever memorialize his hometown as the nation's largest ergot processing center.

Ergot is a toxic fungus found on rye plants. Prior to World War II, the plants hallucinogenic properties were thought only to cause insanity in humans. However, during the war, ergot was used effectively as a blood clotting agent and in treating shell shock, said Dr. Roland Dille, a Dassel resident.

Dille testified Feb. 7 before the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

By 1942, Dassel processed more ergot than anywhere in the United States.

The bill (HF2727) would appropriate \$100,000 for a grant to the city of Dassel to complete the renovation and accessibility improvements for a historical society ergot museum.

The committee took no action on the bill, but will consider it among its other supplementary budget proposals this session.

★ EDUCATION

New plan for writing test

An amendment offered by Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) that significantly alters HF2720, a bill related to the statewide 10th grade writing test, received the approval of the House Education Policy Committee on Feb. 10.

The bill was debated on the floor of the House the first day of the legislative session, when sponsor Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-



Javen Swanson, a 10th-grader from Pine River-Backus High School, speaks at a meeting of the House Education Policy Committee against a bill that would require the state's written composition test to be destroyed and mandate that students be retested.

Owatonna) tried and failed to get an immediate vote on his proposal.

As introduced, Reuter's bill called for the destruction of the tests, which students took last month, and would have required students to be retested. Critics said the test question, which asked sophomores to write about something they would like to change about themselves, was inappropriate and too personal.

But because the tests have already been sent to be scored, Reuter decided not pursue that plan further.

Kielkucki's amendment calls for the tests to be scored and returned to each student, so the information won't be seen or used by anyone else.

"If we don't do this," Kielkucki responded, "teachers and any other diagnostic person is going to have an opportunity to read them."

That language would apply only to the tests administered this year.

Testifying before the committee earlier in the week, Anoka High School student Nick Peterson said he could see how some students might have been offended by the question, but he didn't want to be retested.

"I don't feel that the nature of the question is relevant to the scoring of a student's writing mechanics, and so I ask that we not be required to take the test again," Peterson said.

Kielkucki's amendment also contains language to prohibit the test question from being used again in the future.

Some members of the committee objected to the bill. Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) called the plan an act of "micro-management" and said she felt it was unnecessary, given the effort on the part of the Department of Children, Families and Learning to address the situation.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

★ ELECTIONS

One teen-ager, one vote

Several high school students testified Feb. 7 before the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee in favor of lowering the legal voting age to 16.

The committee took no vote on the bill (HF1250), sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), which would place a constitutional amendment before voters in the November election in an effort to reduce the voting age from 18 to 16.

Proponents of the bill say most young people pay sales taxes and those that have part-time jobs pay income taxes, yet they have no representation in government because they cannot vote.



Patrick Henry High School student Vedrana Partalo, 16, left, and Roosevelt High School student Heather Day, 17, testify in front of the House Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Committee Feb. 7 in support of a plan to lower the legal voting age to 16.

Kahn has proposed similar measures in the past, and one of the major objections she has heard is that younger people are not mature enough or responsible enough to vote for elected officials.

But Kahn said that 16- to 18- year-olds are just like adult voters of all ages.

"Some are (responsible), and some aren't," she said.

Heather Day, a 17-year-old student at Roosevelt High School in Minneapolis, said juniors in high school learn about American history and government, which would be the ideal time to allow people to be eligible to vote.

By teaching 16- and 17-year-olds about government at the same time they are eligible to vote, they would likely establish a pattern of voting, which would improve the voting percentage of 18- to 25-year-olds, Day said.

Kahn said another benefit would be the national attention Minnesota would receive by being the only state that allows 16-year-olds to vote for president.

"This state would be the center of discussion for all youth-related issues," she said.

★ ENVIRONMENT

New authority for DNR officers

A bill that would modify the responsibilities of conservation officers in the Department of Natural Resources was approved Feb. 8 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Conservation officers have many of the same responsibilities as police officers. Both, for example, have authority to give blood-alcohol tests under the state's implied consent laws.

But conservation officers can only issue those tests to people who are hunting while intoxicated or who are driving snowmobiles, motorboats, or all-terrain vehicles — not automobiles.

Under the bill (HF2962), sponsored by Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), conservation officers' implied consent authority would be extended to include automobile drivers.

Also, the bill would modify some procedures regarding forfeited vehicles or property.

Under current law, conservation officers can seize firearms from hunters who are violating laws, such as shooting at deer from a road or possessing too many game birds. In some instances, the officer later finds out that the person illegally possessed a firearm because of prior criminal convictions or other reasons.

In that kind of situation, current law requires the officer to send the firearm to the county sheriff's office, even though that office was not involved in the original incident.

The bill would allow the DNR to administer the forfeiture instead of sending it to the county.

The bill now moves to the House Crime Prevention Committee.

Wetlands plan to cut red tape

Defining "wetland" sometimes depends on whom you talk to, and various local, state, and federal agencies often disagree on how to regulate construction projects near those hard-to-define bodies of water and weeds.

A bill to clarify such confusion was approved Feb. 8 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), bill sponsor and chair of the committee, said the proposal would cut bureaucracy that asks landowners to comply with conflicting regulations and would make it clear who's in charge.

The bill is designed to allow agreements between various agencies while maintaining the standards of the state's Wetland Conservation Act and related federal programs.

Under current federal and state laws, if a road project causes a wetland to be filled, for example, a new wetland needs to be established elsewhere. But various laws don't always agree on such questions as how big the original wetland is, how big the new one has to be, and where it can legally be placed.

Those and many other variables can cause nightmares for anyone who needs to get permits from different agencies.

The bill would consolidate the regulatory process. The aim is to provide "one-stop shopping" for citizens with wetlands concerns and to create more consistency among state and federal laws.

The Senate passed the bill during the 1999 session, but many government and environmental groups proposed revisions during the interim. Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora), Senate

Remembering Rep. Willard Munger

Colleagues honor environmentalist as a man of integrity, a voice for the people, and a legislative giant

House members paused Feb. 7 to give tribute to a man who dedicated much of his life to public service, most notably to protect the quality of the state's environment and natural resources, and who will be missed because of his hard work and great wit.

Family members and friends of the late Rep. Willard Munger attended a memorial service in the House chamber. The House passed a resolution commending Munger's 43 years of service and his legacy of sponsoring legislation to protect the environment.

Munger was recalled as "Mr. Environment," and Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) challenged any state to find someone more deserving of that title. Bishop, who has served with Munger in the House since 1982, called Munger a "man of integrity" and said he was "truly a giant for a generation."

Several House members took turns reading a part of the resolution aloud. At age 87, Munger became the oldest legislator in state history, and his 43 years made him the longest-serving member of the House.

Munger "will be remembered for leaving Minnesota better than he found it," according to the resolution. His record includes the state's ban on DDT in 1969, its system of bicycle trails, the cleanup of the St. Louis River, the Wetlands Conservation Act, the Groundwater Protection Act, and the establishment of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Many of Munger's successful environmental laws were new to the nation and have since been copied by other states and by the federal government.

Munger was able to stay young despite his age, said Rep. Mike Jaros (DFL-Duluth), because he kept his old-fashioned ideas while adapting to changes in the world.

Jaros described Munger's work — both in and out of the Legislature — as a definition of "prayer," because anything that someone does right can be considered a prayer.

"Willard Munger's work in the Legislature and in his community has testified to that," he said. "Let's continue his legacy; let's continue his good work."

Bishop pointed to a Latin phrase in the House chamber that translates, "The voice of the people is the voice of God." Bishop urged his colleagues to use that phrase to remember Munger.

"Willard Munger heard the voice of the people, and he shared it with us, and all of Minnesota has benefited," Bishop said. "And we all will benefit for the rest of our lives."

Early in the 1999 session, Munger was diagnosed with liver cancer. He attempted to go attend daily legislative meetings while undergoing chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Suffering complications of those treatments, he was admitted to St. Mary's Hospice in Duluth July 8.

He died July 11 at the hospice. He was 88.

Munger is survived by two children, Willard Munger, Jr. of Duluth and Patricia Munger Lehr of Minnetonka, and several grandchildren.



William Bastian of Duluth performs "On Eagles Wings" as part of a tribute to the late Rep. Willard Munger during a recess of the Feb. 7 floor session. Munger died of cancer last July after serving 43 years as a member of the House of Representatives.

sponsor, recommended amending the bill to accommodate those revisions.

The committee accepted Stevens' revisions despite objections from Reps. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook) and Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls). Neither objected to the overall concept of the bill, but both raised questions about the amending process.

The bill (HF1493/SF83*) now moves to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

Bond plan exceeds governor's

A proposal to spend \$192 million on capital projects related to the environment was considered Feb. 3 by the House Capital Investment Committee.

The money would be spent on several different programs to purchase conservation easements, protect and clean up state lakes and streams, restore trees in state forests, repair buildings and other facilities in state parks, and build or upgrade wastewater systems.

Gov. Jesse Ventura's capital budget plan proposes to spend \$125 million in those areas.

The committee did not vote on the proposal (HF2651), sponsored by Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield), but the various programs could be included in the committee's omnibus bill.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) asked if the money would be spent on areas that would be fenced off for hunting preserves or if it would be for land that is open to the public.

"Will my kids in my district be able to go out and have a picnic on the land that our taxes helped pay for?" Trimble asked.

Ron Harnack, executive director of the Board of Water and Soil Resources, said there have been very few complaints where the state has purchased easements and landowners have restricted access to the property.

Tuma acknowledged that the \$192 million proposal, called "Legacy 2000," is ambitious, especially in light of the governor's recommendation. But it would meet only a fraction of the actual needs in those areas, he said, and Minnesota is known for its hunting, fishing, resorts, and parks.

"The quality of our outdoor recreation areas is one of the critical elements of our economic future," Tuma said.

★ **GOVERNMENT**

Final word from Y2K office

The soon-to-be defunct Minnesota Year 2000 Project Office gave a final presentation Feb. 8 to the House State Government Finance Committee.

The office collaborated with government

agencies and private sector organizations to avoid the much-publicized danger of computer system crashes as the year changed from 1999 to 2000.

Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview), chair of the committee, asked if the state's \$31 million contribution was necessary, or if it was "much ado about nothing."

Bev Schufft, director of the Administration Department's Technology Standards Division, said some services that the state provides probably would have been forced to stop if it hadn't been for the preparation.

Old computer systems were tested before they had a chance to crash, and many were upgraded or replaced. At-risk systems included sewer lift stations, electrical utilities, and many databases and computer networks throughout the state.

"The problems were real; we just didn't see the failures because of all the work that was done," Schufft said.

Also, the project caused each state agency or department to conduct a thorough inventory of its information technology, and it led to back-up plans being created for emergency or disaster recovery services.

The office will close March 16.

★ **HEALTH**

Alternative medicine defended

Alternative forms of health care, such as herbal medicines, could become more visible in Minnesota if lawmakers pass a bill currently under consideration.

Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) is sponsoring a bill that would prohibit criminal sanctions against an unlicensed practitioner for practicing medicine without a license.

The House Civil Law Committee held two meetings to listen to testimony about the proposal. The committee has planned to vote on amendments at the Feb. 14 hearing.

Boudreau said the bill (HF537) would not allow alternative health care providers to perform surgery, dispense certain drugs, or do other things reserved exclusively for medical doctors.

"This is not a professional licensing statute," Boudreau said. "They are practicing successfully in the community. So why is it illegal?"

Diane Miller, a lawyer with the Minnesota Natural Health Reform Project, said her group seeks legitimacy but not licensure.

"Practitioners want the right to practice without being thought of as criminals," Miller said.

A dozen people testified in favor of the bill, telling stories of how herbal remedies cured asthma, allergies, and Crohn's disease.

Eric Sommerman, dean of the Northwestern Academy of Homeopathy, said alternative medicines are safe.

"In our practice of over 15 years, we have safely and effectively treated people of all ages and many conditions of health," Sommerman said. "Nationwide, there has not been a single lawsuit against any practitioners for any harm that homeopathy has created."

Bob Meichers of the Minnesota Medical Association said the bill would "allow any person to hold themselves out to the public as an alternative health provider" even if they have no experience.

"This is not an issue of freedom," Meichers said. "This is an issue of protecting the public."

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe), a family physician who spoke against the bill, agreed that citizens need more protection.

Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) offered several amendments to the bill, including one that would require parents to take their children to see a regular licensed doctor prior to seeking alternative medicine providers. The committee has not acted on any of the amendments.

★ **HOUSING**

Affordable housing needed

In Minnesota, 5,000 to 7,000 people sleep at homeless shelters every night, but those numbers reflect less than half the total homeless population in the state, said advocate Michael Dahl.

"Each night, we are turning away 700 to 1,000 people at the shelters," Dahl told the House Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Committee on Feb. 9.

Dahl, director of the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, told legislators that more than half the people at homeless shelters are children, and most homeless people are working. About 16,000 Minnesotans are classified as homeless, he said.

"This points to the main problem. We don't have enough affordable housing," Dahl said.

Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls) is sponsoring a bill (HF2678) that would provide an additional \$5.6 million for transitional housing programs in fiscal year 2001.

"Home ownership is the ultimate goal," Nornes told the committee.

Monica Nilsson of Simpson Housing Service told the committee that her organization provides beds in a basement of a church in Minneapolis. People are asked to contribute 40 percent of their paycheck in exchange for a bed. Nilsson said the church is now filled with people who are homeless but have jobs throughout the Twin Cities.

Homelessness is not just an urban problem, said Robynn Galrapp of West Central Minnesota Community Action. Galrapp said she sees many families that face homelessness in rural Minnesota.

"Permanent affordable housing is what we need," Galrapp said. "Jobs don't always provide us that."

Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) objected to the system for counting homeless people. According to Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless statistics, people who do not have a permanent address and are staying with family or friends are counted as homeless. About 8,000 homeless people fall into that category.

Olson suggested the homeless organization should not include those people as homeless.

The bill has been laid over for possible inclusion in the omnibus bonding bill.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Program out of budget trouble

The budget deficiencies incurred by the State Services for the Blind will not be repeated, the head of the agency that oversees the program said.

Department of Economic Security Commissioner Earl Wilson told the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee Feb. 7 that the program's financial difficulty was a result of several factors.

Wilson's testimony was part of a study attached to emergency funding approved by the Legislature during the 1999 session.

Last session, State Services for the Blind received \$10.9 million in state funds over the biennium, including \$370,000 in funding to cover a shortfall in the agency's budget, with a stipulation requiring the Department of Economic Security and the Department of Finance to determine why the deficiency occurred and what could be done to prevent the problem in the future.

The program provides services to the blind residents of Minnesota including vocational training, job placement assistance, and learning alternative techniques including Braille training.

Wilson said that after a period of significant increases during the 1980s, federal and state funding became essentially flat after 1992. With increasing numbers seeking services, the program failed to prioritize or reduce services offered.

To add to the difficulties, a federal one-time appropriation was added to the program's base budget and not treated as one-time resources. Therefore it looked like the program had more money than it did.

"There was no signs of malfeasance or mismanagement," Wilson said.

However, he said, program staff didn't respond quickly enough once the deficiency became apparent.

"They were living on a champagne diet with a beer budget," he said.

Wilson outlined several steps taken to prevent a future reoccurrence. Among these steps was assigning an assistant commissioner to oversee the program.

Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake) encouraged the department to seek input from staff to correct future problems in the program.

"Every time I talk to the staff they are very reluctant to say anything for fear of retribution," Westrom said.

Payment system fix proposed

A bill sponsored by Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) aims to establish a minimum for operating cost reimbursement to address the inequities in cost-based and alternative payment systems for nursing homes.

The bill (HF2699) would create a set of operating cost per diems for the nursing home industry's 11 case-mix categories. It also would lift nursing homes currently operating

at the low end of the reimbursement scale up to the 60th percentile of all facilities in Minnesota being compensated statewide.

The House Health and Human Services Policy Committee approved the bill Feb. 8 and referred it to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

Increasing the minimum level of reimbursement by raising the bar is expected to help rural nursing facilities compete for patients more evenly with homes located in urban settings, officials said. The bill would allocate \$10 million for the restructuring of operating cost reimbursement levels.

Speaking on behalf of Lutheran Senior Citizens Home in Little Falls, Darrel Schwartz said he appreciated what the bill is attempting to do. Schwartz said he worries, however, that many nursing facilities would not be able to benefit from the changes to cost reimbursement as proposed by the bill.

"My only hope is that we don't get so far behind that we're not able to catch up," he said.

While supporting the bill, Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Rush City) questioned whether \$10 million would be adequate to spend.

"I can assure you that \$10 million will not completely solve the problem," said Goodno. "We will still need to look at other ways to keep nursing homes in other parts of the state competitive. However, the bill is a start to correcting the inequity in the system that's been present for quite some time."

PLANS FOR THE NEEDY



Lieutenant Gov. Mae Schunk explains how the Ventura administration plans to use federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds to support after-school programs. Schunk spoke during a Feb. 7 hearing of the House Family & Childhood Education Finance Committee.

★ INSURANCE

Liability for loaners

The House Commerce Committee approved a bill Feb. 8 that would shift insurance liability costs on vehicles loaned out by repair shops.

Pat Whalen, owner of PJW Automotive in New Brighton, said many repair shops provide loaner vehicles while servicing their customers' cars. But some shops are discontinuing the service because their insurance is responsible for covering the costs if the loaner vehicle is involved in an accident.

The bill (HF2719), sponsored by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), would shift the costs of damages to the driver's liability insurance coverage. The repair shop's insurance would only pay the amount in excess of what the driver's insurance covers.

The bill was sent to the House floor.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

What's in a name?

When the residents of Lake Edwards Township in Crow Wing County decided to drop the “s” from the town’s name, they didn’t realize it would be so complicated a process.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) said for years there has been confusion about whether or not the legal name of the township had the “s” at the end. She said the confusion has led to delays when the town has had to file documents with state and federal governments.

Township officials discovered to legally change the name from the Township of Lake Edwards to Township of Lake Edward, would require a petition signed by at least 55 percent of the number of residents who voted in the last general election.

For Lake Edwards, a rural town located in the central part of the state with a population of approximately 1,500 people, the costs of this process seemed too high.

HF2521, sponsored by Hasskamp, would allow the county board to change the name of the township upon receiving a resolution from the town board requesting the change.

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved the bill Feb. 9.

Jim Gelbmann, executive director of the State Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation, said that since the board has no power under current law to authorize the change, legislation is required.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield), said that the change may not clarify the issue for the town when it deals with other units of government since each governmental agency’s records may or may not have the “s” at the end of the township name. Changing the name at this point, Tuma said, won’t really clarify those records.

Gelbmann said that documents from the time the town was formed are lost, and thus it is unclear what the legal name is. The bill would establish once and for all what the legal name of the town is.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

Cities seek more aid

Three cities that are requesting increases in their local government aid from the state presented their cases to the Property Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee on Feb. 9.

The cities, Kelliher, Darwin, and Osseo, are requesting increases in the city aid base and also increases in the maximum amount of total aid.

HF2509, sponsored by Rep. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook), would increase the base aid for

Kelliher by \$32,000. HF2724, sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), would increase Darwin’s aid payment by \$7,200. HF2640, sponsored by Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), would increase Osseo’s payment by \$300,000.

Gregg Thayer, a former Kelliher council member, said the city receives far less aid than neighboring cities and cities of similar size. As an example, Thayer said the city’s population is around 372 and it will receive less than half of the aid given to the city of Northhome, which has 90 less people.

Ness said the city of Darwin is being penalized for its “frugality.” He said that other small cities with no greater need than Darwin get much more aid because Darwin chose to levy and spend at a much lower rate than the average city.

David Callister, the Osseo city administrator, said that the city is landlocked, limiting any expansion to its tax base. He said that although the median value of homes in the city is among the lowest in Hennepin County, the city’s property tax rates are among the county’s highest.

Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) said she hopes the administration would consider changing the aid formula.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) said that he has had discussions with the Department of Revenue indicating that the governor’s reform package that will be presented next year might address the local aid formula.

★ RECREATION

Soccer field funding sought

A program to provide local grants for soccer fields was discussed Feb. 9 by the House Capital Investment Committee.

The bill (HF2733) would provide \$12 million in bond proceeds to provide grants through the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission.

Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake) said soccer is the fastest growing sport in the state, and unlike most other sports, it is equally popular among boys and girls. The grants would be similar to the “Mighty Ducks” grants that were used to help cities throughout the state build ice arenas.

Mares estimated that the money would help pay for about 500 soccer fields, and the money would be distributed equitably among the state’s congressional districts.

Grants would be matched equally with local money on projects that cost less than \$20,000. For projects costing \$20,000 to \$75,000, each \$1 in state grant money would have to be matched with \$2 locally. And



Parisa Rahimi, who plays soccer in a youth soccer league in Eden Prairie, testifies Feb. 9 in support of a \$12 million bonding proposal to create new soccer fields.

projects costing more than \$75,000 would require a \$1 state to \$4 local match.

The costs of soccer fields include the purchase of the land, grading and developing the site, fencing, lighting, parking, and restrooms.

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed portions of the omnibus state government finance bill in 1999 that appropriated money to the sports commission for ice arenas and soccer fields.

The committee did not take action on the bill, but it could be included in the omnibus capital investment bill.

★ TAXES

Rebate eligibility could expand

A driving force behind last year’s \$1.3 billion sales-tax based rebate was that it was, for the most part, automatically generated.

Taxpayers were not required to file additional forms because the Department of Revenue had the information needed to determine the rebate amount.

The House Committee on Taxes heard several bills Feb. 4 that would either expand the eligibility requirements allowing people to retroactively apply for a 1999 rebate or extend the application deadline for people who were eligible but did not apply.

Several legislators were concerned that the window for applying last year was too small. The rebate bill was passed May 24, 1999, and the deadline to file was only three weeks later.

HF2542, sponsored by Rep. Mark Gleason (DFL-Richfield), would extend the rebate to students claimed as dependents by their parents.

Dave Giese, a student at Minnesota State University, Mankato, spoke in support of HF2542, saying many young adults who were in school were penalized as students because their parents claimed them as dependents.

"I was very disappointed to be excluded from the rebate," he said, "I, along with many other students, contributed toward the surplus."

HF2537, also sponsored by Gleason, would include non-taxable social security and disability income in calculating the rebate.

Former Rep. Mark Mahon, representing the American Association of Retired Persons, spoke in favor of HF2537, saying many senior citizens were unaware of the rebate process.

"If this is truly a sales tax rebate, then this group has to be included," Mahon said. "Seniors, probably more than any other group, spent most of their money in Minnesota."

HF2487, sponsored by Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey), would extend the deadline for those already eligible for the rebate.

HF2526, sponsored by Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls), and HF2540, sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), would both extend the deadline and eligibility for the rebate to dependents and people over 65.

The committee took no action on any of the bills, but Abrams said each would be considered for inclusion in this year's omnibus tax package.

Governor seeks tax reform

The governor plans to propose a tax reform initiative next session as part of the biennial budget, the head of the Department of Revenue told the Property Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee on Feb. 7.

Commissioner Matt Smith said tax reform is part of the governor's "Big Plan," emphasizing service not systems.

"A tax system should be simple and easy to deal with for taxpayers," Smith said. "It should also be understandable and predictable, so taxpayers know how much they're going to pay."

Smith said a better tax system should also be fair, so taxes are based on taxpayers' ability to pay and the cost of services they use. The system also must be modern, keeping pace with changes in the economy and technology, and be consistent with the overall goals of the state.

Gordon Folkman, a policy analyst for the department, said reforming the state's property tax system requires a better understanding of the entire system.

"Every property tax system has features which make the system complex to administer and difficult for taxpayers to understand," Folkman said.

He said there are many factors that make it difficult for state and local officials to explain

the system in an understandable way for taxpayers. Among these factors are the changing market value on a property or a market value on another property in the same taxing district may change, shifting taxes from one property to another. Changing local levies and referendum approvals of levy increases also contribute to the complexity.

Smith said that one of the strengths of property taxes in general is that taxpayers can hold their local officials accountable for any increases.

But, he said, because the system is difficult to understand much of that accountability is lost.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Rights to railroad land

Grain elevator owners would have the first opportunity to purchase land along rail corridors if the railroad company decides to sell, under a bill advancing in the House.

Bill sponsor Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) brought the bill before the House Transportation Policy Committee on Feb. 8. The committee approved the bill, which now moves on to the House Civil Law Committee. Several elevator owners told the committee they feared that a railroad company could sell such property to another entity, which then could raise lease rates on the land.

"We can't just pick up the elevator and move," said Bob Zelenka, executive director of Minnesota Grain and Feed Association.

"If a third party bought it and jacked up the rate, we would have to pay it," said Curt Pederson of Farmer's Elevator in Bellingham.

Brian Sweeney of Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway opposed the measure.

"There's no protection for us in this bill," Sweeney said. "Why would we drive them out of business to make an extra \$5,000?"

The bill (HF919) stems from a Minnesota railroad company's attempt in 1999 to sell the land near the elevators to the elevator owners for ten times the amount of the annual lease. The elevator owners balked at the sale offer, saying the land is not worth that much.

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) questioned why elevator owners wouldn't want to purchase the land, noting that lease rates would equal the purchase price in one decade. Zelenka responded that it is difficult to obtain that much money in a short period, and the elevator owners prefer the annual leases.

Sweeney said no railroad companies have raised lease rates or sold the property to a third party due to elevator owners declining the sale offer.

Correction

A photo caption in the Feb. 4 issue of *Session Weekly* stated that construction of a new Arts Building on the University of Minnesota campus was called for in the governor's 2000 bonding recommendations. The governor did not recommend funding for the project, estimated to cost \$21 million.

GIFTED STUDENTS



Rheanne Zimmerman, right, a fourth-grade student at Paynesville Elementary School who is also home-schooled part time, testifies before the House K-12 Education Finance Committee in support of a bill that would establish permanent funding for gifted and talented programs. Alisa Eland-Smithburg, left, an eighth-grade student at Chaska Middle School, also testified at the Feb. 7 hearing.

Crimes of hate

Proposal would increase penalties for crimes motivated by prejudice

BY CHRIS VETTER

Henry Oertelt was calm when he explained how German officials had burned numbers in his arm in a Nazi concentration camp.

The Holocaust survivor shared his tale with the House Crime Prevention Committee as if he has told it many times before. But this time he was hoping to sway legislators to support a new bill aimed at hate crimes.

As he testified, the 79-year-old St. Paul man recalled walking down the streets in his native Germany and seeing swastikas, “Death to Jews,” and other hateful messages written on buildings and shops.

“All you need is the slippery slope of holes in the law, and it could happen here,” Oertelt said.

Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park) displayed obvious sadness as he sat beside Oertelt. Rhodes, who is Jewish, is sponsoring HF1502, which would enhance penalties for bias-motivated crimes.

The committee approved the bill Feb. 8 and sent it to the House floor.

A bias-motivated crime is defined as an offense when the perpetrator selects the victim based, in part or in whole, on the victim’s perceived race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, or national origin.

The state already has a bias-motivated crime law in statute, said Margaret Chutich from the Attorney General’s Office, which is also supporting the bill. Chutich said the state passed its initial law in 1989, which enhances penalties on three crimes — assault, criminal damage to property, and harassment.

Rhodes’ bill would extend bias-motivated penalty provisions to such crimes as interfering with religious observance, third-degree arson, trespassing, public nuisance, and disorderly conduct.

However, the measure would not make certain acts typically considered part of a hate crime illegal.

For example, burning a cross is not illegal. Neither is displaying a swastika. But if you damage someone’s property to burn a cross or paint a swastika on a building wall, that is against the law.



Henny Oertelt of St. Paul, a Holocaust survivor, testifies in favor of a bill that would increase the penalties for hate crimes.

And under the bill, that property crime would carry an enhanced penalty.

After the hearing, Rhodes’ sadness was replaced with a wide smile.

He said his aim is to include all other bias-related offenses that were not included in the original law a decade ago.

Shepard Harris of the Jewish Community Relations Council said the bill does not limit free speech, but rather focuses on the behavior.

“If someone spray paints ‘Vikings stink,’ that’s property damage,” Harris said. “But if the person painted a swastika on the wall and knowing that the person inside is Jewish, that leads to the enhanced penalty.”

Though no specific incident of hate crime was raised as an impetus for the bill, officials are alarmed at the steady increase of bias-related offenses in Minnesota. Such offenses increased by 10 percent from 1997 to 1998, Chutich said.

Under the bill, an offense punishable as a

misdemeanor would be elevated to a gross misdemeanor, and gross misdemeanor crimes would be elevated to felony-level penalties.

A 1993 U.S. Supreme Court decision, known as *Wisconsin vs. Mitchell*, upheld enhanced penalties for hate crimes, regardless of the race of the perpetrator and the victim.

In the *Mitchell* case, an African-American attacked a white man after seeing a movie about black oppression in the South. The Court upheld the state’s law, which increased the penalty because the victim was selected by his skin color.

“It impacts the victim when you know you’ve been targeted,” Chutich said. The Court held the crime was “speech incidental to conduct,” she said.

Chutich helped craft the bill’s language.

“We were looking for something that made sense in Minnesota,” she said.

Tom Prichard, president of the Minnesota Family Council, spoke against the bill, saying the legislation gives special protection to groups rather than individuals. Prichard contends the bill punishes thought.

“If you are a member of a group, you receive greater protection,” Prichard said. “We think that is fundamentally wrong.”

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) criticized Prichard, wondering if the Minnesota Family Council opposes the measure because it offers protection to gays and lesbians.

Prichard said he would oppose the bill regardless of the sexual orientation portion.

Rhodes disagreed with Prichard, saying the bill would not divide people into groups.

“This isn’t going to fracture society, it is going to enhance society,” Rhodes said.

The bill includes an education provision, requiring all juvenile offenders to complete a program where they learn how their acts hurt the victim and society. What the program entails would be up to the individual sentencing judge.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) said the increasingly diverse population in Minnesota makes this bill important.

Chutich said it’s important to note that the motivation behind a crime is always considered in court. For example, she said, the murder of a child is viewed differently than the murder of an adult.

“We’ve never had ‘a crime-is-a-crime-is-a-

Continued on page 39

Three for one

Ventura, Sviggum, and Spear — three of the most influential people in government — pushed for a unicameral legislature this week

By JON FURE

If Gov. Jesse Ventura gets his way, Minnesota voters will be asked if the Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate should be replaced by a single legislative body.

But before that question makes it onto the November election ballot, lawmakers and other interested parties have some questions of their own.

Ventura testified at a joint hearing of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy and Senate Election Laws committees on Feb. 7. He stressed that he wants voters to be able to determine this issue, and asked for support from proponents of the current bicameral system.

“If it really is the best system, why not have the courage to put your system before the voters and let them be the ultimate decision-makers?” he said.

Ventura previously testified about unicameralism at a House committee hearing in Fergus Falls, but the governor did not stay around to answer members’ questions. This time, he stayed for the duration of the meeting and debated the merits of his proposal with committee members.

Under Ventura’s proposal, which is contained in a bill (HF159) sponsored by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), the one-house legislature would be called the “Senate” and would consist of 135 districts. Currently there are 67 Senate districts, each of which is divided to make 134 House districts. The proposed terms would be four years, and they would be staggered — half of the members’ terms would expire every two years.

Those changes would take place in 2003, if the voters were to approve the constitutional amendment.

Senate President Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) is sponsoring the companion bill.

Basically, if the ballot question were to pass as it is currently proposed, the people who take office in 2001 would have the task of re-drawing district boundaries and establishing specific rules for those who would later be elected to the unicameral Legislature in 2003.



Former Secretary of State Joan Growe testifies against a unicameral legislature proposal Feb. 7 before the House Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Committee.

Proponents of the unicameral plan envision a simpler legislative process that would allow more citizen involvement. A bill would be heard in several committees, and then on the “Senate” floor. Every lawmaker would vote, and if a measure passes, it would go on to the governor to be signed into law or vetoed.

That process would likely be more “streamlined” compared to the current system, proponents say, where different versions of the same bill are sometimes passed in both chambers, and then conference committees are appointed to resolve differences between the two versions.

The conference committee report is sent back to both chambers, and members can vote yes or no, but cannot offer amendments. (Lawmakers can also move to sent a bill back to conference committee for further consideration.)

Spear said the conference committee process is “unreformable.”

“The only thing we can do to reform that part of the process is to remove it,” he said.

One argument against a more “streamlined” process is that the conference committees slow down the process, which some say is necessary because only the ideas that have broad support prevail in the end. That can help eliminate the influence of special interests.

“My constituents consistently have told me that they do not want making laws to be easier,” said Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph).

Many of the evils associated with conference committees are things of the past, said Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls), who has served in the House since 1972. House rules require conference committee reports to contain only those provisions that had been approved by at least one chamber, so that new items cannot get tucked in with little or no scrutiny.

Kahn said the only exception to those rules has been when a governor absolutely insists on adding a proposal into the bill.

And Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview) pointed out that people can vote against a conference committee report. He described an instance when the Republicans were in the minority, yet he persuaded enough of his colleagues to vote “no” because he objected to certain provisions in a bill. The conference committee resumed meeting, and those objections were resolved, he said.

Proponents of the current system say the hard-fought battles between the House and Senate create checks and balances within the Legislature.

But Sviggum said checks and balances historically have come from the existence of three branches of government — executive, legislative, and judicial. He added that the openness of the unicameral system would enhance the role of citizens.

“If you’re comfortable with how you represent your constituents, the more open the better,” he said. “An open process that is accountable to citizens is the best check and balance we can have.”

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), who said the discussion has been too narrow, has introduced two reform plans that provide alternatives to a unicameral legislature.

McElroy said the unicameral debate is critically important because the impacts of changing the size and structure of the Legislature will be felt for many years.

“Clearly this is a multi-generational decision,” he said.

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Balancing act

Legislation attempts to protect private property rights versus expanding community development and infrastructure needs

By DAVID MAEDA

The rights of an individual don't always coincide with what may be in the best interest of the greater community. In the area of private property rights, the two can sometimes collide.

That is what legislation proposed by Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township) is attempting to address. Anderson is sponsoring a bill (HF590) that would establish and enact a "private property protection act" in the state.

Anderson presented his bill Feb. 8 to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, and the plan prompted much debate. The committee took no action on the proposal.

"The right to private property is the guardian of every other right," Anderson said. "It is a travesty that I have to bring this bill to this committee."

Anderson said loss of property rights ultimately means a loss in freedom.

The bill, which is similar to legislation that has been considered across the country, seeks to protect property owners who have been denied use of their property due to government regulation.

Under the proposed private property protection act, the Legislature would recognize actions taken by the state and local units of government may inordinately burden private property rights without amounting to a taking from the property owner.

George Deschenes, an Elk River resident, testified that he has been hurt by government action. He said the city is forcing him to move his business and is not providing fair compensation to find a new location that is as valuable as the old location.

"They are offering a bear market value, not a fair market value," he said.

The city plans to rezone his industrial property to accommodate a mixed-use residential housing area. In effect, Deschenes's property has been condemned, and he is being forced from the land. However, he feels the compensation rate is too low.

The bill would establish a process for determining relief or compensation for a property owner. A property owner suing under the act would submit a written claim to the local government entity with an appraisal of the value of the property. The government body would then be required to notify owners of property bordering the property and other parties.

The governmental entity also would be required to make a settlement offer during the notice period. If a settlement is not reached, a jury would determine the damages.

Mike Podulke, an Olmsted County commissioner, said the board of directors of the Association of Minnesota Counties has concerns about the bill. Among those concerns is that the compensation provisions address anticipated usage and not actual usage.

He said that in compensating one neighbor



Gene Melander becomes emotional as he tells the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee how the government seized his farm over tax issues. Melander had suffered a serious back injury before the trouble started, and he contends the government did not allow adequate opportunity for him to resolve the matter.

for diminished property value, it could then encourage another neighbor to claim that the value was thus diminished, leading to an endless cycle of claims.

"This bill tries to solve a lot of complex problems with a simple solution," Podulke said.

Remi Stone, from the League of Minnesota Cities, said the measure could lead to a large increase of lawsuits against cities. Stone cited several other concerns including that the bill has no implicit provisions for nuisances, contains no exceptions for transportation issues, and has no language for temporary impacts. And, she said, cities would still be liable even when enacting state and federal programs.

"I am an attorney, and I could retire off this bill just by bringing lawsuits against cities," she said.

Richard Stafford, the chair of the Washington County Board, said that property rights issues are not always cut and dried. He said that in some instances a person moves into an area knowing full well the potential development and infrastructure concerns of the area.

"If you see a railroad track, there's probably going to be a train," Stafford said.

He said that recently his county board heard a case where a gravel company that has been doing business in the county for 40 years applied for a permit to expand its mining on property it already owned. He said a neighbor to the gravel pit came forward protesting the application. The person said he had lived there for six months.

"I asked him, 'Didn't you see the gaping hole in the ground?'" Stafford said.

It was an example, he said, of how provisions of Anderson's bill would still hold the county responsible to compensate neighboring homeowners for the decline in their property values. Stafford said that property rights legislation should include a test to validate any actual loss of value and somehow calculate the percentage of responsibilities between established entities and people who have recently moved to the area.

Larry George, the executive director of Oregonians in Action, a nonprofit organization that advocates property rights issues in that state, supported the bill, arguing that governmental entities should establish good working relationships with affected taxpayers from the start to avoid conflicts.

"The people who cannot fight are lower income people affected most by regulation," he said. 

Bricks and mortarboards

Critics of the governor's bonding plan want more for Minnesota colleges

By NICK HEALY

At first glance, it looks like higher education would get a pretty big piece of the pie under the governor's bonding proposal.

But some critics claim the pie itself is too small and Gov. Jesse Ventura's higher education plans just won't cut it, especially considering the amount usually targeted for building projects at colleges and universities.

"This is a time of plenty, and we should be making a commitment to higher education," said Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins) during a Feb. 7 meeting of the House Higher Education Finance Committee.

In that meeting, Department of Finance officials were called to explain the process used

of capital spending and Ventura's recommendation is well short of that.

"Twenty-five percent is nowhere near the historical standard," she said.

Higher education projects actually make up slightly less than 25 percent of the governor's bonding proposal this year.

Ventura's plan calls for \$499 million in capital projects. Through cancellations of old projects worth about \$37 million, the total new spending in his capital budget is \$462 million. To get to that figure, the governor would use \$400 million in general obligation bonding, \$1 million directly from the general fund, \$34 million in user-financed bonds, and \$27 million from the trunk highway fund.

Lee Mehrkens, capital budget coordinator

for the Department of Finance, said the governor focused on the merits of each project — without regard to spending categories such as higher education, transportation, or environment — and aimed to keep capital spending to a minimum.

"When the governor sets forth a \$400 million target, it means we're not going to fund all agency requests," Mehrkens said. "That's just the way it is."

The governor's target of \$400 million in general obligation bonds is based on what the administration claims is the 15-year average for such spending. Ventura also "has a philosophy that we should move the bonding bill back

to a more traditional focus," Mehrkens said.

A total of \$118.3 million would go to higher education projects under Ventura's recommendations. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) institutions would see \$64.3 million in projects, and the University of Minnesota would get \$54 million.

Those numbers come up far short of the \$230 million requested by MnSCU and \$134 million requested by the U of M.

Lawmakers took issue with Ventura's decisions about which projects to fund and raised questions about the criteria he used to make those decisions.

Some committee members questioned why the priorities set by the institutions themselves were not followed.

For example, the U of M submitted a list of its top 10 bonding priorities in order of importance. Ventura recommended funding the first, second, and fourth projects on the list.

Third on the list of the U of M's priorities was a \$21 million plan to replace the Arts Building on the West Bank of the Minneapolis campus.

Leppik said the condition of the existing building is "abysmal," and Folliard wondered why the Microbial and Plant Genomics Building, listed as the university's fourth priority, jumped ahead in line under the governor's plan.

Mehrkens said the governor chose projects that fit the "over-arching themes" of his bonding plan.

"How the project lined up against his criteria was the primary driver of whether a project would be included," Mehrkens said.

Ventura's bonding plan also drew criticism from some lawmakers who argued there is a lack of balance between projects in the Twin Cities area and those in the rest of the state.

MnSCU submitted a request for bond funds to finance more than 20 priorities around the state. The governor's plan includes only four.

Ventura is proposing \$30 million for maintenance projects — from roof repair to replacement of aging boilers — at MnSCU campuses throughout Minnesota. MnSCU requested \$100 million for such purposes as its top priority.

The other three MnSCU requests supported by the governor are all at metropolitan-area campuses.



Laura King, vice chancellor and chief financial officer for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, and Associate Vice Chancellor Allan Johnson present the system's \$230 million bonding request during a Feb. 9 meeting of the House Higher Education Finance Committee.

to assemble the administration's bonding package. The officials were met with criticism and tough questions from lawmakers on the panel.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), who chairs the committee, said higher education projects usually account for about 40 percent

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Panacea or pitfall?

Medical and ethical implications of genetic engineering discussed in Capitol Forum series

By CHRIS VETTER

Advances in biotechnology are like an oncoming train, said Dr. Stephen Joseph. Americans are underestimating the speed of the train, and it cannot be stopped.

“It is an enormously powerful economic engine that is just being born,” Joseph told legislators in a Feb. 9 lecture given as part of the Capitol Forum series. “It’s going to make an unbelievable impact on the 21st Century.”

Joseph, a doctor with the National Center for Genome Resources in New Mexico, discussed the Human Genome Project, through which biologists hope to identify all of the 100,000 genes in human DNA. The project is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Institutes of Health.

“We can understand the genetic sequences that lead to red hair,” he said. “But we don’t understand how the proteins work.”

He added, “It is the Holy Grail for biologists.”

Once the genes and sequences are uncovered, doctors will change the way they perform therapy or diagnose sicknesses, Joseph contends.

“It will change every single facet of biomedicine as we know it,” he said.

While Joseph spoke with passion about the wide array of possibilities that biomedicine advances could bring, he recognized there are moral and ethical dilemmas with the new technology.

He spoke of limits versus choice and limits versus privacy. What do people think of cloning or creating genetically modified organisms, including people? Compared to the tidal wave ahead, the abortion debate is small, Joseph said.

“It is nothing compared to the ethical and religious aspects of genetically-modified ‘us,’” he explained.

This new technology could open the doorway to make a “right weight, right height, or right skin color,” Joseph said. He expressed his



Dr. Stephen Joseph of New Mexico discusses the future of biomedicine and genetics at a Capitol Forum series lecture on Feb. 9.

concern over who determines what those “right” things are. Furthermore, he said, many of the questions about morality will likely fall on state legislators.

Another possible impact of genetic engineering is ‘behavior modification,’ which could include changing a person’s attitudes and conduct.

Legislators should revisit the discussion of eugenics from 90 years ago, Joseph said, when there were open discussions of sterilizing the mentally handicapped.

“They will come back in a more subtle, politically correct way,” he said.

Genotypes could reveal a future genetic disorder, like Lou Gehrig’s disease or Parkinson’s Disease. Gene therapy potentially could remove those genetic disorders before they manifest themselves, Joseph said.

Along with the sudden growth in biomedicine, the advancement in computer science cannot be overlooked, Joseph said. Man would not be able to comprehend all the possibilities of genetic deciphering without the aid of today’s computers.

“It’s too much data, it comes too fast for the human brain,” he said.

Now, he said, biomedicine and computer science are intrinsically linked.

However, all these advances in technology will not lower the cost of health care, Joseph argued. While technological advances have led to falling prices, Joseph said those new technologies are sold en masse to the public. However, biomedicine is geared toward a more centralized, more select group of people, thus, causing higher prices.

While some legislators may fear the advances in technology, Joseph said science cannot be stopped.

In his closing remarks, Joseph suggested the Legislature should create a science or technology organization to turn to for answers.

“Think hard about how you are going to get some help,” he said.

Several legislators said they learned a great deal during the discussion.

“We needed to hear another three hours,” said Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson). “He gave some eye-opening perspectives on where we’ve been and where we’re going in health care.”

Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal), who sits on the House Higher Education Finance Committee, said the discussion showed the importance of having a powerful research engine like the University of Minnesota in the state.

“One of our challenges is to build on that strong research institution,” Carlson said.

The amazing technology advances in the past 100 years make it impossible to guess where biomedicine is going to take us, Carlson said.

Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) said legislators must remember that not all answers come from science. He said some answers have to come from the heart.

“If technology grows faster than our ability to love one another, we will blow ourselves up,” Dehler said. “We will kill each other.”

A state of transition

Urban growth, rural concerns dominate 100 years of Minnesota politics

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

In 1900, the people of Minnesota elected Samuel R. VanSant as governor, in a close race that saw VanSant defeat incumbent John Lind by roughly 2,300 votes.

To many observers at the time, the election signaled a turn-around in Minnesota politics and a move away from the populism of the late 1800s. They were wrong.

Though he had only been governor for two years, what Lind borrowed from the Populists and added to his progressive agenda — particularly the notion of putting the “people” before “special interests” — would define political life in Minnesota for the next 100 years.

And as you listen to today’s political debates at the Capitol, you will hear the same themes still resonating with the people.

The late 1800s and early 1900s proved to be a very dynamic time in the political history of the state. Ballots, especially for the major offices, contained numerous candidates representing many different parties.

New parties, such as the Farmer’s Alliance and the People’s Party, also known as the Populists, sprang out of a depressed farming market in the 1890s, in an effort to combat the rise of the urban, industrial centers.

The progressive movement, which rose early in the 20th Century, would be the one to emphasize the virtue of rural, farming communities. It focused on the need to balance growing national interests of business and industry versus the traditional Minnesota values of rural life.

Agriculture was the dominant portion of Minnesota’s economy at the turn of the century. Forty percent of those employed in Minnesota were working in the agriculture industry in 1900. Most of them — nearly 98 percent — were men.

In fact, more Minnesotans lived in rural areas in 1900 than the state’s cities. Seven out of the 10 largest counties in 1900, in terms of population, were outstate counties.

By 1998, only four of the top 10 most-

populated counties were not part of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. And of the four remaining counties, one is just outside the metro area and the others include cities such as Duluth, Rochester, and St. Cloud.

In addition, the largest cities in the state in 1900, behind Minneapolis and St. Paul, were Duluth, Stillwater, and Mankato — all of which were transportation and commercial hubs for the agriculture market. Cities such as Red Wing, Fergus Falls, Little Falls, Owatonna, and Austin also were ranked high in population.

One hundred years later, only Duluth, Rochester, and St. Cloud could break through the strong population numbers from metro area cities.

It wouldn’t take long for the employment opportunities in the cities to shift population from the rural to the urban areas. A large influx of immigrants looking for work also contributed to the shift.

By 1900, manufacturing industries in Minnesota were carving out their own niche in the state’s economy. About 15 percent of the men in the job market filled manufacturing jobs. And Minnesota led the nation in flour milling, the state’s top manufacturing industry in 1900.

The prevailing rural dominance in Minnesota was evident in the state’s political decisions at the turn of the century. So was the notion that leaders needed to protect rural interests in light of the growth in Minnesota’s urban centers.

Gov. Knute R. Nelson illustrated this in his inaugural speech in 1893.



Gov. Samuel R. VanSant, a Republican from Winona with a flourish, in 1905. He is pictured here delivering one of his many speeches.

“While Minnesota is rapidly developing her vast mineral resources and is fast becoming a great manufacturing state, it is still in pursuit of agriculture that a large plurality of her people are engaged,” he said.

Mines on the Iron Range and railroads throughout the state were growing. As a result, the Legislature enacted taxes on mining, railroads, and businesses to shift some of the tax burdens off farmers in the early 1900s.

Farmers had begun to join the Populist movement during the late 1800s and truly defined an “us-versus-them” platform. However, what Lind did with his candidacy was include the concerns of small town businesses with the grievances of the agriculture community.

Lind’s new progressive movement bucked the trends of big business and banks that were being established in the eastern cities and were slowly moving west. The movement also carried with it a moral agenda, arguing that personal virtues of honesty, fairness, and responsibility should be reflected in professional and political circles, as well.

For instance, officials were already becoming concerned with perceived improprieties involving lobbyists at the Legislature.

“In several of the states, steps have already been taken to exclude the lobbyist from the



Gov. John Lind



ir for oratory, served as governor of Minnesota from 1901 to es.

halls of legislation and eliminate one of the greatest evils to political economy and political decency,” said Gov. John A. Johnson in his 1907 inaugural speech.

Progressive viewpoints would dominate through the 1920s, especially in women’s suffrage and prohibition movements. Candidates from both parties adopted some of the tenets of progressivism, and the Legislature enacted progressive measures despite opposition.

Ultimately, that opposition and fractionalizing within the progressive movement resulted in its demise. However, the reformist viewpoints in the movement continue today in the proposals to reduce the influence of lobbyists, plans to limit the tax burdens on individuals and small businesses, and bills to modify the structure of government.

Despite the volatile nature of politics at the turn of the century and the years that followed, leaders were very optimistic about Minnesota’s position.

Agricultural pursuits were gaining strength after a brief setback. State finance officials had predicted surpluses in revenue during the latter years of the 1890s. Minnesota’s lumber, milling, and meat-packing industries were among the most productive in the nation.

They were also looking forward to the opening of a new State Capitol, which was already under construction in St. Paul.

Overall, the leaders of the day were optimistic about the state’s future. In fact, times were such that Gov. William R. Merriam in

his final biennial address in 1893, warned the Legislature not to pass too many laws.

“It is one of the prevailing evils, if I may be permitted to say so, of all legislation of the present time that there is too great a tendency to seek remedies for ills that are impossible to

cure through legislative enactment,” Merriam said.

“To provide a panacea for every trouble, whether imaginary or real ... must result in clogging the statute books with legal forms utterly impossible of execution.”

Old-world flavor

Celebration marks the re-opening of the restored Capitol cafeteria

Lost for decades underneath layers of paint and plaster, the Capitol cafeteria has re-emerged in nearly its original form.

The Minnesota Historical Society devoted an entire week to celebrating its re-opening Feb. 7 to 11.

The week kicked off with a ribbon-cutting ceremony Monday morning with Gov. Jesse Ventura, Lt. Gov. Mae Schunk, and David Fisher, commissioner of administration.

The cafeteria is known as the Rathskeller, which is the German word for “meeting place” Fisher said. The idea behind the original cafeteria was to give the men of the Legislature — since women weren’t even allowed to vote when the capitol opened in 1905 — a place to relax and discuss matters of policy over leisurely meals, and perhaps a glass of beer and a cigar.

The restoration project, which took nearly two years and cost more than \$2 million, recreated most of the 29 German mottoes and 16 design motifs found on the arched ceilings of the room. It took six months alone to uncover the original artwork and draw replicas to match it.

Several renovation projects over the years had covered up the original designs. Fisher said that during the temperance movement in the early 20th Century, officials decided to change some of the mottoes, which encouraged drinking and leisure time, so that they reflected the virtues of temperance, thought to be more prudent at the time.

Anti-German sentiments during World War I led to the mottoes and German symbols being painted over.

The people who worked on the restoration of the cafeteria used photographs and other historical documents to determine what the artwork looked like and to recreate it.

Conservator Dan Tarnoveanu deliberately chose slightly different colors for the replicas, so it would be clear that they are different from the originals.

Throughout the week, the project architect and art conservator delivered speeches about the project. Staff at the historical society also gave presentations on the history

of the cafeteria and the traditional foods served there.

A German band concert wrapped up the week Friday. German dishes were served at the cafeteria as part of the celebration, as well.

“There’s no other way to gather people together than good food,” said Schunk.

Ventura, in his speech, said he hopes the new cafeteria will foster goodwill among the lawmakers and give them a place to relax in between meetings.

He even joked that the Capitol reporters, with whom he has clashed at times during his term, might benefit from the new design.

“Maybe even the Capitol press corps will be nice to us now that we’ve given them a nice place to go and have lunch,” the governor said.



Gov. Jesse Ventura, right, cuts the ribbon during ceremonies Feb. 7 to open the newly restored Capitol cafeteria. Other officials on hand included, from right, Lt. Gov. Mae Schunk, Nina Archabal, director of the Minnesota Historical Society, Nancy Stark, director of the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, and David Fisher, commissioner of Administration.

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Thursday, Feb. 3**HF2742—Dorman (R)****Taxes**

Sales tax rebate provided and money appropriated.

HF2743—Finseth (R)**Taxes**

Farm rebate provided and money appropriated.

HF2744—Finseth (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Agricultural assistance provided to at-risk farmers based on agricultural use land acreage and money appropriated.

HF2745—Stanek (R)**Crime Prevention**

DWI; repeat DWI offenders provided felony penalties, and incarceration and intensive probation supervision sentencing required.

HF2746—Haake (R)**Crime Prevention**

Predatory offender registration law violations provided increased penalties.

HF2747—Holberg (R)**Crime Prevention**

Felons required to notify prosecuting authorities of name change requests, challenges authorized, proof of name change law compliance required for marriage licenses, and license issuance and dissolution conditions imposed.

HF2748—Fuller (R)**Crime Prevention**

Specified offenders required to register under the predatory offender registration law for life.

HF2749—Holberg (R)**Civil Law**

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

HF2750—Rostberg (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Council on Disability sunset extended.

HF2751—Stanek (R)**Crime Prevention**

Financial institutions provided limited liability for information furnished for investigative purposes, stolen and counterfeit check reporting or transfer provided criminal penalties, and racketeering expanded.

HF2752—Mares (R)**Education Policy**

Department of Children, Families and Learning commissioner's referendum date authority sunset removed.

HF2753—Skoe (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Three additional days of student instruction mandate funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2754—Dorn (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Teacher mentorship programs funded through increased general education revenue and money appropriated.

HF2755—Jennings (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Three additional days of student instruction mandate funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2756—Kelliher (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Intervention programs funded through additional general education revenue and money appropriated.

HF2757—Jennings (DFL)**Commerce**

Biomass power mandate regulated for electric generating facilities using poultry litter as a fuel source.

HF2758—Swenson (R)**Taxes**

Family farm corporations and partnerships specified shareholders authorized to reside off the homestead property.

HF2759—Murphy (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Cloquet Forestry Center sewer and water service upgraded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2760—Abeler (R)**Family & Early Childhood Education Finance**

Adults with disabilities pilot programs reinstated and money appropriated.

HF2761—Rostberg (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Isanti County authorized to publicly and privately sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF2762—Rostberg (R)**Taxes**

Sales and use tax rate reduced.

HF2763—Rostberg (R)**Taxes**

Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2764—Stang (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Firefighters' Relief Association financial report asset threshold increased.

HF2765—Cassell (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Pope/Douglas and Dodge and Olmsted counties materials recovery facilities construction provided; and money appropriated.

HF2766—Cassell (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Secondary vocational education funding reinstated and money appropriated.

HF2767—Kubly (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Fair Ridge Trail in Renville County improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2768—Bishop (R)**Taxes**

Revenue recapture claims time limit specified for eligible spouses.

HF2769—Wilkin (R)**Taxes**

Residential property containing four or more units tax class rates reduced.

HF2770—Wilkin (R)**Taxes**

Metropolitan area fiscal disparities program eliminated.

HF2771—Tomassoni (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Video lottery pilot project authorized and gross receipts allocated to the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and the permanent school fund.

HF2772—Tomassoni (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 2711, Mesabi East, severance levy authorized.

HF2773—Lieder (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 2215, Norman County East, fund transfer authorized.

HF2774—Broecker (R)**Crime Prevention**

Carisoprodol schedule IV controlled substance listing effective date delayed.

HF2775—Kielkucki (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, achievement plus facility construction completed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2776—Johnson (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Spring Lake Park Fire Department member prior service credit purchase in the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) authorized.

HF2777—Stanek (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Annual employer contribution maximum increased for specified retirement plans.

HF2778—Tomassoni (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Business assistance provided to those adversely affected by the lack of snowfall and money appropriated.

HF2779—Mulder (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Nonmetropolitan county prepaid medical assistance program capitation rates increased.

HF2780—Howes (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Tourism loan program appropriated money.

HF2781—Mulder (R)**Taxes**

Wind energy conversion systems assessment required.

HF2782—Wenzel (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Legislative session procedures, and legislator qualifications and terms of office modified; and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2783—Davids (R)**Transportation Finance**

Highway user tax distribution fund money transferred from the general fund, portion allocated for right-of-way acquisition, local bridges replaced and rehabilitated, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2784—Dorman (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Rural Challenge Grant program loan repayments regulated.

HF2785—Rest (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Charitable organization annual report filing requirements modified.

HF2786—Kubly (DFL)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Additional agricultural assistance provided to at-risk multiple farmers on a single farm operation and money appropriated.

HF2787—Erickson (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Total operating capital revenue use for school media centers authorized.

HF2788—Mullery (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Juvenile prostitute patrons and pimps enhanced criminal penalties imposed.

HF2789—Orfield (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minneapolis police chief's appointing authority increased.

HF2790—Boudreau (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped addition and improvements provided, and money appropriated.

HF2791—Abrams (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Hennepin County Human Resources Board and department provisions modified.

HF2792—Hackbarth (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 15, St. Francis, fund transfer authorized.

HF2793—Tunheim (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medical assistance pharmacy dispensing fee increased and demonstration providers required to reimburse pharmacies at or above medical assistance rates.

HF2794—Tunheim (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Dental provider medical assistance reimbursement rate increased.

HF2795—Ness (R)
Taxes
Specified county social service costs special levies authorized.

HF2796—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy
Farm real estate or operations third-party debtor disclosure required and remedies provided.

HF2797—Tunheim (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Dislocated worker program eligibility expanded to include specified working farmers, and dislocated farmers and ranchers training grant provided.

HF2798—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy
Specified feedlot penalty orders alternative uses authorized.

HF2799—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy
Eligible wildlife properties corporate farm law exemption provided.

HF2800—Westrom (R)
Higher Education Finance
University of Minnesota-Morris science building renovation provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2801—Howes (R)
Civil Law
Civil immunity created for placement of water buoys.

HF2802—Smith (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) service credit purchase authorized for an eligible employee who has performed service in the U.S. military.

HF2803—Smith (R)
Civil Law
Court reporters allowed to organize under the Public Employment Labor Relations Act.

HF2804—Kubly (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Lake Lillian community center construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2805—Mulder (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) state aid increased and money appropriated.

HF2806—Howes (R)
Transportation Policy
Motor vehicle deputy registrar fee increased, and clarifying changes made.

HF2807—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Perch; daily and in possession bag limits imposed.

HF2808—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Cass County; Tri-County Leech Lake watershed critical habitat protection provided, bond sale authorized, and money appropriated.

HF2809—Howes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Ah-Gwah-Ching nursing center admissions criteria clarified, and center required to provide information on and promote geriatric rapid assessment stabilization program.

HF2810—Buesgens (R)
Commerce
Financial institutions federal data privacy regulation conformity required and state enforcement provided.

HF2811—Davids (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 495, Grand Meadow, alternative facilities design grant authorized; bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2812—Opatz (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
St. Cloud State University nursing science program funded, and money appropriated.

HF2813—Goodno (R)
Higher Education Finance
Northwest Technical College health science instructional space design, construction and renovation authorized; bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2814—Abeler (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Workers' compensation disability pension offset eliminated for specified public employees.

HF2815—Carruthers (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Hennepin County; specified citation fine proceeds distribution provided.

HF2816—Marko (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Payment of omitted salary deductions to the Public Employees Retirement Association authorized for an employee of Dakota County.

HF2817—Sykora (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Number of children diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) who are taking amphetamine prescription drugs determined, and money appropriated.

HF2818—Opatz (DFL)
Education Policy
Board of Teaching required to report on performance of teacher candidates on reading, writing, and math skills exam and on common core assessments.

HF2819—Cassell (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Stearns County land conveyance authorized.

HF2820—McElroy (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Catalyst grants provided to promote Internet access in rural Minnesota and money appropriated.

HF2821—Solberg (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District Nos. 318, Grand Rapids; 316, Greenway; and 319, Nashwauk-Keewatin; enhanced pairing cooperation and combination aid provided, and money appropriated.

HF2822—Rhodes (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Capitol area site selected for installation of memorial to Minnesota firefighters.

HF2823—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Artificial light use provisions modified during hunting season.

HF2824—Haas (R)
Transportation Policy
One or two license plates provided on collector and similar vehicles at owner's discretion.

HF2825—Haas (R)
Commerce
Local governments prohibited from regulating charges of entities regulated by the commissioner of commerce.

HF2826—Seifert, M. (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minnesota election law procedures clarified and conforming changes made.

HF2827-Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Local government employees correctional plan membership criteria modified relating to retirement.

HF2828-Murphy (DFL)
Taxes
Hermantown local sales and use tax usages authorized.

HF2829-Clark, K. (DFL)
Commerce
Financial institutions required to process checks in numerical sequence during business day unless customer specifies differently.

HF2830-Clark, K. (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Criminal penalties enhanced for pimps and patrons of juvenile prostitution, and programs established to train officers relating to prostitution and to provide shelter and counseling to youth at risk, and money appropriated.

HF2831-Clark, K. (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Commissioner of corrections required to develop a plan for services and transitional housing for Native American women leaving incarceration, and report required.

HF2832-Dempsey (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School district crime prevention activities funding increased, and money appropriated.

HF2833-McGuire (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Data sharing provided between probation officers and school officials for juveniles on probation.

HF2834-McGuire (DFL)
Civil Law
Political subdivision data access provided for purposes of child support and paternity actions, and specified court services data sharing authorized.

HF2835-Marko (DFL)
Transportation Finance
I-494 Wakota Bridge completion funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2836-Rostberg (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
National Guard and organized militia membership eligibility clarified.

HF2837-Boudreau (R)
Civil Law
Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program use required to verify immigration status of applicants for child care assistance and human services assistance.

HF2838-Daggett (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Percentage of moose licenses selected from previously unsuccessful applicants.

HF2839-Storm (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Minnesota Technology, Inc. appropriated money for the e-Business Institute.

HF2840-Cassell (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Workforce identification systems development support provided and money appropriated.

HF2841-Seifert, M. (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Administrative rulemaking regulated and governor's authority to veto rules made permanent.

HF2842-Trimble (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Biological control agents transported into Minnesota regulated.

HF2843-Trimble (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Ramsey County exempted from imposing county conservation fees.

HF2844-Knoblach (R)
Transportation Finance
St. Cloud Department of Transportation facility renovation and addition provided, and money appropriated.

HF2845-Knoblach (R)
Higher Education Finance
St. Cloud Technical College public land and building acquisition and improvement authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2846-Bradley (R)
Commerce
Bleacher safety building code requirements modified.

HF2847-Opatz (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
St. Cloud State University Eastman and Riverview halls building renovation authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2848-Opatz (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
St. Cloud Area Joint Powers Board parks and trails grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2849-Kubly (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Gross income for MinnesotaCare eligibility definition modified.

HF2850-Kubly (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Educational, charitable, and religious organizations fund-raisers provided food establishment requirements exemption.

HF2851-Kalis (DFL)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Farmamerica-Minnesota's agricultural interpretive center in Waseca appropriated money.

HF2852-Kubly (DFL)
Commerce
Public Utilities Commission membership expanded to include two commissioners from Greater Minnesota.

HF2853-Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Sexually transmitted infection prevention efforts appropriated money.

HF2854-Chaudhary (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Alien labor certification program appropriated money.

HF2855-Pelowski (DFL)
Education Policy
Charter schools provided Profile of Learning alternative.

HF2856-Gunther (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Martin County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF2857-Gunther (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
State and county environmental partnership program created for individual sewer treatment system (ISTS) improvements, and money appropriated.

HF2858-Gunther (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Minnesota talented youth math project expanded and money appropriated.

HF2859-Gunther (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Interactive television future levy authority restored to the previously authorized amount and money appropriated.

HF2860-Kalis (DFL)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Farmamerica-Minnesota's agricultural interpretive center in Waseca, accessibility and security improvements provided, and money appropriated.

HF2861-Kalis (DFL)
Taxes
Cemetery upkeep services sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2862-Kalis (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 2860, Blue Earth, type III school van age requirement exemption provided.

HF2863-Kalis (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
St. Clair; Le Sueur River erosion control project grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2864-Entenza (DFL)
Crime Prevention
DWI; repeat DWI offender recreational vehicle operating privileges revoked for a period of time.

HF2865-Mulder (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Luverne border development zone tax incentives authorized, state tax reductions allocated, and money appropriated.

HF2866-Gray (DFL)
Commerce
Home mortgage predatory lending model act adopted.

HF2867-Gray (DFL)
Commerce
Minneapolis authorized to issue an on-sale wine and malt liquor license to Illusion Theatre.

HF2868-Haas (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
MinnesotaCare subsidized insurance account created, and premium and provider taxes repealed.

HF2869—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Public health occupation licensing, registration, and certification requirements modified.

HF2870—Bishop (R)**Ways & Means**

State revenue and expenditure forecast parameters and variables provided, and information sharing with the Legislature required.

HF2871—Juhnke (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Tuition freeze; Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) provided additional revenue for the purpose of offsetting tuition rates, and money appropriated.

HF2872—Juhnke (DFL)**Commerce**

Statewide extended area telephone service provided.

HF2873—Hackbarth (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Anoka County department head time requirements clarified.

HF2874—Carlson (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

General education funding increased for class size reduction and full-day kindergarten, and money appropriated.

HF2875—Orfield (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Business subsidy grant decision review requirements expanded.

HF2876—Orfield (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Patient protection measures established.

HF2877—Peterson (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Attorney general agri-business investigative unit established, “support family farms” license plates authorized, and money appropriated.

HF2878—Skoglund (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Life imprisonment without parole sentence provided to persons causing the intentional and premeditated death of a child under age 14.

HF2879—Mullery (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Specified convicted criminal sexual conduct offenders provided mandatory minimum sentences.

HF2880—Skoglund (DFL)**Civil Law**

County attorney access to private data authorized for commitment proceeding determinations.

HF2881—Rostberg (R)**Education Policy**

Intensive English language program created for students with limited proficiency.

HF2882—Juhnke (DFL)**Education Policy**

Statewide K-12 teacher bargaining unit created and revenue provided.

HF2883—Howes (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Prescription drug discounts regulated and remedies provided.

HF2884—Opatz (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Outdoor advertising and vegetation control regulations modified.

HF2885—Stanek (R)**Judiciary Finance**

Regional public safety training facilities grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2886—Bakk (DFL)**Taxes**

County natural resources land in lieu of tax payment provided inflation adjustment and program administration transferred to the commissioner of revenue.

HF2887—Bakk (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Trophy buck license created.

HF2888—Peterson (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Canoe and boating route marking authorized on a portion of the Chippewa River.

HF2889—Hackbarth (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Archery bows used for bowfishing exempt from casing requirement.

HF2890—Broecker (R)**Judiciary Finance**

Local adult detention facility construction grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2891—Molnau (R)**Transportation Policy**

Motor vehicles sales tax portions deposited in the highway user tax distribution fund and the multi-modal transportation fund, exclusive bus transit ways established, transit improvement financed, and money appropriated.

HF2892—Stanek (R)**Crime Prevention**

Statute of limitations expanded to include homicide and specified criminal sexual conduct.

HF2893—Kelliher (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Minneapolis central library provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2894—Opatz (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

St. Cloud head start community center grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2895—Mulder (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Pipestone County museum grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2896—Paulsen (R)**Crime Prevention**

Predatory offenders failing to comply with registration requirements provided increased criminal penalties and level III sex offender information posted on the Internet.

HF2897—Goodno (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Moorhead State University acquired land improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2898—Rukavina (DFL)**Commerce**

Quad cities joint recreational center authority on-sale liquor license issuance authorized.

HF2899—Nornes (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Lake Milton muskie stocking prohibited.

HF2900—Anderson, B. (R)**Crime Prevention**

High-risk sex offender placement after release regulated.

HF2901—Anderson, B. (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

OSHA; deceased employee next of kin authorized to participate in occupational safety and health citing procedures, and presumptive penalties provided.

HF2902—Opatz (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

St. Cloud State University Centennial Hall renovation planning provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2903—Stang (R)**Taxes**

Fire department purchases sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2904—Johnson (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Watershed management organizations board membership modified.

HF2905—Peterson (DFL)**Judiciary Finance**

Emergency response personnel ruptured gas main and area control training authorized.

HF2906—Peterson (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

University of Minnesota College of Agriculture report to the Legislature required.

HF2907—Daggett (R)**Transportation Finance**

Wadena; Trunk Highway No. 10 reconstruction appropriated money.

HF2908—Carruthers (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Adult court jurisdiction over juvenile nonfelony level traffic offenders provided and dispositional alternatives provided.

HF2909—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Physician assistant supervisory requirement modified for rendering care in disaster situations, medical assistance coverage clarified, and physician assistant advisory council terms limited.

HF2910—Luther (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Registered combined charitable organization definition modified.

HF2911—Mulder (R)**Civil Law**

Foreign and domestic corporation civil action conciliation court venue provided.

HF2912—Mulder (R)**Taxes**

June accelerated sales, liquor, cigarette, and tobacco tax payments abolished.

HF2913—Erickson (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Mille Lacs County nursing home bed moratorium exception provided.

HF2914—Solberg (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

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

HF2915—Juhnke (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Green Lake sanitary sewer and water district wastewater infrastructure funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2916—Erickson (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Mora workforce center elevator provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2917—Nornes (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Parkers Prairie storm water sewer grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2918—Juhnke (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Kandiyohi County alternative care and elderly waiver program medical assistance reimbursement rates increased.

HF2919—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
Domestic fatality review committee required to collect domestic violence death data.

HF2920—Rostberg (R)
Crime Prevention
Juvenile court appearance by interactive video conferencing authorized.

HF2921—Rostberg (R)
Taxes
Prescription drug income tax credit authorized and money appropriated.

HF2922—Entenza (DFL)
Commerce
No call list; specified telephone sales calls regulated and civil remedies provided.

HF2923—Winter (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate extended to eligible dependents and persons over age 65, filing dates extended, and money appropriated.

HF2924—Opatz (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Maternity, prenatal care, and children's health supervision services benefits limitations regulated.

HF2925—Haas (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Osseo and Osseo Volunteer Firefighters Relief Association unplanned liability increases offset, and money appropriated.

HF2926—Clark, K. (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Urban Indian housing program regulated.

HF2927—Tuma (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Inter-County Association group insurance protection authorized.

HF2928—Dawkins (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
MinnesotaCare provider tax exemption provided to chiropractors.

HF2929—Dempsey (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Library facilities grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2930—Seifert, J. (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Woodbury center for the arts construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2931—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate provided in 2000, 1999 rebate eligibility expanded, filing dates extended, agricultural assistance provided to at-risk farmers, and money appropriated.

HF2932—Dorman (R)
Commerce
Bleacher safety requirements modified.

HF2933—Swenson (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Fort Ridgely State Park golf course upgraded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2934—Hasskamp (DFL)
Taxes
Crosslake authorized to impose an additional sales and use tax for wastewater treatment facility improvements.

HF2935—Larsen, P. (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Dental services disclosures and consumer protection requirements clarified, and specified dental benefits disclosures required.

HF2936—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Public and private property entry authorized for the purposes of examinations and surveys, and town cartway costs recovered.

HF2937—Wolf (R)
Commerce
Telecommunications statutes modified and recodified, and money appropriated.

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HF2938—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate provided in 2000, 1999 rebate eligibility expanded, passenger automobile registration tax and levy limits limited, health care premium taxes modified, tax relief and reform account created, and money appropriated.

HF2939—Rhodes (R)
Crime Prevention
Adult court jurisdiction provided over juvenile offenders charged with serious crimes involving firearms.

HF2940—Workman (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Dry cleaner environmental response and reimbursement law modified.

HF2941—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Individual income tax rates reduced, health insurance premium subtraction provided, and corporate franchise tax appointment formulas modified.

HF2942—Daggett (R)
Commerce
Telephone solicitors required to register with the secretary of state.

HF2943—Lenczewski (DFL)
Commerce
Automobile insurance payment for damaged safety glass net cost limit authorized.

HF2944—Swenson (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 2887, McLeod, previous grant provision modified.

HF2945—Sykora (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Safe place for newborns; immunity and anonymity provided for leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms, and procedures established.

HF2946—Lenczewski (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate filing dates extended.

HF2947—Lenczewski (DFL)
Taxes
Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2948—Lenczewski (DFL)
Taxes
Sales and use tax rate reduced.

HF2949—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Solid waste management tax account created and excess revenue adjustment provided.

HF2950—Bishop (R)
Higher Education Finance
University Center, Rochester, horticultural facilities improvements provided; bonds issued; and money appropriated.

HF2951—McCollum (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Minnesota veterans homes maintained and repaired, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2952—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Transportation provisions modified.

HF2953—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Motor vehicle registration and titling provisions, plate impoundment provisions, and interstate commercial vehicle registration modified.

HF2954—Pelowski (DFL)
Civil Law
Law enforcement expanded notice to school chemical abuse pre-assessment teams provided in cases of student drug paraphernalia, alcohol, or tobacco possession.

HF2955—Davids (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Shooting Star Trail completed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2956—Tingelstad (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
University of Minnesota Raptor Center expanded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2957—Kuisle (R)
Taxes
Correctional facilities construction materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2958—Mahoney (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Persons escaping after lawful arrest prior to trial proceedings charged with escape from custody.

HF2959—Sykora (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Child care assistant classification established for licensing and employment purposes.

HF2960—Skoe (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 309, Park Rapids, facilities grant authorized and money appropriated.

HF2961—Skoe (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 25, Pine Point, new K-8 facility constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2962—Haas (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Seizure and administrative forfeiture of firearms and abandoned property provided, trespass citation authority and vehicle forfeiture provisions modified, peace officer definition modified, penalties provided, and money appropriated.

HF2963—Peterson (DFL)
Judiciary Finance
Drug task force education measures appropriated money.

HF2964—Pugh (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Passenger automobile and hearse additional registration tax rate reduced, and motor vehicle sales tax revenue distributed.

HF2965—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Two Harbors marina and harbor of refuge developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2966—Gunther (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Multicultural development grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2967—Seifert, J. (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Health care facilities specified employees wage increase provided and money appropriated.

HF2968—Mullery (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Veterans homes support test not to include sales tax rebates or refunds.

HF2969—Tuma (R)
Higher Education Finance
Certified public accountant licensing requirements modified.

HF2970—Lenczewski (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Senior drug program eligibility expanded and money appropriated.

HF2971—Tuma (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) prior service credit purchase authorized for private American schools located in foreign countries.

HF2972—Jaros (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) and Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) general state employees retirement plan members prior and uncredited interim military service credit purchase authorized.

HF2973—Davids (R)
Commerce
Financial institution loan charges and payments regulated, and technical changes provided.

HF2974—Davids (R)
Commerce
National Association of Insurance Commissioners model legislation conforming state statute changes provided.

HF2975—Rukavina (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Evtac Mining Company in St. Louis County re-employment insurance claimants provided additional benefits and requirement exemption provided.

HF2976—Hilty (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Mash-Ka-Wisen Treatment Center youth alcohol wing constructed and money appropriated.

HF2977—Peterson (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
State parks account and citizens council created, and lottery ticket in lieu taxes credited to the game and fish fund and natural resources fund.

HF2978—Haas (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
State park reduced fee age requirement eligibility lowered.

HF2979—Abeler (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Compensation definition modified for the purposes of public employment retirement annuities limitations.

HF2980—Haas (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Opening fishing season modified.

HF2981—Rostberg (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Supervisory or confidential emergency medical services employees or 911 system dispatchers representation by the same exclusive representatives as non-supervisory and non-confidential employees authorized.

HF2982—Koskinen (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Senior drug program eligibility expanded, age and asset limitations removed, simplified application form required, and money appropriated.

HF2983—Nornes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Community nursing facilities starting minimum wages equal to those at Minnesota veterans homes and money appropriated.

HF2984—Abrams (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Lake Minnetonka public access site acquisition provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2985—Rukavina (DFL)
Taxes
Property tax levy limit calculation modified for the purposes of eliminating specified mining tax distribution deduction.

HF2986—Kubly (DFL)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Farm advocates program appropriated money.

HF2987—Pelowski (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Winona State University science building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2988—Harder (R)
Taxes
Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2989—Harder (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Farm pollution run-off research appropriated money.

HF2990—Lenczewski (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Harassment restraining order violators provided felony penalties for intent to tamper with an investigation or retaliate against a peace officer.

HF2991—Swenson (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
State park additions and deletions provided.

HF2992—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Child care licensing exclusions expanded.

HF2993—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Predatory offender registration law violator information disclosure authorized.

HF2994—Fuller (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Ambulance service and EMT requirements modified.

HF2995—Fuller (R)
Crime Prevention
DWI; driving while impaired crimes and provisions recodified and simplified.

HF2996—Wolf (R)
Commerce
Electric utilities required to provide cost and fuel information to utility customers.

HF2997—Haas (R)
Commerce
Fraternal benefit society board membership modified.

HF2998—Broecker (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Ramsey County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF2999—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State employees health care reimbursement fund created.

HF3000—Seifert, M. (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Administrative rules sunset provided and governmental operations committees authorized to formally object to rules.

HF3001—Milbert (DFL)
Commerce
Fire insurance; failure to provide timely proof of loss regulated.

HF3002—Hasskamp (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Pequot Lakes Trailside Information Center grant provided and money appropriated.

HF3003—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
Department of Corrections fugitive apprehension unit created.

HF3004—Solberg (DFL)
Taxes
Maple syrup equipment sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3005—Pelowski (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Winona State University Maxwell Library renovated, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3006—Mares (R)
Crime Prevention
High-risk juvenile sex offender community notification provided, court authority provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF3007—Mares (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School district safety and health levy equalization expanded, and revenue use to include student safety.

HF3008—Koskinen (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Persons leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms not prosecuted, hospital duties specified, and liability immunity provided.

HF3009—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Pistol and semiautomatic military-style assault weapon transfers at gun shows prohibited without a background check.

HF3010—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Predatory offender registration law retroactive application provided.

HF3011—Swenson (R)
Transportation Finance
Rail service improvement program grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3012—Ozment (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Dakota County snowmobile trails grant-in-aid pilot program created.

HF3013—Anderson, I. (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Minimum secondary and elementary sparsity revenue provided.

HF3014—Fuller (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District Nos. 38, Red Lake; 115, Cass Lake; 299, Caledonia; 306, Laporte; and 914, Ulen-Hitterdahl, maximum effort capital loans authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3015—Peterson (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Clara City water quality improvement grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3016—Stang (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Contiguous city or town annexation to a city or town contiguous to a hospital district authorized.

HF3017—Biernat (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minnesota World War II merchant marine honorary plaque placed on the capital grounds.

HF3018—Entenza (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Voluntary, full-day kindergarten funding established and money appropriated.

HF3019—Knoblach (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Phoenix treatment and behavior change program employment service credit transferred from the General State Employee Retirement Plan to the Correctional Retirement Plan.

HF3020—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Long-term care provisions modified.

HF3021—Wejcman (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Maltreatment of minors reporting expanded to include additional persons, failure to report provided increased criminal penalties, and fourth degree assault expanded to include assault of uniform security personnel.

HF3022—Westfall (R)
Agriculture Policy
Animal feedlot rules delayed implementation and enforcement provided.

HF3023—Broecker (R)
Crime Prevention
Lawful gambling fraud defined and felony penalties imposed.

HF3024—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Tax and revenue recapture provisions corrected and administrative changes provided, and attorney general authorized to compromise specified fees.

HF3025—Stanek (R)
Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy
Part-time Metropolitan Transit police officers provided pension coverage.

HF3026—Cassell (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Police or salaried firefighter prior service credit purchase in the Public Employees Police and Fire Plan authorized.

HF3027—Westfall (R)
Commerce
Retailers required to provide items free of charge if scanned price is greater than marked price and exceptions provided.

HF3028—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Individual income tax long-term capital gain exclusion authorized.

HF3029—Dempsey (R)
Crime Prevention
Per diem cost of housing juveniles to be shared by counties and the Department of Corrections.

HF3030—Seagren (R)
Transportation Policy
Truck traffic prohibited on Hennepin County Road No. 1 between Trunk Highway No. 169 and Flying Cloud Drive.

HF3031—Dehler (R)
Transportation Policy
School bus stops in cul-de-sacs authorized.

HF3032—McCullum (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Municipalities definition expanded to include counties for the purpose of highway routing and construction provisions.

HF3033—Dehler (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Additional local sales and use taxes approval by specified voters required.

HF3034—Hackbarth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Carlos Avery Wildlife Management Area north metro headquarters repaired, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3035—Erickson (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislature size modified, committee organization conditions provided, leadership terms limited, member terms modified, and term limits provided.

HF3036—Juhnke (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Employee electronic monitoring notification required.

HF3037—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Criminal sexual conduct offenses and solicitation offenses prosecution jurisdiction provided in state of origin or termination.

HF3038—Mares (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 832, Mahtomedi, fund transfer authorized.

HF3039—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Wadena County provided a one-time penalty exemption to truth-in-taxation requirements and previous year's levy authorized.

HF3040—Stanek (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers Retirement Association (TRA), and Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth Teachers Retirement Fund associations retirement annuity formula computation modified.

HF3041—Leppik (R)
Commerce
Paint ball guns sale, rental, discharge, and possession regulated; and criminal penalties imposed; and remedies provided.

HF3042—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Tax policy modified and administrative changes provided.

HF3043—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Tax information sample data study provided and specified tax preparers authorized to file electronically.

HF3044—Dehler (R)
Taxes
Income tax long-term care insurance credit inflation protection requirement removed.

HF3045—Dehler (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Public trails construction, administration, and use requirements established.

HF3046—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Resident and nonresident hunting and fishing license fees modified.

HF3047—Kuisle (R)
Civil Law
Title insurance mortgage release certificate language modified to include assignment of rents and profits.

HF3048—Nornes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
New medical assistance case-mix system based on federal minimum data set transition time lines provided; and education, training, and report required.

HF3049—Bishop (R)
Crime Prevention
Predatory offender registration and penalty provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF3050—Ness (R)
Taxes
Retailers accelerated June sales tax liability underpayment penalty repealed and interest modified.

HF3051—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Senior drug program asset limit increased and money appropriated.

HF3052—Solberg (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Itasca County medical assistance prepayment demonstration project participation extended.

HF3053—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Collector vehicles authorized to display a blue light as part of rear brakes.

HF3054—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Ambulance driver requirements modified and local units of government required to reimburse additional requirements for ambulance services costs.

HF3055—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Ring dike construction appropriated money.

HF3056—Finseth (R)
Agriculture Policy
Farm wrap and rural help network organization grants provided for farm family assistance, and money appropriated.

HF3057—McElroy (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Business subsidy provisions clarified.

HF3058—Dehler (R)
Crime Prevention
Trespass definition expanded to include returning to the property after being told not to return.

HF3059—Finseth (R)
Crime Prevention
Harassment by electronic means prohibited and harassment crime clarified.

HF3060—Sykora (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Human services licensing tort liability exclusion and indemnification of municipalities provided.

HF3061—Mares (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Intermediate school districts authorized to sell and issue bonds under specified conditions.

HF3062—Leppik (R)
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System (MnSCU) and intermediate school districts coordinating facilities and program planning grant authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3063—Mares (R)
State Government Finance
Mighty Kids: children and adolescent recreational programs appropriated money.

HF3064—Jaros (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
St. Louis County nursing home renovation approval deadline extended and rate setting modified.

HF3065—Finseth (R)
Agriculture Policy
Gray wolf management provided and criminal penalties imposed.

HF3066—Seifert, J. (R)
Commerce
Secretary of state fees and annual corporate registrations regulated, digital signature technical changes provided, and specified nonprofits extended.

HF3067—Erickson (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Kathio, South Harbor, and Isle Harbor underground injection control memorandum of understanding provisions administered by the Pollution Control Agency.

HF3068—Mahoney (DFL)
Commerce
Tobacco products vending machine sales clarified.

HF3069—Wenzel (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Little Falls Mississippi River cleanup and building demolition provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3070—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
800-MHZ trunked radio system source code access and two vendors required.

HF3071—Huntley (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Seaway Port Authority of Duluth warehouse grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3072—Kubly (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Olivia Agricultural Innovation Center established, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3073—Solberg (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Fort Snelling building No. 17 restored for use as an international hostel, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3074—Hausman (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Ramsey County soccer fields acquired and improved, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

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HF3075—Paulsen (R)
Crime Prevention
Insurance tax laws recodified, civil and criminal penalties imposed, and money appropriated.

HF3076—Seifert, J. (R)
Commerce
Auto glass repair, replacement, and insurance claims practices regulated; and remedies provided.

HF3077—Koskinen (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded and name changed to prescription drug program.

HF3078—Rukavina (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Mesabi Range Community and Technical College, Eveleth campus, firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical services training facility constructed; bonds issued; and money appropriated.

HF3079—Koskinen (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Nursing facility salary adjustment per diem modified.

HF3080—Skoe (DFL)
Taxes
Agricultural production and farm machinery definitions expanded to include maple syrup harvesting and machinery for the purpose of sales and use tax provisions.

HF3081—Storm (R)
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State University, Mankato improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3082—Tuma (R)
Higher Education Finance
Higher education facilities authority bonding authority increased.

HF3083—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Permanent school fund lands exchanged for revenue producing state lands and lost revenue reimbursed.

HF3084—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Lake County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF3085—Bishop (R)
Crime Prevention
Judicial branch, criminal justice technology infrastructure improvements and grants, community corrections act subsidy grants, and sex offender supervision caseload reduction grants funding provided; and money appropriated.

HF3086—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Gitche-Gami State Trail developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3087—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Nonprofit motor vehicle purchases and leases sales and use tax, and motor vehicle sales tax exemption provided.

HF3088—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Gun control law crime of violence definition expanded to include felony theft.

HF3089—Tomassoni (DFL)
Taxes
Income tax long-term care insurance credit modified.

HF3090—Kahn (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Mississippi Whitewater Trail public waters work permit exemption provided, white water course constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3091—Tomassoni (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Motor vehicles driven in the right-hand lane requirement clarified, exceptions provided, and money appropriated.

HF3092—Greiling (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislative open meeting law expanded to include caucuses and conference committee negotiations.

HF3093—Orfield (DFL)
Taxes
Metropolitan revenue distribution act expanded to include Chisago, Isanti, Sherburne, and Wright counties.

HF3094—Mulder (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Pipestone County museum grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3095—Knoblach (R)
Capital Investment
Bonding bill public improvements of a capital nature, previous specified projects reduced or eliminated, bond issuance authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3096—Storm (R)
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) increased enrollment efforts appropriated money.

HF3097—Tingelstad (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Healthful school buildings: indoor air quality improved, portable classroom use limited, and operating capital revenue portion reserved for facilities purposes.

HF3098—Leppik (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School district training and experience revenue phaseout restricted.

HF3099—Hilty (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Constitutional office of commissioner of agriculture created and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3100—Hilty (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Moose Lake State Park geological interpretive center constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3101—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Individual income tax long-term capital gain exclusion authorized.

HF3102—Molnau (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Specified labor agreements ratified, Groups I and II salary limits modified, and public employment labor relations act technical changes provided.

HF3103—Sykora (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Excluded adult foster care provider right to seek licensure established, tribal licensing agencies provided access to criminal history data, and county agency tort liability licensing exception clarified.

HF3104—Sykora (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Churches and religious organizations authorized to operate child day care programs, and adherence to group and family day care rules required.

HF3105—Hasskamp (DFL)
Civil Law
Indigent persons represented by legal aid offices conflicts or interest studied by court-appointed attorney task force.

HF3106—Dorn (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State University, Mankato student athletic facilities phase II renovation authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3107—Greiling (DFL)
Civil Law
Civil commitment relative notification provided, minor voluntary treatment consent provisions modified, and early intervention provisions modified.

HF3108—Davids (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Lanesboro Theater and Arts Center grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3109—Davids (R)
Commerce
Uniform electronic transactions act adopted.

HF3110—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission exhibition participation provision repealed.

HF3111—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Transit zone taxation qualifications clarified.

HF3112—Broecker (R)
Crime Prevention
Predatory offender registration information inclusion on offender's driving record required and offender registration system data transfer between state agencies authorized.

HF3113—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Pharmacies permitted an additional nationally certified pharmacy technician.

HF3114—Lieder (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Polk County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF3115—Dorman (R)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate filing dates extended.

HF3116—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Tax increment financing district reporting requirements modified.

HF3117—Mahoney (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
St. Paul Phalen corridor initiative west segment construction gap financing grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3118—Otremba (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Abortion informed consent required and civil remedies provided.

HF3119—Bishop (R)
Civil Law
Children in need of protection representation by public defenders and court-appointed counsel limited to minors age 10 and older.

HF3120—Abeler (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Charter schools and nonresident districts not to receive referendum equalization aid.

HF3121—Howes (R)
Commerce
Insurance coverage, notice and filing requirements, and rate increase disclosures provided; and motor vehicle insurance contracts and workers' compensation self-insurance regulated.

HF3122—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medical assistance, general assistance, MinnesotaCare, and other health care program provisions modified.

HF3123—Larsen, P. (R)
Education Policy
Charter school students authorized to participate in school district sponsored extracurricular activities.

HF3124—Osskopp (R)
Civil Law
Court-ordered child visitation enforcement provided and penalties imposed by courts authorized.

HF3125—Seifert, M. (R)
Higher Education Finance
Southwest State University library renovation designed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3126—Greiling (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Campaign finance reform provided, criminal penalties imposed, and money appropriated.

HF3127—Seifert, M. (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Campaign finance reform provided, publicly subsidized candidates prohibited from accepting political committee or fund contributions, state money allocation modified, and income tax checkoff modified.

HF3128—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Noncompliant Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) recipient sanctions and program eligibility requirements modified.

HF3129—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medical assistance income standard increased.

HF3130—Koskinen (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
School district equity revenue program increased and money appropriated.

HF3131—Osthoff (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
MTBE: gasoline blended with the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether sale prohibited in the state of Minnesota.

HF3132—Storm (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Security deposit interest rates provided.

HF3133—Reuter (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Elected officials who move from their districts removal and replacement provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3134—Ozment (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Metropolitan mosquito control commission authority to enter specified state lands limited.

HF3135—Nornes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Dog field trial land acquired and developed.

HF3136—Biernat (DFL)
Commerce
Theater on-sale intoxicating liquor, wine, and malt liquor licenses authorized.

HF3137—Biernat (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Peace officer assault provided increased criminal penalties.

HF3138—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Lottery tickets in lieu of sales tax receipts dedicated for natural resources purposes.

HF3139—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Utility company property valuation proceedings and appeals provided.

HF3140—Ness (R)
Higher Education Finance
Ridgewater Community and Technical College asbestos removal and other improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3141—Trimble (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
School safety capital improvements grants authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3142—Swenson (R)
Transportation Policy
Trunk Highway No. 4 designated as Richard J. Mathiowetz Memorial Highway.

HF3143—Dorn (DFL)
Education Policy
School district-sponsored choice magnet schools created, start-up grants authorized, location approval required, and sponsorship denial appeals provided.

HF3144—Lindner (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Dayton wastewater infrastructure program grant provided, bond issuance authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3145—Swenson (R)
Transportation Policy
School bus transportation, driver's license endorsement, and training provisions modified.

HF3146—Skoe (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Tribally owned housing and housing development projects subject to shelter charges.

HF3147—Greiling (DFL)
Education Policy
Graduation standards, Profile of Learning implementation, graduation rules, and length of school year modified.

HF3148—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Group residential housing expenditures study and report required.

HF3149—Holberg (R)
Civil Law
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) information tort liability exception provided.

HF3150—McElroy (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Dakota County Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) diversionary assistance pilot project established and money appropriated.

HF3151—Jennings (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) military service credit purchase provided.

HF3152—Kuisle (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Governmental units removed from corrections industry procurement requirements, uniform municipal contracting law specified dollar limits increased, cooperative purchasing exemption provided, and county credit card purchases authorized.

HF3153—Skoe (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Big Bog state recreation area established in Beltrami County, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3154—Lieder (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Norman County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF3155—Cassell (R)
Taxes
Sales, liquor, cigarette, and tobacco tax June accelerated payments eliminated.

HF3156—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Trunk Highway No. 390 on Interstate Highways I-35 designated and marked as the "34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division Highway."

HF3157—Stanek (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Specified tribal police officers exercising state arrest powers provided pension coverage.

HF3158—Dawkins (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Ramsey County conservation fee funds retained in county general fund.

HF3159—Seifert, M. (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Telecommunication access grant funding provided through reallocation of appropriations.

HF3160—Pugh (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Debt service equalization aid funding increased, new school buildings property tax levy lowered, and money appropriated.

HF3161—Harder (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Minnesota River Basin Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program projects funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3162—Buesgens (R)
Education Policy
Charter school sponsors expanded to include charitable organizations, and parents included in charter school board majority.

HF3163—Dorman (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Blazing Star State Trail Bridge construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3164—Larsen, P. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Washington County housing and redevelopment authority membership increased.

HF3165—Carlson (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Capital improvements authorized at specified Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3166—Ozment (R)
Taxes
Filing deadline extended for 1999 agricultural assistance aid.

HF3167—Ozment (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Wildlife management areas designated, state forest lands expanded, and all-terrain vehicle use authorized in certain wildlife management areas.

HF3168—Cassell (R)
Agriculture Policy
Specified food standards updated to provide federal conformity.

HF3169—Gerlach (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Dakota County additional personnel board of appeals member authorized.

HF3170—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Rochester nursing facility rate adjustment provided.

HF3171—Trimble (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
St. Paul capital projects authorized including Willard Munger Trail connection, Upper Landing Park development, Raspberry Island improvements, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3172—Swenson (R)
Agriculture Policy
Rural finance authority loan programs eligibility and maximum loan amounts modified.

HF3173—Westfall (R)
Agriculture Policy
Board of grain standards meeting provisions and duties modified, and specified grain fees clarified.

HF3174—Swenson (R)
Agriculture Policy
Dairy product adulteration penalties modified.

HF3175—Sykora (R)
Taxes
Personal and dependent income tax exemption subtraction provided.

HF3176—Boudreau (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Unfunded county child protection mandates repealed.

HF3177—Westerberg (R)
State Government Finance
National Sports Center sports conference center construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

- HF3178—Knoblach (R)**
Higher Education Finance
St. Cloud State University capital improvements at Lawrence Hall, Riverview Hall, and Eastman Hall, and redesign of a new athletic facility authorized; bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3179—Folliard (DFL)**
Education Policy
Profile of Learning content standards distribution and time line implementation clarified, scoring criteria and record keeping practices determined, and money appropriated.
- HF3180—McGuire (DFL)**
Commerce
Sale or rental of restricted video games to minors under age 17 prohibited, display practices regulated, remedies provided, and study and report required.
- HF3181—McGuire (DFL)**
Crime Prevention
Firearms; civil cause of action provided for negligible manufacture or sale of firearms.
- HF3182—Paymar (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
St. Paul; Highway No. 5 landscaping improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3183—Anderson, I. (DFL)**
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Itasca County previous land conveyance modified.
- HF3184—McCollum (DFL)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Ramsey County alternative waiver and elderly waiver maximum rate for services state conformity provided.
- HF3185—Osthoff (DFL)**
Transportation Policy
Local governments authorized to vary speed limits on specified roads and request variances from engineering standards.
- HF3186—Trimble (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Minnesota Council for Quality grant authorized, and money appropriated.
- HF3187—Mulder (R)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Midwifery requirements and definitions modified.
- HF3188—Tingelstad (R)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Special transportation services medical assistance reimbursement study required.
- HF3189—Mulder (R)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Luverne Carnegie Cultural Center capital improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3190—Tomassoni (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Iron Range Resource and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) capital improvement projects authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3191—Mulder (R)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Lake Benton visitor center and railroad depot grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3192—Swenson (R)**
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Regional development commission grants and regional planning funds authorized, and money appropriated.
- HF3193—Fuller (R)**
Health & Human Services Finance
Beltrami County hospital construction moratorium exception provided.
- HF3194—Fuller (R)**
Higher Education Finance
American Indian history center and museum construction initiation deadline postponed.
- HF3195—Leppik (R)**
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
University of Minnesota excepted from the designer selection board selection process.
- HF3196—Osskopp (R)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Nursing facility employee pension benefit costs treated as PERA contributions.
- HF3197—Solberg (DFL)**
Education Policy
Naswauk-Keewatin High School joint public library project levy clarified.
- HF3198—Goodno (R)**
Higher Education Finance
Tuition waivers for employees of qualifying health care and human services providers authorized, and money appropriated.
- HF3199—Rostberg (R)**
State Government Finance
State Armory Building Commission bond limit increased.
- HF3200—Stanek (R)**
Transportation Policy
Driver's license photograph access allowed to businesses under certain circumstances.
- HF3201—Seagren (R)**
K-12 Education Finance
Special education funding deficiency additional revenue authorized, and money appropriated.
- HF3202—Wilkin (R)**
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Coroner, deputy coroner, coroner's investigator, and medical examiner compensation provisions clarified.
- HF3203—Clark, K. (DFL)**
Crime Prevention
Fatal hit and run accident penalties increased while driving recklessly or while impaired.
- HF3204—Gunther (R)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Redevelopment account funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3205—Rest (DFL)**
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Impacted communities low income housing aid increased.
- HF3206—Rifenberg (R)**
Education Policy
Rural teacher education loan forgiveness program created and money appropriated.
- HF3207—Knoblach (R)**
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Partition fence law repealed.
- HF3208—Dawkins (DFL)**
Civil Law
Residential real estate held in trust homestead treatment clarified, appeal periods consistency provided, and specified uniform probate code provisions modified.
- HF3209—Seifert, J. (R)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Health care cost containment major commitment expenditure report requirements modified.
- HF3210—Abrams (R)**
Judiciary Finance
Supreme Court, court of appeals, and district court appropriated money.
- HF3211—Mulder (R)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota utilization review act and practice of medicine definition modified.
- HF3212—Tingelstad (R)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Home care and personal care provider transportation expense reimbursement studied.
- HF3213—Ozment (R)**
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Heritage forest areas established in specified counties, timber provisions modified, and recreational area public use rules modified.
- HF3214—Knoblach (R)**
Agriculture Policy
Partition fence law applicability limited.
- HF3215—Gunther (R)**
Agriculture Policy
Swine pseudorabies control program appropriated money.
- HF3216—Anderson, I. (DFL)**
K-12 Education Finance
School district outstanding capital loan bond sale limitation modified.
- HF3217—Cassell (R)**
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Central Lakes Trail improved and developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3218—Howes (R)**
Commerce
Tobacco compliance checks requirement that minors be used eliminated.
- HF3219—Osskopp (R)**
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Paddlewheel location and prize requirements modified, and lawful gambling organizations authorized to pay for premises.
- HF3220—Smith (R)**
Civil Law
Common interest ownership communities, certificates of value, and redemptions of realty technical changes provided; and procedural requirements modified.
- HF3221—Wagenius (DFL)**
Crime Prevention
Criminal and juvenile justice information policy group membership modified, data group created, technology infrastructure improvements authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3222—Rhodes (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Health-related boards reporting requirements modified and health professionals services program committee membership requirements modified.

HF3223—Haas (R)**Commerce**

State of Minnesota made a comprehensive health association contributing member in respect of self-insured employee health plans and money appropriated.

HF3224—Larson, D. (DFL)**Commerce**

Consumer right to privacy, confidentiality, and secrecy of financial records provided; consumer authorization for records exchange or disclosure required; and civil remedies and penalties imposed.

HF3225—Gerlach (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Health maintenance organization personal information disclosure circumstances specified.

HF3226—Nornes (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Nursing home survey process procedure developed.

HF3227—Dawkins (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

St. Paul; Pierce Butler Avenue relocated and extended, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3228—Rukavina (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Public employment labor relations fair share fee to apply to charitable hospital exclusive representatives and employees.

HF3229—Abrams (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Hennepin County obligations payment by electronic transfer or credit card provided.

HF3230—Koskinen (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Public higher education system exempt from debt service costs.

HF3231—Seagren (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

General education, special programs, lifework development, facilities and technology, education excellence, nutrition programs, and libraries provisions modified.

HF3232—Goodno (R)**Civil Law**

Business corporation and limited liability company shareholder and member rights regulated, director and governor conflicts of interest notification clarified, and share purchasing and contribution allowance agreements regulated.

HF3233—Carruthers (DFL)**Taxes**

Sales tax rebate provided in 2000, 1999 rebate eligibility expanded, filing dates extended, agricultural assistance provided to at-risk farmers, and money appropriated.

HF3234—Abrams (R)**Taxes**

Sales and use tax law recodified, and provisions clarified.

HF3235—Hackbarth (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Policy**

Joint labor-management safety committee requirements modified to apply to standard industrial classified employers.

HF3236—Mulder (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Vital record certified copy issuance provisions modified.

HF3237—Dempsey (R)**Education Policy**

Expelled students prohibited from participating in the enrollment options program.

HF3238—Swenson (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Farm equipment manufacturers and dealers regulated.

HF3239—Finseth (R)**Taxes**

Polk County increased levy limit base provided.

HF3240—Finseth (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Agricultural land set aside and payment program established, and money appropriated.

HF3241—Otremba (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Animal feedlot rules delayed implementation and enforcement provided.

HF3242—Otremba (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Senior drug program eligibility expanded and qualified Medicare beneficiaries asset limits increased.

HF3243—Otremba (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Secondary vocational education funding extended for one year and money appropriated.

HF3244—Otremba (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Minnesota Care income and asset provisions modified.

HF3245—Otremba (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Secondary vocational education funding reinstated and money appropriated.

HF3246—Osskopp (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Card club table number limitation clarified.

HF3247—Goodno (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Nursing facilities authorized to place licensed beds on layaway status and medical assistance reimbursement adjusted.

HF3248—Goodno (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) maintenance of effort (MOE) expenditures specified and legislative advisory commission review of spending procedures provided.

HF3249—Hausman (DFL)**Transportation Finance**

Metropolitan Council transit appropriated money.

HF3250—Greenfield (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Vulnerable adult maltreatment determinations review and reconsideration rights specified.

HF3251—Rukavina (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Recreational gold prospecting authorized and restrictions provided.

HF3252—Huntley (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

University of Minnesota, Duluth, Bulldog sports center constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3253—Huntley (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

University of Minnesota, Duluth, music performance laboratory constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3254—Huntley (DFL)**Taxes**

Aircraft shipped to a purchaser outside Minnesota sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3255—Jaros (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

County capital improvements definition expanded to include historical society, museum, and cultural and art centers.

HF3256—Swapinski (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Motor vehicle registration application filing fee increased and provisions clarified.

HF3257—Jennings (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Sanitary district annexation study expenses payment requirements modified.

HF3258—Larson, D. (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport impact mitigation planning provided, impact zones and tax increment financing districts established, airport impact mitigation fund created, and money appropriated.

HF3259—Seifert, J. (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Metro greenways and natural areas grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3260—Olson (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Lake improvement district provisions modified.

HF3261—Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

Residential homestead property tax classification rates modified.

HF3262—Westfall (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Stream maintenance grant program appropriated money.

HF3263—Swapinski (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Duluth human rights commission additional powers authorized or new commission established.

HF3264—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Minnesota Program Development, Inc. in northeastern Minnesota domestic abuse intervention program facilities grant provided and money appropriated.

HF3265—Swapinski (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Fond du Lac area water and sanitary sewer service improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3266—Huntley (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Duluth/North Shore sanitary district improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3267—Kubly (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Feedlots with under 300 animal units exempted from regulation.

HF3268—Leppik (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Metropolitan regional park acquisition and betterment authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3269—Jaros (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Duluth Lake Superior College multipurpose recreation complex authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3270—Jaros (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Spirit Mountain Recreation Authority improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3271—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy
Feedlot permit obligations disclosure and timely permit issuance required, and remedies provided for permit denied.

HF3272—Swapinski (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local excise tax on motor vehicles limited.

HF3273—Swapinski (DFL)
Taxes
Sales and use tax exemption provided sales to political subdivisions of the state.

HF3274—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Utility-owned vehicles exempted from specified weight restrictions.

HF3275—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Special limits for nursing facility bed limit moratorium exceptions provision clarified.

HF3276—Juhnke (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Regional treatment center surplus building use study required.

HF3277—Juhnke (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Adult foster care rate-setting methods advisory task force established, and report required.

HF3278—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Seniors' agenda for independent living program expanded, congregate housing services project administration modified, and money appropriated.

HF3279—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Prepaid medical assistance capitation rates for non-metropolitan counties increased.

HF3280—Ozment (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Recovered material and environmental factors in state purchasing modified.

HF3281—Boudreau (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State building energy code authority transferred to commissioner of administration.

HF3282—Hackbarth (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Secondary vocational education funding extended one additional year, and money appropriated.

HF3283—Otremba (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 787, Browerville, fund transfer authorized.

HF3284—Otremba (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Pharmacists not disciplined for refusing to dispense prescriptions for moral or religious reasons.

HF3285—Lindner (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Wage payment provisions modified, and employers prohibited from charging employees or applicants for background checks and specified training.

HF3286—Knoblach (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Respite care for family adult foster care providers legislative proposals developed.

HF3287—Boudreau (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and Blind improvements grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3288—Fuller (R)
State Government Finance
Bemidji headwaters science center constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3289—Biernat (DFL)
State Government Finance
Minneapolis northeast culture and fitness campus constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3290—Dorman (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Specified discrimination complaint communications classified as privileged.

HF3291—Dorman (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Owatonna heritage halls appropriated money.

HF3292—Dorman (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
MTBE; gasoline blended with the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether sale prohibited in the state of Minnesota.

HF3293—Kielkucki (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Public school employees mandatory statewide health care plan studied and money appropriated.

HF3294—Carlson (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) increased enrollment efforts appropriated money.

HF3295—Mulder (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Rock County bicycle and pedestrian trail provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3296—Hasskamp (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Crosslake library constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3297—Paulsen (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Technology business and activity defined, and regulations provided.

HF3298—Entenza (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Minnesota Children's Museum permanent exhibits grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3299—Wejcman (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Minneapolis empowerment zone sub-projects infrastructure improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3300—Boudreau (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Community action, head start, and food shelf data classification provided; child care program provisions modified; and learning readiness program plan submission requirement modified.

HF3301—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Family and adult self-sufficiency provisions modified.



Time off for caucuses

The House of Representatives will take some time off to accommodate the upcoming caucuses.

It was announced this week that there will be no House committee meetings between noon Tuesday, March 7 and noon the following day. The Republican and Reform parties will hold caucuses the evening of March 7.

There also will be no committee meetings on Saturday, March 11. That is the day the DFL will hold its precinct caucuses.

MONDAY, February 14

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: HF2733 (Mares) Soccer; Amateur Sports Commission new facilities plan developed and implemented statewide, grants authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF2836 (Rostberg) National Guard and organized militia membership eligibility clarified.
HFXXXX (Rostberg) Increases the bonding authority of the Minnesota State Armory Building Commission to \$15 million.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: Discussion of bonding priorities continued from Wed., Feb. 9th.
Discussion of the following deficiency appropriation requests: MN Board of Psychology - extraordinary litigation costs; Department of Health Poison Control Center; Department of Human Services Adoption Assistance; Department of Human Services - equalization of state and county MFIP recoveries.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: HF2820 (McElroy) Catalyst grants provided to promote Internet access in rural Minnesota and money appropriated.
HF2839 (Storm) Minnesota Technology, Inc. appropriated money for the e-Business Institute.
HF2840 (Cassell) Workforce identification systems development support provided and money appropriated.
HF2625 (Anderson, B.) Buffalo community center grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF3074 (Hausman) Ramsey County soccer fields acquired and improved, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF1432 (Hausman) St. Paul RiverCentre and skyway system underground connection grant provided, and money appropriated.
HF1722 (Trimble) St. Paul Dale Street shops, Maxson Steel, and the former Stroh Brewery capital redevelopment activities grant provided; and money appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: HF2730 (Dempsey) Port development assistance grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
Department of Transportation personnel issues, AFSCME Council 6.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: HF2550 (Storm) Private college campus security personnel authorized to receive telephone access to motor vehicle registration information.
HF2837 (Boudreau) Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program use required to verify immigration status of applicants for child care assistance and human services assistance.
HF537 (Boudreau) Complementary and alternative health care freedom of access act adopted.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: Board of Water and Soil Resources bonding recommendations:
Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP); RIM Reserve - Wetland Reserve Partnership; Statewide RIM Reserve; operating costs for easement programs; and local government wetland banking.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: University of Minnesota bonding requests.
Overview of priorities.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF2547 (Lieder) Independent School District No. 914, Ulen-Hitterdal, K-6 school building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF2575 (Howes) Independent School District No. 115, Cass Lake, maximum effort capital loan approved and money appropriated.
HF2811 (Davids) Independent School District No. 495, Grand Meadow, alternative facilities design grant authorized; bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF2961 (Skoe) Independent School District No. 25, Pine Point, new K-8 facility constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF3014 (Fuller) Independent School District Nos. 38, Red Lake, 115, Cass Lake, 299, Caledonia, 306 Laporte, and 914, Ulen-Hitterdal, maximum effort capital loans authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF2775 (Kielkucki) Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, achievement plus facility construction completed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HF2769 (Wilkin) Residential property containing four or more units tax class rates reduced.
HF2781 (Mulder) Wind energy conversion systems assessment required.
HF2681 (Juhnke) Manufactured homes low market value improvements property tax exemption provided.
HF2985 (Rukavina) Property tax levy limit calculation modified for the purposes of eliminating specified mining tax distribution deduction.
HF2201 (Dawkins) Residential property containing four or more units tax class rates reduced.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Community crime prevention grants: Charlie Weaver, Department of Public Safety; Mary Ellison, Department of Children, Families and Learning (DCFL).
Child care update: Karen Carlson and Cherie Kotilinek, DCFL.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen
Agenda: HF590 (Anderson, B.) Private property rights protection act adopted.
HF591 as amended (Anderson, B.) Private property protection act adopted (continued from Feb. 9 meeting; committee deliberation).
HF2722 (Tunheim) Kittson County granted the authority to dissolve a town with less than five full-time residents (originally on Feb. 9 agenda).
HF2517 (Haake) Local governing body members prohibited from serving on city charter commissions.
HF2535 (Sykora) Shorewood authorized to establish wards and elect city council members by wards.
HF2791 (Abrams) Hennepin County human resources board and department provisions modified.
HF2873 (Hackbarth) Anoka County department head time requirements clarified.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf
Agenda: HF2942 (Daggett) Telephone solicitors required to register with the secretary of state.
HF2996 (Wolf) Electric utilities required to provide cost and fuel information to utility customers.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

4 p.m.

Hennepin County Delegation

318 State Capitol
Chr. Sen. Linda Higgins

Agenda: Discussion of Hennepin County's legislative proposals for the 2000 Session.

TUESDAY, February 15

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF2716 (Bradley) Tobacco settlement revenues credited to the health care access fund, provider premium tax modified, and contingent elimination of MinnesotaCare provider taxes created.

HF2707 (Juhnke) Organization sponsored potluck event requirements modified.

HF2909 (Abeler) Physician assistant supervisory requirement modified for rendering care in disaster situations, medical assistance coverage clarified, and physician assistant advisory council terms limited.

JOBES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: Presentation of Airport Community Stabilization Report from the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

HFXXXX repealing laws governing entertainment agencies.

HF2926 (Clark, K.) Urban Indian housing program regulated.

Continuation of housing discussion by Minnesota Housing Finance Agency.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker
Agenda: Overview of courts budget.
Auto Theft Prevention Board.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF2824 (Haas) One or two license plates provided on collector and similar vehicles at owner's discretion.

HF2884 (Opatz) Outdoor advertising and vegetation control regulations modified.

HF2635 (Luther) Drivers' license applicants authorized to make a donation for public education and information on anatomical gifts.

HF2502 (Wenzel) Trunk Highway No. 371 portion known as the Brainerd Bypass designated as C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway.

HF3070 (Workman) 800-MHZ trunked radio system source code access and two vendors required.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: Department of Military Affairs capital bonding requests.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HF2892 (Stanek) Statute of limitations expanded to include homicide and specified criminal sexual conduct.

HF2491 (Skoglund) Kidnapping statute of limitations lengthened.

HF2492 (Skoglund) Kidnapping statute of limitations modified.

HF2493 (Skoglund) Kidnapping statute of limitations eliminated.

HF2747 (Holberg) Felons required to notify prosecuting authorities of name change requests, challenges authorized, proof of name change law compliance required for marriage licenses, and license issuance and dissolution conditions imposed.

HF2448 (Skoglund) Inmate name change request notice to victims and criminal justice system officials provided, and inmate name changes limited.

HF2746 (Haake) Predatory offender registration law violations provided increased penalties.

HF2748 (Fuller) Specified offenders required to register under the predatory offender registration law for life.

Others to be announced.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: Report from Accountability in Education Working Group, Rep. Mark Buesgens.

Other items to be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF3213 (Ozment) Heritage forest areas established in specified counties, timber provisions modified, and recreational area public use rules modified.

HF2613 (Boudreau) Big Woods Heritage Forest established through specified county board resolutions.

HF3167 (Ozment) Wildlife management areas designated, state forest lands expanded, and all-terrain vehicle use authorized in certain wildlife management areas.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF2938 (Abrams) Sales tax rebate provided in 2000, 1999 rebate eligibility expanded, passenger automobile registration tax and levy limits limited, health care premium taxes modified, tax relief and reform account created, and money appropriated (Governor's tax bill).

HF2742 (Dorman) Sales tax rebate provided and money appropriated.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: To be announced.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: Overview of light rail transit by the Department of Transportation.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF2641 (Fuller) School bank pilot project made permanent.

HF2515 (Solberg) Independent School District Nos. 508, St. Peter, and 316, Greenway-Coleraine, authorized to create school banks for educational purposes and sunset eliminated.

HF2652 (Goodno) Border cities provided residential building energy code requirements exemption.

HF3066 (Seifert, J.) Secretary of State fees and annual corporate registrations regulated, digital signature technical changes provided, and specified nonprofits extended.

HF1757 (Haas) Health insurer and health maintenance organization regulations simplified.

HF2713 (Rest) Funeral acts and services regulated, and pre-need arrangement requirements established.

HF2829 (Clark, K.) Financial institutions required to process checks in numerical sequence during business day unless customer specifies differently.

Other bills to be announced.

WEDNESDAY, February 16

8 a.m.

Joint ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE/ JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Mark Holsten,

Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF2636 (Mulder) Lewis and Clark Joint Powers Board grant provided for a rural water system, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2917 (Nornes) Parkers Prairie storm water sewer grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2583 (Anderson, I.) Koochiching County Minnesota cold weather testing center construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2915 (Juhnke) Green Lake sanitary sewer and water district wastewater infrastructure funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2418 (Otremba) Eagle Bend wastewater funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2438 (Otremba) Clarissa wastewater funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

Note: The Environment & Natural Resources Finance Committee will hold its regularly scheduled 10 a.m. meeting in 300S State Office Building to discuss DNR bonding recommendations. See listing below.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: Discussion of the Department of Human Services budget forecast. Discussion of TANF regulations and their impact on the general fund.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: HF2589 (Smith) Health care provider action expert review certification regulated. HF2803 (Smith) Court reporters allowed to organize under the Public Employment Labor Relations act. HF2919 (Stanek) Domestic fatality review committee required to collect domestic violence death data. HF3047 (Kuisle) Title insurance mortgage release certificate language modified to include assignment of rents and profits. HF1662 (Boudreau) Medical assistance programs and liens modified, and claims clearance provided. HF2911 (Mulder) Foreign and domestic corporation civil action conciliation court venue provided. HF2555 (Carruthers) Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21. HF2527 (Biernat) Sole physical custody of a child modification standards altered.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

*****NOTE ROOM*****
300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: DNR bonding recommendations.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

*****NOTE ROOM CHANGE*****
10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: University of Minnesota bonding requests. Overview of priorities. MSUSA/MSCSA presentation.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: To be announced.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HF2758 (Swenson) Family farm corporations and partnerships specified shareholders authorized to reside off the homestead property. HF2544 (Lieder) Agricultural relative homestead definition expanded to include grandchildren. HF2600 (Tunheim) Family farm corporations and partnerships specified shareholders authorized to reside off the homestead property. Other bills to be announced.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth
Agenda: Department of Agriculture agency bills: HFXXXX (Finseth) Uniformity for meat and poultry inspection requirements. HFXXXX (Westfall) Grain inspection technical changes. HFXXXX (Swenson) RFA technical changes. HFXXXX (Swenson) Revise adulterated dairy products; remove penalties. HFXXXX (Wenzel) Clarification of ag value-added/coop grants. HFXXXX (Wenzel) Anhydrous ammonia tampering bill. HFXXXX (Harder) Pesticide and fertilizer technical amendments. HFXXXX (Harder) Changes to the corporate farm law/estate planning adjustments. HFXXXX (Cassell) Technical changes to food safety law. Overview of Department of Agriculture study on contracts. Overview of the memorandum of understanding between the Department of Agriculture and the Pollution Control Agency on dairy inspectors.
Note: This meeting is scheduled to last until 6 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: HF2554 (Sykora) Adult basic education performance accountability system created and data sharing provided. Early childhood centers bonding proposal.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen
Agenda: HF1937 (Bishop) County services districts established, county cooperation required, and boards and advisory committees authorized. HF2723 (Ness) McLeod County authority to temporarily office in Glencoe Township extended. HF2927 (Tuma) Metropolitan Inter-County Association group insurance protection authorized. HF2673 (Rest) Political subdivision corporation creation standards established and existing corporations continued. HF2634 (Anderson, I.) Northern Itasca Hospital District hospital board membership modified. HF2737 (Solberg) Municipalities and veterans' organizations authorized to donate to all public school programs and facilities. HF2745 (Stanek) DWI; repeat DWI offenders provided felony penalties, and incarceration and intensive probation supervision sentencing required.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf
Agenda: HF2757 (Jennings) Biomass power mandate regulated for electric generating facilities using poultry litter as a fuel source. HF2996 (Wolf) Electric utilities required to provide cost and fuel information to utility customers. Continuation of discussion from Feb. 14 meeting. Other bills to be announced.

3 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach
Agenda: HF2808 (Howes) Cass County; Tri-County Leech Lake watershed critical habitat protection provided, bond sale authorized, and money appropriated. HF2848 (Opatz) St. Cloud Area Joint Powers Board parks and trails grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated. HF2739 (Solberg) Itasca County railroad authority grant, Itasca County highway improvement grant, and Nashwauk wells and wastewater treatment facilities construction grant provided; bonds issued; and money appropriated. Finance Committee reports.

Jobs Training Criteria Work Group/ JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Gunther
Agenda: To be announced.

THURSDAY, February 17

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley
Agenda: HFXXXX (Abeler) Department of Human Services health care bill. HF3020 (Bradley) Long-term care provisions modified. HFXXXX (Nornes) Requiring nursing home regulatory reform.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner
Agenda: Presentation of Business Climate Report from the Department of Trade and Economic Development. HF3057 (McElroy) Business subsidy provisions clarified. HF22 (Jaros) Minnesota office of international affairs established, and money appropriated.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker
Agenda: To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman
Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie
Agenda: HF2500 (Krinkie) Light rail transit project contract requirement language modified and usual state procurement laws explicitly required.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek
Agenda: HF2896 (Paulsen) Predatory offenders failing to comply with registration requirements provided increased criminal penalties and Level III sex offender information posted on the Internet.
HFXXXX (Abeler) Predatory offender registration law expanded to include additional offenses.
HF3037 (Skoglund) Criminal sexual conduct offenses and solicitation offenses prosecution jurisdiction provided in state of origin or termination.
Other bills to be announced.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares
Agenda: HF2752 (Mares) Department of Children, Families and Learning commissioner's referendum date authority sunset removed.
Other items to be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment
Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HF2549 (Tuma) Eligible county enhanced 911 program expenses special assessment procedure authorized, municipality and improvement definitions modified, and authorized improvements expanded.
HF2828 (Murphy) Hermantown local sales and use tax usages authorized.
HF2903 (Stang) Fire department purchases sales and use tax exemption provided.
HF2921 (Rostberg) Prescription drug income tax credit authorized and money appropriated.
HF2934 (Hasskamp) Crosslake authorized to impose an additional sales and use tax for wastewater treatment facility improvements.
Other bills may be added and/or deleted.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness
Agenda: Department of Agriculture bonding recommendations.
To be announced.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach
Agenda: To be announced.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids
Agenda: HF2942 (Daggett) Telephone solicitors required to register with the secretary of state.
HF2810 (Buesgens) Financial institution federal data privacy regulation conformity required and state enforcement provided.
Other bills to be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

Immediately Following Session

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth
Agenda: Continuation of Feb. 16 agenda.

FRIDAY, February 18

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek
Agenda: HF2751 (Stanek) Financial institutions provided limited liability for information furnished for investigative purposes, stolen and counterfeit check reporting or transfer provided criminal penalties, and racketeering expanded.
HFXXXX (Stanek) Board of Public Defense; expert witness fee expenses.
HFXXXX (Haas) Department of Natural Resources enforcement bill.
HF3023 (Broecker) Lawful gambling fraud defined and felony penalties imposed.
HF2920 (Rostberg) Juvenile court appearance by interactive video conferencing authorized.
HFXXXX (Dempsey) Department of Corrections facility at Red Wing.
HF2533 (Kielkucki) Correctional fees allocated and probation officer salary state reimbursement prorated eliminated.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: HF2651 (Tuma) Legacy 2000; statewide natural resources projects provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF3268 (Leppik) Metropolitan regional park acquisition and betterment authorized, bonds

issued, and money appropriated.
HF3259 (Seifert, J.) Metro greenways and natural areas grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF3161 (Harder) Minnesota River Basin conservation reserve enhancement program projects funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF2170 (Ozment) Board of Water and Soil Resources shoreland protection pilot program created, and money appropriated.
Note possible addition of other legacy initiatives.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: HF2649 (Abeler) Anoka-Hennepin Technical College facilities remodeled and repaired, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HF2277 (Otremba) Municipalities authorized to use the Revenue Recapture Act to collect delinquent payments for ambulance services.
HF2377 (Carruthers) Governmental pension plan income tax subtraction allowed.
HF2523 (Harder) Bleacher safety materials sales and use tax exemption provided.
HF2865 (Mulder) Luverne border development zone tax incentives authorized, state tax reductions allocated, and money appropriated.
Other bills may be added and/or deleted.

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The Legislative Reference Library maintains an exceptionally thorough and useful links page that provides easy access to a massive amount of information on issues related to politics and government.

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It's a great place to start for researching just about any issue.

To find the library's links, just go to the Legislature's site (www.leg.state.mn.us) and click on "Links to the World."



Continued from page 15

crime,” Chutich said. “We are always making distinctions in crime based on harm done.”

Brian Rusche, executive director of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, said he was pleased with the bipartisan support for the bill.

“We feel very strongly this legislation can repudiate these acts and isolate perpetrators,” Rusche said.

He said it’s important for people who burn crosses and paint swastikas on buildings to understand the magnitude of their acts, even though the crimes associated with them are technically only minor property crimes.

“I can’t see how (a misdemeanor) reflects the terror that crime brings into a community,” Rusche said.

Oertelt is hopeful the bill would lead to change.

“My hope is these idiots will be a bit more scared because they will be punished for something they weren’t before,” he said.

Oertelt is writing a book about his experiences that he hopes will be published this year. He said he is occasionally the victim of bias crimes, often in the form of hate mail.

“It is frustration and anger,” he said. “People who refuse to learn from history.”

The committee had discussed this proposal during an interim meeting last October. The Senate, which passed a similar bill last year, currently has a version awaiting a hearing in the Senate Crime Prevention Committee sponsored by Sen. Richard Cohen (DFL-St. Paul).

Continued from page 18

Rep. Doug Stang (R-Cold Spring) said it seems the governor “overlooked rural Minnesota” and asked why the administration’s plan isn’t more balanced.

The \$1 billion bonding law passed in 1998 included more than \$281 million for higher education facilities. This year’s Legislature is free to add or subtract projects from the governor’s proposal.

On Feb. 9, MnSCU officials came before the Higher Education Finance Committee to begin explaining the system’s bonding requests in full.

Chancellor Morrie Anderson said MnSCU is a “big system with big needs” and he told lawmakers that the state’s strong economy is at least partly a product of good colleges and universities.

“We have an opportunity because of good times,” Anderson said. “I think that should be a winning opportunity.”

Continued from page 16

One proposal (HF2617) would establish joint House and Senate standing committees, a concept that is found in the Connecticut and Maine legislatures. Instead of having two versions of the same bill in each body, the joint committees would introduce one bill that would “ping pong” back and forth to reconsider and amend the bill.

The other (HF2718) proposal is loosely based on Sweden’s parliament, McElroy said. It would retain two bodies, but each would have slightly different duties.

One body — the “Assembly” — would be like the proposed unicameral Legislature, responsible for passing most legislation and determining the biennial budget.

The other body — the “Council” — would confirm some types of legislation, such as laws that change the number of members of the legislature, change district boundaries, propose a constitutional amendment, cause the

state to incur debt, change tax rates, eliminate a tax or establish a new tax. The “Council” would also confirm governor’s appointments, which is currently done by the Senate, except that McElroy’s proposal would add judicial appointments and deputy commissioners to those that are currently confirmed by the Senate.

Also, members of the “Council” from the metropolitan area would serve as the Metropolitan Council, and remaining members would form a “Greater Minnesota Council.”

The Met Council is currently an appointed body. Leaders have criticized that structure, saying it makes the council less accountable because its members don’t have to face voters periodically.

The Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy is considering the unicameral bill and other reforms proposed by House members. No action has been taken yet on the bills.

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 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

A century of change

State population in 1900, in millions	1.75
in 1998	4.73
Governor's annual salary, 1900	\$5,000
in 1999	\$114,506
Years in term for governor, 1900	2
in 1999	4
Total seats in the Legislature, 1900	182
in 1999	201
Number of U.S. congressional districts, 1900	7
in 1999	8
Percentage of eligible voters participating in presidential election, 1900	76.7
in 1996	64.8
Percentage of people living in urban areas, 1900	33
in 1998	72
Non-white percentage of population, 1900	0.8
in 1998	8
Number of Minnesotans unable to speak English, 1900	75,071
in 1990	79,000
Percentage of families that owned homes, 1900	64
in 1998	75.4
Average size of a farm, in acres, 1900	150
in 1999	343
Percentage of women employed, 1900	16.2
in 1997	68
People in average household, 1900	4.9
in 1997	2.55
Percentage of people ages 15 to 19 attending school, 1900	28
in 1990	87
Minnesota breweries operating in 1900	85
in 1999	16
Newspapers in Minnesota, 1900	677
in 1999	466

Sources: *Turn of the Century: Minnesota's Population in 1900 and Today*, Minnesota Planning State Demographic Center, 1999; *Minnesota in a Century of Change: The State and Its People Since 1900*, Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989; *Minnesota Labor Market Review 1996*, Minnesota Department of Economic Security; Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development.

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TAX PLAN IN TROUBLE,

ETHANOL SUPPORT, AND LIGHT RAIL

HF3302-HF3670

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- AT ISSUE: CRIME** — In recent years, horrible crimes have prompted new laws designed to protect citizens from sex offenders. • 18
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On the cover: Fourteen-month-old Eva Anderson plays on the "Star of the North" in the Capitol rotunda during a Feb. 15 rally for increased funding for Early Childhood Family Education programs.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Conflict on taxes

The governor's tax plan met with questions and criticism in a House committee

By DAVID MAEDA

Gov. Jesse Ventura's 2000 tax plan ran into strong criticism in a Feb. 15 hearing of the House Taxes Committee.

In fact, two of the people carrying the governor's tax bill in the House — chief sponsor Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) and co-sponsor Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) — were among the harshest voices in the mix.

On one point, committee members agreed with the Ventura administration — Minnesotans will likely receive a tax rebate sometime this summer.

But lawmakers found much to criticize in the specifics of the governor's proposal, which includes a plan to establish a \$75 maximum fee for motor vehicle license tabs.

Abrams ripped the governor's proposal to carry over \$855 million from the current budget surplus into the next biennium, to be used for tax reforms.

Several legislators this year are pushing various proposals to cut taxes, while it seems the governor's carryover plan would leave the tax-cutting debate until next year.

"This is a governor who during his campaign said he was going to send it all back," Abrams said.

Rest agreed that there is little chance the Legislature will approve that amount of carryover. She said with no concrete reform proposals on the table, it is fiscally irresponsible to not balance the state's books at the end of the biennium.

Right now, the state has a forecast surplus of \$1.58 billion, which could be eliminated this biennium through tax rebates, new spending, or, most likely, a mix of both. The governor would bring some of that surplus into the next budget cycle.

Committee members also criticized parts of the governor's plan involving significant changes to the funding structure for state operations such as transportation.

The committee took no action on the bill (HF2938) but will consider it further when compiling this year's omnibus tax package.

Matt Smith, commissioner of the

Department of Revenue, presented the governor's proposal, which would use surplus budget funds for a sales tax rebate.

"It will return the remaining '99 balance to the same general population as last year's rebate," he said. "It is a \$470 million sales tax rebate returned to around 3.2 million people."

Under the governor's proposal, the Revenue Department would mail rebate checks by mid-summer.

Smith said the governor's bill is more inclusive this year, adding about 245,000 people to receive rebates by expanding the pool to include senior citizens living on Social Security and people receiving disability income.

There also is a proposed extension for those

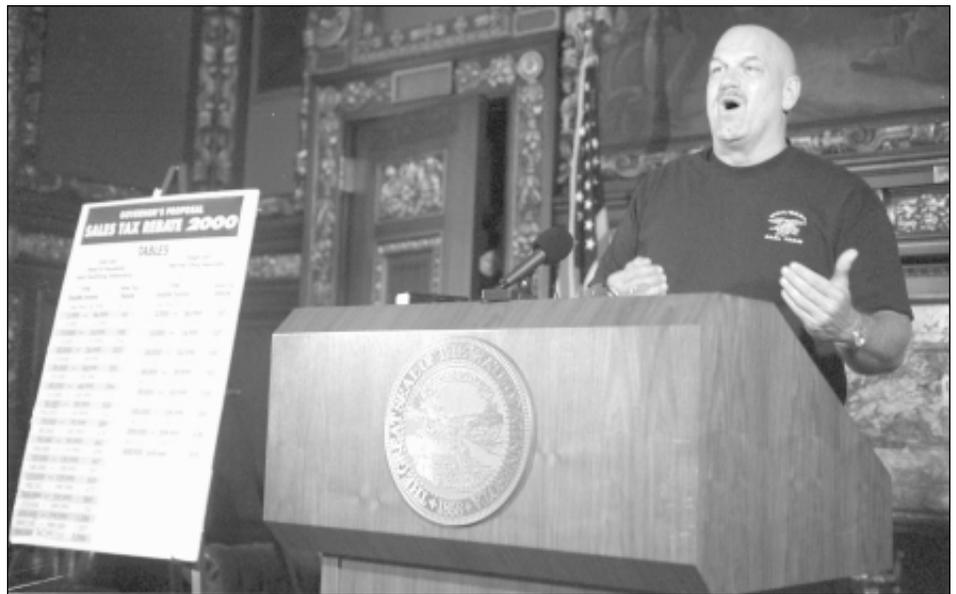
Under the bill, the average rebate for married couples would be \$280, and for single individuals \$139. The minimum for married couples would be \$125, with a maximum of \$1,750. For single filers, the minimum would be \$71, while a maximum of \$875.

However, several state funding provisions in the governor's bill raised alarm among committee members.

Abrams raised two issues from the 1999 session where the governor appears to have circumvented the legislative process.

He said that one of the governor's proposals last year approved by a House-Senate conference committee was an automatic "settle up" provision establishing the criteria for how rebates will be issued from future budget surpluses.

Then the governor vetoed a proposed cut in the health care provider tax, an action that increased the amount of last year's surplus by \$85 million dollars without any legislative input. Abrams said to allow a governor to set



Gov. Jesse Ventura announces his proposed \$470 million sales tax rebate during a news conference earlier this month. The governor's tax plan has met criticism in the House.

who were eligible to receive a rebate last year but did not file in time. It is estimated that this extension would allow 12,000 people to receive a rebate at a cost of \$3.5 million.

However, the governor's proposal would not expand the rebate to those claimed as dependents on their parent's tax returns. Smith said to include them would require a manual process that would be inaccurate, cumbersome, and expensive.

the eventual amount of a budget surplus is too easily susceptible to politics.

"This points out why the Legislature ought to be setting the amount of the rebate," Abrams said.

Abrams said the veto of the proposed transfer of general fund money to support MinnesotaCare, the state's health insurance program for low-income people, led to a violation of law by Department of Finance



Commissioner Pam Wheelock. He said because of a deficiency in the fund, Wheelock was required by law to increase health-care taxes paid by businesses. Abrams said she failed to do so, knowing it was unlikely anyone would sue the department over the violation.

“Just because someone thinks it’s the right thing to do doesn’t mean it’s the legal thing to do,” he said. “The governor was able to take credit for the veto, and not take responsibility for the rest of the statute.”

Abrams was also critical of the governor’s proposed cut in the motor vehicle registration tax. The bill would set maximum tab fees at \$75.

Smith said the cap was a key part of the governor’s plan, being a permanent tax cut provision. He said that as the governor has traveled across the state he has continued to hear from people who dislike the tax and feel it should be reduced.

He said that 55 percent of vehicle owners in the state would see an immediate reduction. Currently about 40 percent register at the minimum \$35 amount.

Revenues from the tax currently go to the state’s highway fund and would be replaced with a one-time general fund payment of \$276 million. The governor supports placing a constitutional amendment on November’s ballot proposing the dedication of 54 percent of future motor vehicle sales taxes to go to the highway fund to offset the revenues lost created by registration tax reduction.

In addition, the governor is proposing to create a new multimodal transportation and transit fund that would be receive its revenue from a statutory dedication of 46 percent of the motor vehicle sales tax. Thus overall transportation funding would increase under the governor’s plan even though the motor vehicle registration tax would be reduced.

However, the governor hasn’t developed an alternative plan, should the constitutional amendment fail at the polls.

In comparison to neighboring states, Minnesota does have a higher tax, Smith said.

Abrams suggested Ventura’s motor vehicle tax plan is too regressive, shifting more of the responsibility to those less able to pay.

Smith acknowledged that is somewhat true, but he also emphasized those objections should not derail the plan.

“The tax relief proposal needs to happen,” he said. “The governor sees the need to increase transportation funding. It is clear how critical infrastructure investment is the kind of thing we need to do to keep Minnesota competitive.” 

A different kind of strike

1950s teens were not spared from illegal labor practices

In the 1950s, certain Minnesota businesses exploited scores of children, whose size and speed made them valuable commodities. The state’s child labor laws were often overlooked, trumped by the need for corporate profits.

But the children were not being pressed into labor in some awful urban sweatshop or forced to spend long days at work in a northern mine.

The sector of the business world responsible for the most child labor violations? Bowling alleys. Teen-agers around the state worked as pinsetters, and their employers seemed to have some trouble abiding by the relatively lax limitations of Minnesota’s labor laws.

State law at that time made it illegal for minors under 16 to work after 7 p.m. or before 7 a.m. Those children also could not work more than eight hours a day and 48 hours a week. And the law prohibited children under 14 from working in a factory, mill, or mine, or in the construction of any building.

Between July 1, 1956, and June 30, 1958, the state issued 446 citations for violations of child labor laws. A total of 345 of those were for running afoul of standards regarding hours of work (mostly for keeping children on the job too late in the evening). Fifty-six were for “dangerous employment,” and 26 were for employing children in “beer parlors or where liquor was served,” according to the biennial report of the Department of Labor and Industry’s Industrial Commission.

The violations involved a total of 647 children. Most of them — 395 to be exact — were 15-year-olds, but some of the cases involved much younger children, including 10 workers who were just 10 years old.

Bowling alleys, retail stores, restaurants, and theaters, in that order, were responsible for most of the illegal employment practices, the Industrial Commission found.

In most cases, businesses that violated child labor laws were issued orders to comply, and inspectors would return to ensure

violations did not persist. Criminal prosecution was rare, coming only when serious offenses continued after repeated warnings.

During the two years detailed in the report, three bowling alley operators were prosecuted for violations involving child labor. All three cases ended in convictions.

The report bemoaned the fact that Minnesota’s child labor laws were outdated — most of them had been enacted in 1909 — and called on the 1959 Legislature to make changes. Foremost among the Industrial Commission’s recommendations was a call for the minimum age for factory, construction, or mine work to be moved from 14 to 16.

There were no recommendations specifically related to bowling alleys and their frequent violations.

Child labor laws had not changed by the time the Industrial Commission issued its next biennial report in 1960, and the number of citations issued by the state had increased by more than 200.

But bowling alleys were no longer the chief violators. Retail stores, restaurants, and agricultural operations, in that order, were more often cited for child labor offenses.

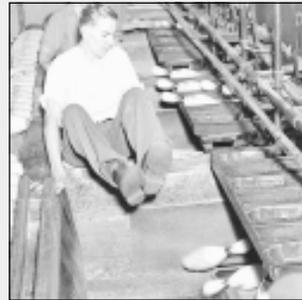
So what happened to knock bowling alleys out of the top spot? A change in the bowling industry might have played a part in solving the problem. Brunswick had installed the first automatic pinsetter in 1956, sealing the ultimate fate of teen-age “pin boys.”

Minnesota’s current labor laws are more restrictive than those of 40 years ago.

Children under 14 cannot be employed, except as newspaper carriers, actors, models, or farmhands. Limits on the employment of 14- and 15-year-olds dictate the hours of day they can work and the maximum number of hours they can log in a week.

The child labor law also includes a long list of prohibited occupations for all minors. The list includes mining, logging, construction, operating heavy machinery, and bartending.

(N. Healy)



A young pinsetter at work in a St. Paul bowling alley.

Photo courtesy Minnesota Historical Society

★ BUSINESS

Subsidy requirements reconsidered

Easing reporting requirements for small businesses that receive government subsidies is one of the goals of a bill approved Feb. 17 by the House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee.

The bill (HF3057), sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), would make a number of changes to subsidy reporting requirements that were established last year.

McElroy said that the increased reporting requirements were originally included in a 1999 bill authored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls). That bill did not pass the House but several of its provisions were included in the Senate's omnibus tax bill and were agreed to by House conferees.

McElroy's bill would re-define the term "business subsidy" to apply only to amounts over \$100,000. Currently, subsidies are defined as those over \$25,000.

The existing law also requires wage and job goals for all subsidies. The bill would allow those job goals to be set at zero, if it is determined that job retention and creation are not purposes of the subsidy. A zero job goal would require a public hearing.

McElroy said the bill also would change the current law prohibiting a recipient of a subsidy from moving locations within five years. The bill would allow the recipient to move at any time after a public hearing is held.

Clark offered an unsuccessful amendment that would have kept the dollar amount defining a subsidy at \$25,000. That provision was part of her bill last session after a task force concluded it was a fair amount, she said.

She said that welfare recipients have stringent reporting requirements for every dollar they receive and it was not unfair to expect the same from businesses who receive public subsidies.

Eric Nathanson, from the Minneapolis Community Development Agency, said that the reporting requirements discourage small entrepreneurs, particularly immigrants, from seeking the assistance they need to get a business going.

Beth Fraser, from the Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action, said that in 1997, 177 subsidies fell under the \$100,000 threshold. She said this amounted to more than \$11 million. For such substantial amounts of public funding, subsidy recipients should be held accountable for the goals they set, she said.

The bill was sent to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

★ CHILDREN

Bonding request advances

Although Gov. Jesse Ventura did not recommend any bonding for early childhood learning facilities, the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee on Feb. 16 approved \$5 million for such projects.

The measure will advance in the form of a recommendation to the House Capital Investment Committee.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) said she was angry the governor did not include any early childhood projects in his \$400 million bonding plan. The committee agreed with her, and members approved the request.

"This is the least we need," McGuire said. "If we come in with only \$1 million, they will think that is all we need."

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) sided with McGuire, saying the education facilities are needed.

"I think it looks really bad for the House in a bonding year to do nothing for early childhood facilities," Mariani said. "The governor thinks what we do here is 'nice.' It's not nice to not invest in kids."

The bonding request does not pertain to any

specific sites or projects; it only aims to give the money to the Department of Children, Families and Learning for construction of facilities to promote early childhood education.

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), who chairs the committee, initially suggested the committee aim for \$1 million because of the tight bonding bill requested by Ventura.

McGuire was critical of Ventura for making "healthy and vital communities" a major portion of his Big Plan initiative and then not funding this request.

★ CONSUMERS

Tracking telemarketers

Telemarketers should be required to register with the state and should not use technology to block caller-identification devices, said Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee).

Daggett is sponsoring a bill (HF2942) that would require telemarketing firms to pay a \$75 registration fee to the secretary of state.

Violators would have to pay a \$50 fine within 60 days. If a solicitor continued to violate the law, the state would assess a \$500 fine for every 60 days until the solicitor is registered.

The Regulated Industries Subcommittee of the House Commerce Committee approved the measure Feb. 14 and sent it to the full committee, which approved it Feb. 17.

KIDS' CONCERT



Visitors to the Capitol rotunda Feb. 16 were treated to a short concert by the Anoka Cluster Elementary Honors Choir. The choir, conducted by Debra Halstenson, is composed of fourth and fifth graders from seven schools in the Anoka-Hennepin School District.

The bill would also require that telemarketers be fined \$500 for blocking their phone number from appearing on caller-identification boxes.

Registration information would have to include name, address, telephone and fax numbers and e-mail addresses. Information changes would cost an additional \$35.

"There's been a lot of fraud, especially with senior citizens who are very vulnerable," Daggett said of telemarketers. "They are not reputable and we have no way of knowing who they are."

The bill would not ban telemarketing; it would only require registration. Daggett said 300,000 Americans work as telemarketers, making 1.8 million calls each day. None of the firms those workers represent are registered in Minnesota.

Glen Dorfman of the Minnesota Association of Realtors opposed the bill. Dorfman said people can register on a federal 'do not call' list. People also have the option to ignore telemarketers, Dorfman said.

"Enough is enough," Dorfman said. "Support current law. If citizens don't want these calls, let them hang up."

Citizens gain valuable information from telemarketers, Dorfman added.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) questioned why the bill pertains only to telephone advertising and does not include solicitors who use e-mail or U.S. mail.

Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) supported the Daggett bill, sharing a story about how his grandmother was swindled by a phone scam. He said it is much easier to discard mail than disregard a phone call.

"These people can be very persuasive and really play on your emotions," Gunther said.

★ CRIME

Need for lab questioned

Members of the House Judiciary Finance Committee heard a bonding request Feb. 17 to build a new Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension facility in St. Paul.

The Department of Public Safety, which administers the bureau, is asking for \$58 million in bonds to finance construction of the facility. Gov. Jesse Ventura has recommended full funding for the project.

Frank Dolejsi, director of the bureau laboratory, said that a number of renovations have been performed on the existing lab on University Avenue. However, the needs of law enforcement agencies in the state are no longer being supported.

For example, it takes the lab 74 days to analyze DNA, 60 days for drugs, 90 days for

toxicology reports, 150 days for firearms analysis and 120 days for latent fingerprints. The goal in the new facility is 30 days for all analysis, Dolejsi said.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) questioned whether the analysts could use the current lab space and staff it 16 or 24 hours a day to speed up the analysis. Public Safety Commissioner Charlie Weaver said even if the lab worked around the clock, it wouldn't have the space to do all the work.

Several law enforcement officials from around the state also testified in favor of the project. St. Paul Police Chief William Finney said his department's lab does not accommodate some of the sophisticated analysis that the bureau laboratory does.

Police officials in outstate Minnesota said they could not sufficiently investigate crimes without the bureau.

Dolejsi also discussed concerns over an existing mold problem in the ceiling at the bureau laboratory. He said there's a possibility evidence could be altered because of the mold problem.

The committee will soon rank bonding proposals and forward a recommendation to the House Capital Investment Committee.

State courts in funding pinch

State judicial branch officials argued their case before House Judiciary Finance Committee on Feb. 15 for more money to cover severe budget shortfalls anticipated through fiscal year 2001.

The judicial branch is requesting \$3.1 million in funds to cover a deficit for fiscal year 2001. Officials say the court system's operating budget has been forced to absorb significant increases in personnel costs over the past few years.

That budget is no longer sufficient to cover the increases, said Sue Dosal, state court administrator.

"We have literally wrung out every little bit of flexibility that we had," Dosal said.

More than half of the shortfall — \$1.98 million — involves insurance costs alone, which increased between 23 and 42 percent, depending on the program employees elected.

Though they're not requesting the money, the courts expect to accumulate a \$2.1 million deficit for the current fiscal year.

Dosal said the judicial branch is trying a number of strategies to cut costs, including holding all new judgeships or existing judgeships open for five months, holding open law clerk and other staff positions, reducing funding for jury trials, reducing use of retired judges, and holding down the bottom of the pay range.

However, officials said, these cutbacks will ultimately affect the citizens relying on the efficiency of the court system.

Judge Leslie Metzen from South St. Paul said many judges are going without clerks, so they are required to do their own research and file their own orders. The more time they spend on these administrative tasks, Metzen said, the less time they spend on the bench.

And with increasing caseloads, she said, they don't always have spare time during the day to get to the orders and filings fast enough, thus making parties on both sides wait longer.

"This ultimately has an effect on them," she said.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada), who chairs the committee, said the panel will consider the branch's request among other spending proposals, possibly combining them into one bill.

Drunken driving laws clarified

Drunken driving laws would be clarified under a bill approved Feb. 11 by the House Crime Prevention Committee.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji), who is sponsoring the legislation, led a task force that worked during the interim on plans for simplifying the laws. Police officers would have a better grasp of DWI laws with this legislation, he said. All drunken driving laws would be compiled in one new section of statute.

The bill would provide few substantive changes to DWI laws, but it would create separate levels of impaired-driving crimes. There would be a three-tiered system of first-, second- and third-degree drunken driving offenses.

The third-degree offense, a misdemeanor, would apply to all impaired driving offenses. The second-degree level, a gross misdemeanor, would include one aggravating factor. A first-degree offense would have two or more aggravating factors.

Aggravating factors are prior impaired-driving offenses in the past 15 years, a blood-alcohol concentration higher than 0.20 at the time of the offense, and driving impaired with children under age 16 in the vehicle.

The bill would remove one aggravating factor — driving drunk while crossing train tracks.

State Trooper Mike Asleson told the committee the bill doesn't change the law much, but it would help officers understand the complex DWI statutes.

"It's so important that this be simplified for officers," Asleson said.

The bill (HF2995) was referred to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

★ EDUCATION

Profile of Learning moratorium passed

Minnesota's Profile of Learning would be put on hold, under a bill the House approved Feb. 17. The vote was 97-34.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie), was amended on the House floor to include an indefinite moratorium on the Profile.

When it arrived on the House floor, the bill was focused on the controversial writing test administered to high school sophomores last month.

Kielkucki's bill (HF2720) would require test booklets to be scored and returned to students, and it would guarantee that the question given to students this winter would not be used again. The test asked students to write about something about themselves they would like to change, and it drew fire because of the personal nature of the question.

On the House floor, Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona) offered an amendment to place a two-year moratorium on the Profile of Learning portion of the state's Graduation Standards initiative.

"We're going to have a train wreck at graduation time if we don't do something," Pelowski said.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) upped the ante, asking lawmakers to change the amendment so it called for a "permanent moratorium."

Seifert's plan won approval and the bill was passed with the amendment attached. The legislation now goes to the Senate.

Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm) expressed disappointment over the amended version of the bill, calling it a missed opportunity to improve the Profile of Learning had the House simply limited the moratorium to two years of study.

"We had an opportunity to do something positive for school districts in the form of Rep. Pelowski's amendment, but what we ended up with is legislation that will never receive the governor's approval," he said.

K-12 bonding projects pitched

Education-related capital projects totaling upwards of \$53.1 million were considered Feb. 14 by the House K-12 Education Finance Committee.

Project requests presented before the committee have received the support of the Department of Children, Families and Learning and were submitted to the Department of Finance. The governor's bonding plan was drawn from requests sent to the latter.

The committee delayed action on the projects until further information is released regarding

precisely how much money will be available for K-12 projects in this year's bonding bill.

The proposals call for bond proceeds to go to the Caledonia, Cass Lake, Red Lake, LaPorte, and Ulen-Hitterdal school districts for either building projects or improvements to existing structures.

The Caledonia School District is seeking approximately \$14 million to build a new middle/high school and to remodel the district's current secondary school to serve as an elementary school.

Bonds totaling about \$7.5 million are also being sought by the Cass Lake School District to fund a new middle school for grades 5 to 8.

The Red Lake School District is seeking \$11.2 million to construct an early childhood facility

and to renovate a middle school and elementary school.

The LaPorte School District is seeking more than \$7 million in for a variety of projects.

Officials from the Ulen-Hitterdal School District came before the committee in search



Mary Helen Pelton, superintendent of Cass Lake-Bena School District, holds up art work made by students from Cass Lake-Bena Elementary School during her testimony before the House K-12 Education Finance Committee in support of a bill that would provide bond funds for the school district.

of about \$4 million for the construction of a building to house kindergarten through 6th grade students.

Of the requests mentioned, Gov. Jesse Ventura has suggested partial funding for the projects in the Caledonia, Cass Lake, and Red Lake school districts. The governor's bonding proposal provides no funding for the LaPorte and Ulen-Hitterdal districts.

The committee also considered a handful of requests not originally submitted to the Department of Finance. Those requests included \$4.1 million in general obligation bonds to construct a K-8 facility in the Pine Point School District and \$5.2 million to St. Paul's Achievement Plus program for continued construction.

Funds for physically disabled

Separate bills sponsored by Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) would increase learning opportunities for people who are blind or physically disabled and appropriate money to state academies for the deaf and blind for asset preservation.

The first bill (HF2790) would dedicate \$1.35 million from the state's general fund to the commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning for planning, design costs, and improvements to the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Faribault.

The second bill (HF3287) would authorize the state to issue up to \$3.8 million in bonds for various improvements at the Minnesota Academies for the Deaf and Blind, including electrical upgrades and sewer and water improvements.

Both bonding requests were given consideration by the House K-12 Education Finance Committee Feb. 16, although a decision to take action was delayed until further information on precisely how much money would be available for bonding projects is released.

Speaking in support of HF2790, Edina resident Nadine Jacobson, who is blind, told the committee a bill that would allow the library in Faribault to expand its book and tape selection would be of benefit to her and families in situations like hers.

Jacobson said her husband and two adopted children are also blind and appreciate the resources the Faribault library and libraries similar to it provide.

"In considering this issue, I would hope you'd remember that libraries for the blind and handicapped have special funding needs and should not be treated in the same breath as other public libraries," Jacobson said.

Gov. Jesse Ventura has recommended providing only \$600,000 for the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in his bonding proposal.

★ EMPLOYMENT

Tracking success of adult education

The state would begin tracking adult basic education graduates after they have completed the program, under a bill considered Feb. 16 by the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee.

Sponsored by Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), the bill (HF2554) would require adult basic education providers to ask students for their Social Security numbers. The state would then receive information from the Department of Economic Security regarding whether the graduates are employed and how much money they are earning.

"When they leave our program, we have no idea what happens to them," said Carlye Peterson of the Minneapolis schools district. "We have no way to track our learners."

Tracing economic information through the department is easier and more cost-effective than telephone surveys, said Barry Shaffer of the Department of Children, Families and Learning. He estimated the state would spend \$55,000 to \$75,000 on data matching. Telephone surveys would cost \$200,000 to \$400,000, he said.

Peterson said she prefers the data matching. She said many people have disconnected their phones, phone numbers change, and mail is rarely returned.

"It would be difficult to ask a person, 'Do you have a job and how much do you make?'" Peterson said.

Adult basic education teaches skills to people who do not have high school diplomas. Many of the participants are foreign-born and are just beginning to learn English.

Federal law requires the information to be collected, Shaffer said. Each state can decide the best route for collecting the data. Federal law also says states cannot use sampling measures to obtain its information.

Even though providers would have to ask, under the measure, students would not be required to provide the Social Security information. Shaffer said in other states that collect Social Security numbers, about 5 percent of people decline.

"They want to learn, they want to be there, and they would probably provide it," Shaffer said.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) wanted to know if students would be given a written statement saying how the information would be used. Sykora said that is not in the bill.

The bill would cost about \$52,000, Sykora said, but that cost would be paid by the federal government.

Claudia Fuentes of the Urban Coalition in St. Paul said the legislation would have a nega-

tive effect on adult basic education students. She said many of those students from foreign countries are fearful of government. It may keep some of them from attending classes, she said.

The committee took no action on the bill.

Matching workers with jobs

Identifying areas where there may be skilled workers whose abilities are not being used is the focus of a bill proposed by Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria).

Cassell told the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee on Feb. 14 that the bill (HF2840) would appropriate \$600,000 to the Department of Trade and Economic Development for grants to study areas where the skill sets or education of the available workforce are underused. The grants would go to local or regional development agencies.

"This would help us identify workers that have specific skills but aren't using those skills in their current employment," said Gary Fields, a department official.

The bill was approved Feb. 16 and sent to the House Ways and Means Committee.

Fields said studying the area would help both the companies looking for workers with a specific skill and the workers themselves.

Dr. Richard Lichty, a professor at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, said that the northeastern region of the state was surveyed in 1994 with a grant from Minnesota Technology, Inc. The survey identified several issues related to the emerging workforce shortage.

This bill, Lichty said, would establish similar projects to collect information covering the entire state.

According to the measure, the department would establish the criteria for the grants, with projects eligible for up to 60 percent of the total project costs.

Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) said she was concerned that the bill doesn't attempt to address a larger problem of businesses not paying high enough wages to attract and retain qualified workers.

Lichty said that he agreed that high paying jobs are needed to address the workforce shortage.

"I'm not an economist, but there is no shortage if the price is right," he said.

★ ENERGY

Code exemption proposed

The House Commerce Committee approved a bill Feb. 15 that would exempt border cities from the state's new energy code requirements.

The bill (HF2652), sponsored by Rep. Kevin

Goodno (R-Moorhead), would allow the cities of Breckenridge, Dilworth, East Grand Forks, Moorhead, and Ortonville, which are legally designated as border cities, to revert to the energy code that was in place prior to July 1999.

Last year the Legislature passed a law requiring the Department of Administration to develop design and construction standards regarding heat loss control, illumination, and climate control. These standards are in addition to the other building-related standards.

Goodno said that the new energy code will increase the cost of construction on new homes from \$3,000 to \$10,000. He said that cost increases put border cities at an economic disadvantage.

"This increase will stifle new housing starts," he said.

Greg Johnson, a spokesman for the Association of Minnesota Building Officials, spoke against the measure. Johnson said that allowing exemptions to the code would be confusing to contractors who would not be sure which code requirements applied in the particular jurisdiction.

"What's good for Minnesota is good for all of Minnesota," Johnson said.

Linda Taylor from the Department of Commerce also testified against the bill. Taylor said the new energy code was written so that the energy savings would offset the increased building costs within 10 years. She said if the bill passes it would leave the border cities with no residential code requirement.

"Non-uniformity is not good public policy," Taylor said.

Goodno said that the new energy code would not necessarily save homeowners energy costs and that even under last year's legislation, the state does not have a uniform energy code. He said the statute currently applies to cities with populations of more than 2,500 people.

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

Light from litter

A bill that would pave the way for a power plant designed to burn poultry litter as fuel was approved Feb. 16 by the House Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Regulated Industries.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris), sponsor of the bill (HF2757), explained the proposal stems from the 1994 Prairie Island legislation, which required a public utility operating a nuclear powered plant to develop 125 megawatts of electric energy generated by farm grown biomass.

Jennings said the bill would provide 50 of the 125 megawatts from a facility that uses poultry litter as its primary fuel source.

Rubert Fraser, the chief executive officer of Fibrowatt, the British company proposing to build the plant in Minnesota, said because the state is the second largest turkey producing state in the country, it is an ideal location for the facility.

Fraser said that the plant is similar to two other biomass projects already approved by the Public Utilities Commission — one that uses urban wood waste and another whose fuel source is whole tree combustion.

“We’re just looking for a level playing field,” Fraser said.

Fibrowatt owns and operates three poultry litter power plants in Great Britain. The plants produce energy by burning the litter at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit, producing steam that drives a turbine.

Fraser said the company works closely with the local communities to adapt to the plant settings.

“We are good neighbors and responsible members of the community,” he said.

David Morris from the Institute for Local Self Reliance, a nonprofit organization that researches environmental economic development issues, said that instead of focusing on one technology and one company, the state would be better off investing in other energy sources including wind-generated power.

“This bill is premature and ill-conceived,” Morris said. He said the bill would provide an \$80 to \$140 million public subsidy to burn an

inexpensive fertilizer that might be in short supply.

Linda Taylor, from the Department of Commerce, said that the department is suggesting an alternative proposal to tally up the biomass energy created by Northern States Power Company sources and then accept bid proposals to make up the difference.

The bill now goes to the full Commerce Committee.

★ GOVERNMENT

Unicameral proposal advances

The secretary of state would be required to publish an informational guide for voters regarding a proposed switch to a unicameral legislature, under a bill that was sent forward by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee on Feb. 14.

The committee voted unanimously to send the bill (HF159) without further recommendation to the House State Government Finance Committee.

The bill, sponsored by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), would put a constitutional amendment on the ballot in November. If the voters were to approve the amendment, the House and Senate would be replaced by a single legislative body in the year 2003.

Rep. Mark Gleason (DFL-Richfield) suggested the requirements for the voters’ guide, which would contain “arguments commonly advanced in support of and opposition to bicameral and unicameral state legislatures.” The voters’ guide would be distributed statewide, and related legal notices would be published in qualified newspapers.

Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie), co-sponsor of the bill, disagreed with Gleason’s proposal, because it would be hard to define “commonly advanced” arguments. Many arguments have been presented on the issue, and he said it would be hard to provide an equal amount of information on all of them.

But Gleason said he would welcome any attempt to provide balanced information. Holding up a brochure on unicameralism that was published by Gov. Jesse Ventura’s office and Minnesota Planning, Gleason said its claims are not supported with facts and it doesn’t list any counter arguments.

“The governor is trying to promote this idea, and this does not make any attempt to make it unbiased, fair, objective, or balanced,” he said. “I have a problem with them spending taxpayers’ money on this and not providing any balance.”

First law of 2000 session extends ice fishing season

The 2000 ice fishing season was extended by nine days, under a law signed Feb. 16 by Gov. Jesse Ventura. It is the first new law of the 2000 session.

The measure was sponsored by Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), who said it would help small businesses and resorts in areas where ice fishing is popular. Those businesses lost potential income due to unusually warm weather in the early winter and a lack of snow.

Under state law, the ice fishing season lasts until the third Sunday in February, which this year would be Feb. 20.

The new law extends the season through Feb. 29. The extension also includes the spearing season.

The Senate sponsor was Sen. Pat Pariseau (R-Farmington).

The law (HF2980/SF2763*/CH251) was effective Feb. 17.

★ HEALTH

Alternative health care bill on hold

After several hours of debate, the House Civil Law Committee delayed a vote on legalizing alternative health providers.

Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) is sponsoring a bill (HF537) that would allow alternative health providers to practice in Minnesota. However, several legislators expressed concern about the lack of consumer protection in the bill.

Alternative health practitioners include people who provide services such as acupuncture, energetic healing, aromatherapy, herbalism, and meditation as a means to cure sicknesses.

Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) proposed an amendment that would have required all alternative health providers to obtain an official license.

“I’m not willing to give them greater protection than licensed practitioners,” he said.

Diane Miller, a lawyer with the Minnesota Natural Health Reform Project, said her group objects to licensing.

“It eliminates many, many alternative health providers that are already practicing,” Miller said.

She suggested that instead of licensing them, alternative providers should be required by law to prepare a disclosure form of their prior experience and give it to clients. That way providers would be bound by fraud statutes and face potential lawsuits if they were untruthful.

Carruthers said licensing might be



Rupert Fraser, chief executive officer of Fibrowatt Limited, testifies before the Regulated Industries Subcommittee of the House Commerce Committee on Feb. 16 in support of a bill that would modify the state’s biomass mandate to allow a facility that uses poultry litter to generate electricity.

necessary. He opposed language in Boudreau's bill that would eliminate criminal sanctions and limit civil actions that could be brought against unlicensed health providers.

"If licensing is so bad, proponents of this bill should say, 'We should get rid of licensed doctors and dentists,'" Carruthers said. "Who wants to visit an unlicensed dentist?"

The full licensure amendment failed, along with another Carruthers amendment that would have established an investigative and enforcement measure within the Health Department. The amendment also outlined disciplinary action and conduct that would exclude a person from practicing alternative health.

"It does what they say they want, but without all the special protections," Carruthers said.

The investigation amendment also failed.

The bill can be recalled at anytime by the committee chair, Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound).

Boudreau said she believes she had enough votes to pass the bill before it was delayed.

"I don't think the concept is destroyed," she said.

Hotdish and health standards

Much to the delight of scores of casserole-loving Minnesotans, a bill that would ease health regulations regarding food served at community potluck events was approved Feb. 15 by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee and sent to the House floor.

"I'm hearing from church ladies from all over the state," joked Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar), who said his bill (HF2707) is an attempt to clarify state health regulations as they apply to community potlucks.

The idea behind the bill originated when Juhnke, attending a DFL bean feed at the American Legion in Willmar, was told health regulations prevented outsiders from bringing prepared food into community potlucks.

Aggie Leitheiser, assistant commissioner of the state's Health Protection Bureau, said such restrictions exist to prevent outbreaks of food-borne disease. Over the past four years, Leitheiser said, 16 percent of the confirmed food-borne disease outbreaks in the state were traced to privately prepared food.

So, following health regulations to the letter, organizers of the event in Willmar politely rejected Juhnke's beans, asking him to return them to his car.

After the experience, Juhnke said he felt all people should be allowed to attend community potlucks and share their food without being subject to health inspection.

The bill Juhnke brought before the committee would allow any person attending a potluck event, not just members of the organization sponsoring the event, to bring individually prepared food for consumption.

It also would allow an organization sponsoring potluck events to advertise the events and permit people who are not members of the organization to attend the event and eat the food.

Patient privacy

A bill that would specify when health maintenance organizations (HMOs) are prohibited from disclosing personal, privileged, and general health information about patients or applicants received the approval of the House Health and Human Service Policy Committee on Feb. 17.

Sponsored by Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley), the bill (HF3225) would make it clear what HMO responsibilities are concerning issues of data privacy.

An existing subdivision of law prohibits the release of data relating to the diagnosis, treatment, or health of any enrollee or applicant, but does not specify to whom it applies.

Gerlach's bill would rewrite the subdivision to make it apply to HMOs, granting exceptions when there are cases of express consent, a court order, or when an individual is suspected of violating a law.

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) said he sup-

ports the bill but that it needs clarification on how the bill might be interpreted if a communicable disease outbreak were to arise.

"My only concern in looking over this bill would be that it might lock things up so tightly that it would prohibit, say, counties from acting in cases of public good," Haas said.

According to information provided by the nonpartisan House Research Department, the Minnesota Department of Public Health has statutory authority to collect data about patients when a public health epidemic surfaces. St. Paul resident Richard Neumeister spoke in favor of the proposed legislation and offered a few possible changes to the bill the author might consider as the measure travels through the process of committee.

Some of Neumeister's suggestions to modify the bill included establishing an enforcement mechanism to aid patients in getting access to their records and making the willful or negligible disclosure of patient health information a crime punishable by law.

The bill was referred to the House Civil Law Committee.

Organ donation plan advances

Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) wants to disseminate more information about organ donations. Luther, who had an emergency liver transplant in February 1998, is sponsoring a bill that would raise money for public awareness of donations.

The House Transportation Policy Committee approved the bill (HF2635) Feb. 15. The bill would create a \$1 checkoff on driver's license applications. Money raised from the checkoff would then be used to make pamphlets and purchase equipment, such as a mobile unit, to increase awareness of the program.

"It's an innovative approach to solve this crisis," Luther told the committee.

Approximately 1,160 Minnesotans are currently on organ donor waiting lists, said Susan Gunderson, executive director for LifeSource.

"Every day, 12 people die waiting for an organ transplant," Gunderson said.

About six in 10 Minnesotans have signed on as organ donors on their driver's license, Gunderson said.

"If everyone who could donate when they died did we would virtually eliminate the waiting list," she said. "When people have the correct information, the checkoff rate is even higher."

Several states have a \$1 checkoff program, Luther said. Ohio has raised \$1.7 million with its checkoff, she added.

Luther said she would be happy if the

DIABETES RALLY



Eight-year-old Robby Mancini, Oakdale, stands next to his father, Bob, in the Capitol rotunda Feb. 14. Robby, who was diagnosed with diabetes when he was 2 years old, was one of many who spoke about how diabetes has affected their lives. The event was sponsored by the Juvenile Diabetes Foundation.



Susan Gunderson, left, executive director of LifeSource, and Jim Connolly, chief of examinations and inspections for the Driver and Vehicle Services Division of the Department of Public Safety, testify in support of a bill that would require that an application for a new or renewed driver's license contain a provision allowing the applicant to add a \$1 donation for purposes of public information and education on organ donation.

program netted \$250,000 in Minnesota next year.

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska), who voted against the measure, said she feared that creating the organ donor checkoff would lead to bills for more checkoffs from other good causes.

Molnau said she would rather see a financial checkoff on income taxes, similar to the natural resources checkoff.

Luther said it is better to place the checkoff on driver's license forms because people are already choosing whether they want to be a donor at that time.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) noted the Department of Public Safety is equipped to collect and disburse the checkoff funds because it fulfills that function for other programs.

The bill passed after Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen), chair of the committee, attached an amendment that would require the funding recipient to report to the Legislature in 2002 on total receipts and expenditures raised through the checkoff.

The bill now awaits action in the House Transportation Finance Committee.

Plan to cover health costs

A proposal that would use money generated by the state's lawsuit against Big Tobacco to off-set the cost of premium taxes and health care provider taxes received the approval of the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 15.

The bill (HF2716), sponsored by Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), would transfer one-time and ongoing tobacco settlement payments into the state's health care access fund, and provide for a contingent elimination of both the 1 percent premium tax and MinnesotaCare provider tax beginning Jan. 1, 2001.

"We have a great opportunity here with the funds available from the tobacco settlement to make health care coverage more affordable by offsetting what many feel are, quite frankly, hidden taxes," Bradley said.

Bradley's bill comes at a time when many people are expressing concern over rising health care coverage costs. Figures show that the average family in Minnesota pays approximately \$6,000 a year for health care coverage, according to Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth), co-sponsor of the bill.

Huntley said what many people do not realize is it's ultimately the employee, and not the employer, who pays the cost of his or her health benefits.

To support Huntley's claim, some studies have shown that between 83 and 100 percent of the real cost of employer contributions to health coverage is borne by workers, through offsetting wage cuts.

Blanton Bessinger, from the Minnesota Medical Association, spoke favorably of the bill and told the committee it would provide the greatest relief to low-income patients and fixed-income senior citizens with substantial pharmaceutical costs.

"Our health care tax system, as it exists now, is rather flawed and regressive," Bessinger said. Regressive in the sense that the poorest 10 percent of Minnesotans account for only about 1 percent of income earned but pay 2.6 percent of the MinnesotaCare tax, while the richest 10 percent pay a far less percentage of their total income to the tax, Bessinger said.

The bill now heads to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Art Building must go, officials say

Deplorable. That's one word Steven Rosenstone, dean of the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Minnesota, had for the condition of the Art Building on the Minneapolis campus.

"'Deplorable' hardly begins to describe it," said Rep. Peggy Leppik, chair of the House Higher Education Finance Committee. "It is an absolute disgrace to the university and to the state."

Rosenstone and other U of M officials detailed the university's capital spending proposal during Feb. 14 and Feb. 16 hearings before Leppik's committee.

The U of M is seeking \$134 million in bond proceeds to finance 10 capital initiatives. The Art Building has become a focus of attention for several reasons, not the least of which is the governor's lack of support for the project.

Gov. Jesse Ventura's bonding proposal would provide \$54 million for the U of M, with funds for three of the university's top four priorities. He left out the Art Building, which the university ranked third.

The U of M wants to tear down the Art Building — actually a 1921 industrial facility converted for university use in the 1960s — and replace it with a new structure considered the centerpiece of the "arts quarter" being developed on the West Bank.

The new building would cost \$44 million, but only \$21 million would come from the state. The rest would be paid for with university funds and private donations. A 1998 law provided \$730,000 in state funds for planning a new building.

Rosenstone painted a grim picture when he told lawmakers about the problems of the current facility. For starters, the building is not up to snuff when it comes to fire safety, air quality, and handicap accessibility.

"The building is a hodgepodge of dysfunctional spaces," Rosenstone said.

The governor's plan would provide \$35 million for the Molecular and Cellular Biology Building on the Minneapolis campus, \$10 million for a Microbial and Plant Genomics Building on the St. Paul campus, and \$9 million for maintenance work on all campuses. Ventura did not recommend funding for a proposed music performance center at the Duluth campus, a sports facility in Duluth, and renovation of buildings at Crookston and Morris.

Lawmakers took no action on the matter, but the committee will eventually compile a set of bonding recommendations for post-secondary institutions in Minnesota and send that list to the House Capital Investment Committee.

A major maintenance backlog

A backlog of nearly \$500 million in maintenance work would continue to grow under the governor's bonding plan for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

MnSCU requested \$100 million in bond funds for repair and maintenance projects at its 36 institutions. The money would pay for 294 individual projects such as roof repair, tuckpointing, plumbing work, heating and cooling system improvements, and fire sprinkler installations.

During a Feb. 11 meeting of the House Higher Education Finance Committee, officials from MnSCU explained their 20-year plan to eliminate the backlog of maintenance projects. The committee took no action on the matter.

Allan Johnson, MnSCU's associate vice



Justin Bing, center, a student at Normandale Community College, carries a sign challenging Gov. Jesse Ventura for financial aid during a Feb. 16 rally on the Capitol steps. The Minnesota State College Student Association's annual lobby day gave students the opportunity to talk with legislators about several issues, including lower tuition, bonding to renovate facilities, and the proposed closure of Anoka-Hennepin Technical College.

chancellor for facilities, said the backlog would continue to grow if lawmakers follow Gov. Jesse Ventura's plan to provide only \$30 million for maintenance work.

Under the governor's plan, there would be enough money to repair "only the worst of the worst," Johnson said.

The \$100 million request would allow MnSCU to begin chipping away at a backlog created by years — even decades — of deferred maintenance, Johnson said. At least \$56 million would be needed just to prevent the maintenance backlog from growing even larger.

The governor's \$30 million would pay the \$6.1 million needed for boiler repair and replacement at Winona State University, an item Ventura line-item vetoed from the 1999 bonding bill.

But approval of only \$30 million would force MnSCU to delay dozens of other repair projects, such as roof replacement at the Moorhead State University library, asbestos abatement at Normandale Community College, and replacement of bleachers at several campuses.

The repair and maintenance spending is listed as MnSCU's top priority for this year's bonding bill, but the system also requested funds for 23 new construction projects.

The list of priorities is topped by an \$18.1 million addition for science classrooms and labs at Normandale Community College, an \$11.1 million addition at North Hennepin Community College, \$8 million to renovate and add on at St. Cloud Technical College, and \$18.3 million for a new library at Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

The governor's plan does not include funds for the St. Cloud project or for 19 other projects proposed by MnSCU.

MnSCU's total request of \$230 million includes other projects ranging from \$16.7 million for a new library at Metropolitan State University to \$300,000 for renovations at Riverview Hall at St. Cloud State University.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Benefits verification program

The state would begin using a service that tracks undocumented aliens who apply for public assistance, under a bill approved by the House Civil Law Committee.

Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) is sponsoring a bill (HF2837) that would require the commissioner of Children, Families and Learning to verify the immigration status of all recipients using a federal program called Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE).

The SAVE program ensures that benefits would only go to citizens and qualified non-citizens, Boudreau said.

Assistance includes food stamps, general assistance, and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), which is the state's welfare reform initiative.

It is unclear what the total cost of the program would be. The cost for each inquiry would range between 2 cents and 23 cents, but Boudreau did not say what makes one inquiry

cost more than another. The software and employee training also must be factored into total costs, she said.

Currently, 45 states use SAVE to determine whether a person is eligible to receive benefits, Boudreau added. Minnesota received a waiver from participating in SAVE, and this bill would eliminate the waiver.

Patricia Mattos, an immigration lawyer, spoke against a second part of the bill that requires the department to turn over data on unregistered immigrants to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Mattos said the INS provision will have a "chilling effect" on people who are in the country legally and qualify for benefits. INS searches could cause delays for people seeking benefits, she said.

She said she fears the bill would cause people to be singled out by law enforcement for "looking Mexican and speaking Spanish." She told the committee about a lawsuit in Arizona because the state did not comply with the Civil Rights Act.

However, Mattos said she does not have any concerns about using SAVE for benefits.

The committee sent the bill to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Funds for wastewater treatment

The House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee was given an overview Feb. 16 of the governor's \$26 million bonding request for wastewater treatment projects.

Terry Kuhlman, director of the Minnesota Public Facilities Authority, said the governor's request includes \$12.8 million for the state matching funds that would draw five federal dollars for every state dollar.

The loans to local governments would be made available through two different programs: the Water Pollution Control Revolving Fund administered by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Drinking Water Revolving Fund administered through the Department of Health.

The funds would be used to address critical infrastructure needs associated with drinking water and wastewater facility improvements.

Kuhlman said the funds help communities contain the high costs associated with the projects.

And he told lawmakers the governor is also recommending \$8 million for the agency's Wastewater Infrastructure Funding, which supplements water pollution loans to match grant assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Christopher English, an engineer from the federal Agriculture Department, said that several of the state's smaller towns and cities are not properly treating and disposing of their wastewater. He said many communities have sewer systems that are failing to meet performance and discharge requirements. The estimated cost to upgrade and replace those systems is over \$1 billion.

Nancy Larson, a lobbyist for the Minnesota Association of Small Cities, and Remi Stone, a lobbyist for the League of Minnesota Cities, said the governor's decision not to recommend additional funds for the Wastewater Infrastructure Fund would mean several cities would not be able to complete their projects.

Stone said the fund provides gap funding for low-revenue communities. Also, by not providing matching funds, the state is in essence turning down federal funds.

"It is a huge mistake," she said.

The Wastewater Infrastructure Fund received \$20.5 million in the 1999 bonding bill, of which approximately \$3 million is left.

New storm sewer requested

The city of Bayport asked the House Judiciary Finance Committee to fund a new storm sewer project Feb. 17.

The city, which is home to the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Stillwater, suffers from periodic flooding in the winter, because the storm sewer system built to service the prison is damaged.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) testified for the project, along with Bayport City Administrator Ken Hartung.

Holsten said the old storm sewer pipe, constructed from clay, used to flow directly into the St. Croix River. However, damming on the river has raised the water level and the storm sewer pipe is now covered over by water. As a result, the pipe is damaged.

In addition, a spring-fed pond, which the prison had used for water supply for many years, is not being drained enough and the water is flooding areas of Bayport via a stream, Hartung said.

The project cost is estimated at \$3.8 million. Bayport is requesting bonds for the project because the storm sewer is technically the state's responsibility.

Members of the committee will consider the proposal for inclusion in its omnibus bonding request.

★ RECREATION

ATVs on forest trails

A bill that would modify some of the state's policies regarding all-terrain vehicles in state forests was approved Feb. 15 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

The bill (HF3213) also would modify the procedures used by the Department of Natural Resources to conduct timber sales.

A 1999 law deleted some of the DNR's administrative rules relating to the use of all-terrain vehicles in state parks and forests. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), would restore some of those deletions.

Under the bill, those vehicles would be allowed only on specific, designated trails. The only exception would be for big-game hunters in October through December who use the vehicles to help carry animals. Steve Simmer, recreation and land programs coordinator for the department, said the vehicles cause less damage during those times because the ground is generally frozen.

Also, the bill would specify that no one may cut trees to construct unauthorized, permanent trails on forest lands.

The provisions of the bill related to timber sales are designed to improve customer service and administrative efficiency within the department, said Bob Tomlinson, assistant director of the DNR's forestry division.

The department determines how much timber can be harvested each year on state-owned lands while sustaining forest areas.

Some committee members wanted the public to be more involved in those decisions.

Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) proposed an amendment that would require the DNR to publicize each timber auction. Also, each geographic unit of the forestry division would have to prepare a public notification plan every five years.

The committee voted against Kelliher's proposal. But a similar proposal by Ozment was adopted. Under that proposal, the DNR would be required to notify the public each year before its annual harvest plans.

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

Zoo bonding requests

Minnesota Zoo officials explained their \$5.1 million request for capital projects to the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee on Feb. 14.

The request includes \$1.1 million to replace parts of the heating and cooling system. The system mainly consists of a boiler and underground pipes, which carry water to control temperatures in buildings and in exhibits. The pipes are leaking in some areas, and the boiler is more than 20 years old.

Jim Reinholdz, vice president of finance for the zoo, said the system is critical because

BEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE



Leah Lumley, *left*, and her sister Hannah share the best seat in the House, their grandfather Rep. Howard Swenson's, during the Feb. 17 floor session. The girls are the daughters of Mark and Ruth Lumley of Austin, who were visiting for the day.

many of the animals need certain temperatures to live. The zoo opened in 1978 after about four years of construction, so parts of the facility are deteriorating.

The remaining \$4 million of the request would be to rebuild paths, roads, and parking lots at the zoo.

The committee will consider including the zoo's request in its recommendation for capital projects.

TAXES

Property tax cut proposed

The Property Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee heard two bills Feb. 14 that would address the rising cost of renting an apartment.

HF2201, sponsored by Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), and HF2769, sponsored by Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan), would reduce the class rate on the market value of apartment buildings (those with four or more units) from 2.4 percent to 2 percent.

"I hate to use the term, but it would be a shift in taxes," Dawkins said. "It would shift on to the state sales tax and income tax and reduce the government's over-reliance on the property tax."

Wilkin's bill would reduce the rate in 2001 while Dawkins' bill would spread the costs out over two years, reducing the rate from 2.4 percent to 2.2 percent in 2001 and to 2 percent in 2002. The Department of Revenue estimates the costs of either bill would be \$39.3 over the biennium.

The committee took no action on either bill but will consider them for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Wilkin said the rapid increase in the costs of rent is directly related to having too many renters and not enough apartments.

Jack Horner, from the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association, said that the average rent in the metro area is \$728, while the average vacancy rate is 1.7 percent. He said that ideally the area should have a 4 to 5 percent vacancy rate.

Horner said reducing property taxes would encourage new construction and rehabilitation of aging apartment complexes, thus increasing and preserving the supply.

He said that landlords have learned that simply increasing rental rates to offset tax increases is not efficient. At the same time, he said, more government subsidies are also not the answer.

"It is not good for the government to be the primary financier of housing," Horner said. "In other countries where government is, it doesn't work very well."

TRANSPORTATION

Rail maintenance funds requested

Railroads across Minnesota would be upgraded if the Legislature provides an additional \$12 million for the Minnesota Rail Service Investment Program.

Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet) is sponsoring a bill (HF3011) that would authorize general obligation bonds for the upgrades.

"The rail needs upgrading," Swenson said. "If it was upgraded, it would be used a lot more."

Al Vogel, an official with the state Department of Transportation, told the House Transportation Finance Committee on Feb. 16 that \$17 million has been requested in projects, but only \$6.3 million is currently available. The additional \$12 million would sufficiently meet the current needs.

The project was not included in the governor's bonding proposal, Vogel said.

Francis Schweiss, Renville County commissioner, told the committee the rail upgrades are needed.

"We consider it the lifeblood of the farming community, because it is the best way to

move our goods," Schweiss said.

The program was created in 1976 to rehabilitate rail lines. The system usually provides grants up to \$200,000 on short lines, Vogel said.

Since the program began, the state has spent \$52 million, which has generated an additional \$42 million in private or federal dollars, he said.

Gene Short, Redwood County commissioner, said each train car carries about the same capacity as 3.8 semi-tractor trailers. If train lines are not improved, more trucks will be on the road on two-lane highways, he said.

Schweiss said there are several gravel quarries in his county.

"Everything right now is being shipped by truck," he said.

Bruce Pinske, Seneca Foods plant manager, said his company is losing profits because it ships by truck instead of train.

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska) asked if money from this program could be used on commuter rail improvements. Vogel said it could not, noting this money is aimed specifically at the smaller rail lines.

Legislators will consider including the bill in the committee's bonding proposal.



Evidence on file

States fight crime with by collecting, storing DNA profiles

Law enforcement officials across the United States are increasingly using DNA technology as a crime-fighting device, and not merely as evidence for trials.

As a result, several states and the federal government are working more aggressively to collect DNA samples into massive databases.

DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) residue provides a genetic fingerprint often used to identify suspects from hair, bodily fluids, or other materials found at crime scenes. Currently, every state allows the collection of DNA samples from some convicted criminals.

Last October, the FBI unveiled a nationwide system, linking databases from all 50 states into one integrated information system of convicted criminals' DNA samples.

However, each state gathers the DNA data differently. Thirty-one states require people convicted of any violent crime to provide a sample. Nineteen states require only sex offenders to do so.

Louisiana is the only state that allows DNA testing of people arrested (as opposed to convicted) in certain sex crimes. Implementation of that practice has been delayed because of a need to upgrade the police laboratory to handle the increase in testing.

Opponents of the increasing the number laws requiring DNA samples worry about privacy issues, while proponents say that DNA samples are merely more detailed fingerprints, which are commonly gathered in databases.

In New York, a new law that took effect on Dec. 1, 1999, added 86 crimes — including arson, burglary, and drug offenses — to the number of offenses subject to mandatory testing. Previously only eight percent of convicted criminals in the state were obligated to give DNA samples, mostly those convicted of violent crimes.

New York Gov. George Pataki, with the support of the New York City police, actually proposed a measure that would have required the collection of DNA samples from anyone currently serving a felony sentence. It also asked for a feasibility study of taking DNA samples from suspects arrested for any felony-level crime.

In Minnesota, samples are currently only required from registered sex offenders. After July 1, 2000, people convicted of murder, assault, kidnapping, and burglary will also be required to give DNA samples.

(D. Maeda)

Subsidizing success

Increasing support for productive ethanol plants is key to success in a depressed market, farmers say

By MIKE DELARCO

Steve Muller, a farmer from Cottonwood County, is aware of the hardships that low crop prices and unpredictable weather can present for families dependent upon agriculture to pay the bills and put dinner on the table.

For a growing percentage of farmers, Muller said, concern over the uncertainty of crop revenue during any given year can, at some point, be overwhelming. But many farmers who, like Muller, grow corn in Minnesota have found that production of ethanol might be more than just a temporary solution to a somewhat sagging farm economy.

Muller, a partner in the Ethanol 2000 plant in Bingham Lake, said that state subsidies for the production of ethanol have provided farmers in his area an alternative when corn prices are low. The plant, he continued, has

October 1997, all fuels sold in Minnesota must have an oxygenated additive like ethanol.

Growth has been a staple at the Ethanol 2000 plant since its inception. A few ethanol plants in the state, including the plant in Bingham Lake, have, in fact, been able to exceed their approved eligibility level of 12 million gallons a year. But, because such plants are not eligible to receive payments for production above the agreed-to level, many feel their progress is not being rewarded.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea) would allow ethanol producers to qualify for state provided payments based upon actual production rather than documented capacity levels. The bill (HF2698) was approved Feb. 10 by the House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee.

Dorman's proposal would increase the maximum production level for producer pay-

ments to 15 million gallons per year per plant. Currently, plants that were operating at the approved capacity of 12 million gallons per year as of July 1, 1998 but are now producing more could only receive producer payments up to the 12 million gallon limit.

Currently, plants are receiving payments of 20 cents per gallon of ethanol.

"In a year when we have a surplus of dollars at our disposal, I think this is a pro-

posal that should be fully funded," Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul) said.

In addition, the bill would increase the amount of ethanol payments from \$68.4 million approved in 1999 to \$72.4 million.

Osthoff said he is also planning to propose legislation that would place a ban on the use

of the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) in gasoline in Minnesota later this session. Concern has surfaced in recent months that spills of gasoline containing MTBE can lead to problems of drinking water contamination.

A proposal to ban the use of fuel containing MTBE could benefit the ethanol industry by increasing demand for the fuel additive.

Government subsidies for ethanol production were introduced in the 1970s partly to reduce America's dependence on foreign oil and partly to trim pollution associated with the burning of traditionally-blended fuel.

Proponents of ethanol-blended gasoline contend its use reduces pollution, helps to better balance the United States' trade deficit, and expands the American job market as ethanol-producing plants continue to surface in rural areas — not just in Minnesota, but across the nation.

Many ethanol plants in Minnesota are owned and operated by farmer cooperatives. Encouraging the ethanol industry to continue to grow will allow for a bit more stability in farming communities across the state, Dorman said.

Dorman's bill would also remove a quarterly cap of \$8.5 million in total producer payments by the state and allow a plant that has actual production below approved capacity in any of the first seven quarters of a biennium to recapture the "lost" payments in the last quarter of the biennium by producing more.

The bill would keep the cap on total annual payments to a plant at \$3 million.

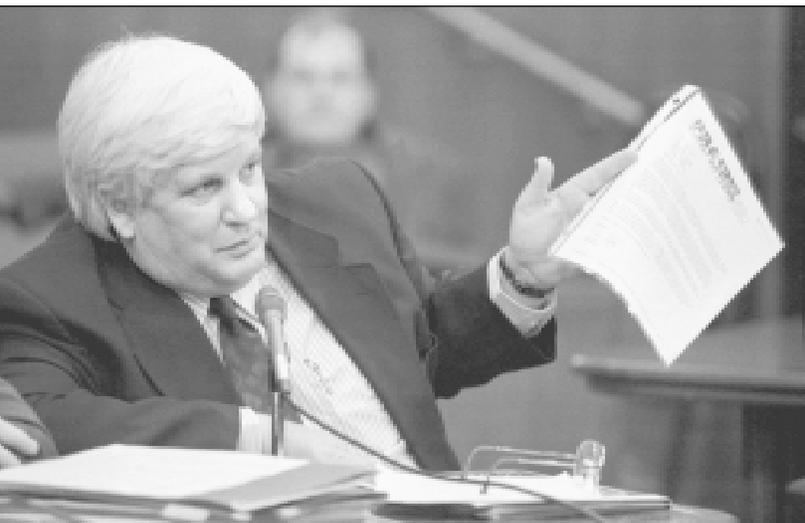
There continues to be some opposition to the use of ethanol-blended gasoline. Tests have shown that fuel containing ethanol can lead to lower gas mileage. Also, the vapor pressure associated with ethanol-blended gasoline is higher and occasionally can hamper a car's acceleration capability.

Maple Grove resident Bret Collier testified before the committee in support of eliminating subsidies for ethanol production.

Collier said his car had engine problems in the past due to ethanol-blended gasoline, and he argued that reports have shown there is no scientific proof that ethanol-blended gasoline significantly benefits environment.

Also, big oil companies have consistently opposed subsidies to the ethanol industry, claiming that doing so is unfair for purposes of marketplace competition.

Dorman's bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee. 



Dave Kolsrud, board chairman of a Luverne farmer cooperative, testifies before the Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Committee on Feb. 10 in support of a bill that would increase subsidies to ethanol producers.

also created many jobs.

"The ethanol industry as a whole means a lot to myself, my family, and the community where we live and work," Muller said in testimony before a House committee.

Ethanol is a form of alcohol distilled from corn and used as an additive to fuel. Since

Time to fight crime

Some seek to extend the statute of limitations for sex crimes and other serious offenses

By CHRIS VETTER

Advances in DNA testing mean evidence can remain fresh for years after a crime is committed.

"Memories fade, but DNA profiles never change," Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner told the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 15.

But even with that compelling evidence, if time has run out on the ability to prosecute those cases, officials are powerless to bring the perpetrator to justice.

Gaertner hopes to eliminate the state's current statute of limitations guidelines on sex offense crimes, manslaughter, and criminal vehicular homicide offenses.

Statute of limitations refers to the number of years that attorneys have to convict an offender after a crime has been committed. For instance, the law states that an arsonist cannot be convicted after five years have passed since the incident.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) is sponsoring a bill (HF2892) that would eliminate the current nine-year statute of limitations on sex offense crimes when the victim is older than age 18. The bill also would eliminate the statute of limitations on any crime that resulted in the death of a person, from vehicular homicide or manslaughter.

With new technology developed in recent years, detectives can compile physical evidence from fingerprints to fiber analysis to catch an offender.

Gaertner, who for the first time brought DNA evidence before a jury in 1989, told legislators the practice is now commonplace.

Gaertner also described a series of rapes in Milwaukee in 1993. The crimes were all committed in a similar style. Samples taken from the three victims have been matched to the same offender.

Now, about seven years after those rapes were committed, the offender has not been caught. The prosecutor in Milwaukee filed criminal charges last October against John Doe based on that man's DNA, in hopes to circumvent

Wisconsin's statute of limitations law.

The likelihood that another man has the same DNA as John Doe is one in 1.96 billion to one in 7.25 billion, according to the court complaint.

Gaertner fears the plan will fail, and she doesn't want to see Minnesota prosecutors try a similar route.

"We're asking the Legislature to move on this now, before any prosecutor has to stand before you and say, 'It's too late. Maybe next time,'" she said.

According to Gaertner, DNA evidence has linked a prison inmate to a murder that occurred four years ago in Rochester. It also connected a sex offender to a rape in Minneapolis seven years ago. Statutes of limitation could stop similar cases from leading to convictions in the future, she said.



Ramsey County Attorney Susan Gaertner testifies for a bill that would extend the statute of limitations on several crimes during a Feb. 15 hearing of the House Crime Prevention Committee.

More of these older cases could be solved in the future as states link together through a national DNA database. Minnesota is among 23 states that are linked in the system that was created in October 1998.

Statutes of limitation are in place because witnesses die and memories fade over time, according to the nonpartisan House Research Department. Ideally, a case would be brought to the court when the details are fresh in the minds of witnesses.

In the past 10 years, Minnesota has loosened its statute of limitation rules. In 1989, the state approved a special limit for cases involving minors who fall victim to sex offenders. Cases involving minors, who may have repressed memories of sex crimes or kept silent out of fear, were given two years of extra time. In 1991, the state expanded that time frame from two to three years.

Then in 1995, the statute of limitations on all criminal sexual conduct cases was stretched from seven years to nine years, giving prosecutors more time to seek convictions.

An important rule in sex crime cases is the offense must be reported within 72 hours, if the victim is 18 or older. Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) asked if the length of time should be longer.

Gaertner said the hour-limit should stay in place, saying it gives the victim some time to recover from the incident, but it also gives police prosecutors ample opportunity to collect samples and begin an investigation.

Stanek's bill is expected to become part of a larger measure addressing sex offender laws that will be assembled later this session.

Another proposal expected to be part of statute of limitations legislation this year pertains to kidnapping cases. Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) is sponsoring a bill (HF2493) that would eliminate limitations in kidnapping cases.

Skoglund said the bill arose from his concern over the Jessica Swanson case, in which a three-year-old girl vanished in Goodhue County in 1995. Dale Jenson, the boyfriend of Swanson's mother, admitted to accidentally killing the girl last year, but he could not be prosecuted for kidnapping because the time limit had expired.

While the likelihood of a similar case occurring is remote, Skoglund said, the state should pass a law to keep the case open beyond the current three-year limit.

A full jailhouse

Local officials want to replace overcrowded, outmoded county jails with new regional facilities

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

Aitkin County Sheriff Dennis Landborg has watched the same offenders pass in and out of the county's 20-bed jail many times. County law enforcement officials are concerned that their limited resources inhibit their ability to even house the area's prisoners, let alone keep them from coming back.

Landborg and other officials say rural jails aren't providing the adequate programming services to keep inmates from reoffending. And the officials contend new regional facilities are necessary to provide enough space to house all the offenders and to provide rehabilitation programs.

"The people in these facilities keep coming back, coming back, coming back," said Scott Arneson, coordinator for Aitkin County. "Why? It's because we're not doing a lot to try and get these people to not come back."

Aitkin County is one of many in Minnesota working in cooperation with neighboring counties to build regional jail facilities. The House Judiciary Finance Committee has heard requests for nine regional construction projects at a total estimated cost of nearly \$163 million.

Most of the consortia are requesting that a portion of the projects be funded by state bonds. The rest would be covered with local matching funds.

Kevin Corbid from the Association of Minnesota Counties said each community requesting funds has assumed no more than 50 percent of the total costs will come from the state.

Only seven of the regional jail projects were submitted to the Department of Finance by the September 1999 deadline. Those seven requests totaled \$67.3 million in state bonds.

From 1989 to 1998, average daily population in the state's jails grew from 3,718 to 5,282, an increase of 42 percent. Officials attribute the increases to several factors, most of which are controlled by state policy-makers.

For example, in the early 1990s, studies showed that states could save large amounts of money if certain felons were sentenced to

jail time rather than state prison, otherwise known as downward departures.

In 1997, the state sent 880 felons to county jails. According to the state Sentencing Guidelines Commission, Minnesota saved more than \$68 million in operating costs during that year.

Aitkin County has experienced a 32 percent overall inmate increase in the past five years. It has organized with five neighboring counties — Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd, and Wadena — to build a 174 bed facility in Brainerd at an estimated cost of \$16 million.

Currently, those six counties have an average daily population of 251 inmates in their jails and a total population of 325 inmates including the 74 being monitored electronically.

However, 39 inmates are housed out and 83 people in those six counties are currently on waiting lists to get into jail and serve their sentences.

"If you want my opinion, that's a crime right there," Arneson said. "People should not have to wait to get into jail after they commit a crime."

Other consortia of counties in the state are following suit. Only two regional facilities are currently operating in Minnesota. One of them, operating since 1976, needs to build another facility to meet growing needs.

Tri-County Community Corrections, a joint venture of Red Lake, Polk and Norman counties, plans to build a new 200 bed facility for \$16.9 million.

Officials from rural counties say their concerns go beyond merely locking up lawbreakers. With limited resources and small jails, each individual county cannot provide adequate programs to keep offenders from going back behind bars.

The central Minnesota proposal in Brainerd includes operating the jail with 17 chemical dependency counselors, adult basic education programs, and other mental health resources.

The practical impact of increased penalties and downward departures of the 1990s is that many of the state's DWI and drug offenders serve their sentences in county jails. As a result, those inmates need treatment.

But beyond that, officials claim, many of the inmates lack work and social skills to keep them from falling back into destructive lifestyles.

"A lot of these people are missing basic life skills," Arneson said.

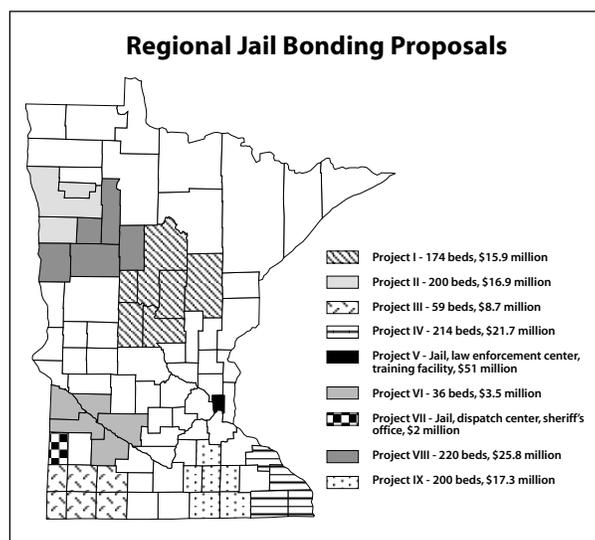
The requests for state funds for the regional jails may be coming at a bad time. Gov. Jesse Ventura has not recommended any bond funding for the projects. In addition, the governor has given judiciary spending a low priority among other capital projects.

"It's not that I don't support the idea," said Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada), chair of the Judiciary Finance Committee. "The committee thinks there's a definite need for regional jails, but a lot of the members are concerned."

Beyond the money factor, legislators have expressed concerns about the precedent that might be set if the state starts funding local projects.

"That's the biggest argument against it," Broecker said.

Broecker agreed that in order for the notion of regional jails to succeed, local governments have to match any state funds.



Source: House Judiciary Finance Committee

A continuing threat

Infamous crimes have prompted efforts to protect citizens from sex offenders

BY BRENDA VAN DYCK

Minnesota's sex offender laws are more stringent now than 10 years ago. Tragically, it's often been terrible crimes that have forced the toughening of these laws.

And with the abduction and apparent murder of 19-year-old Katie Poirier last May, legislators are already looking to increase enforcement of registration laws, close loopholes, and otherwise strengthen the state's sex offender laws.

Efforts to toughen laws began in 1988, after two women were sexually assaulted and then murdered in Minneapolis parking ramps. In both cases, the perpetrators had extensive histories of sexual violence against women and had recently been released from prison for sex crimes.

Legislators responded in the 1989 session by increasing prison time for convicted sex offenders. Under the law, individuals convicted of first-degree murder, who either had prior murder convictions or were guilty of first- or second-degree criminal sexual conduct (involving force or violence), would be sentenced to life in prison without parole.

In addition, a person with two previous sex offense convictions who was then convicted of first- or second-degree criminal sexual conduct would be subject to a mandatory 37-year prison sentence.

The law also allowed courts to deviate from sentencing guidelines for offenders who could be defined as predators. For example, judges could double sentences and require treatment upon the person's release. In addition, courts could civilly commit a patterned sex offender under the psychopathic personality statute.

Other provisions in the 1989 law required probation officers to notify local law enforcement authorities of the address of a sex offender when he or she was released from jail. The law also allocated more money for sex offender treatment programs for adults and juveniles.

The Legislature followed up in 1991 by passing a law requiring sex offenders to register their addresses with local law enforcement authorities when they were released from prison.

In 1991, the state was again stunned by the rapes and murders of two young women. One of the women, Melissa Johnson, was sexually assaulted and killed by Scott E. Stewart, who had been released from prison four days earlier for a 1988 rape. The murders prompted some lawmakers to propose reinstating the state's death penalty.

Then-Gov. Arne Carlson formed a 25-member Commission on Violent Crimes, which recommended creating a new "predatory offender" crime classification subject to life imprisonment. The commission also recommended increasing the use of the psychopathic personality law, and increasing supervision following release from prison to 10 years for violent criminals.

The 1992 Legislature followed some of those recommendations and passed a crime law that again increased sentences for sex offenders. Under the law, rapists who murdered their victims would be subject to life in prison without parole; they wouldn't have to have prior convictions for criminal sexual conduct, as was the case under the 1989 law.

Offenders convicted of a rape for a third time would be subject to a mandatory life sentence with the possibility of parole after 30 years. Those convicted of rape who had earlier been convicted of aggravated rape would be subject to a mandatory 30-year sentence.

All sex offenders would undergo intense supervision upon release from prison. Six months prior to their scheduled release, all sex offenders would be reviewed for possible civil commitment to the state's mental health hos-

pital under the psychopathic personality law.

The law also included provisions for sexual violence prevention and sexual harassment education.

In 1994, the state was forced to deal with its psychopathic personality law, then more than 50 years old. The law allowed the state to civilly commit criminals at the end of their prison sentences. (The law also allowed the state to commit people who hadn't been convicted of any crime, if they were proven to be sexual psychopaths.)

Passed in 1939, the

law allowed commitment of anyone who showed "emotional instability, or impulsiveness of behavior, or lack of customary standards of good judgment, or failure to appreciate the consequences of personal acts, or a combination of any such conditions, as to render such person irresponsible for personal conduct with respect to sexual matters and thereby dangerous to other persons."

In 1940, a requirement was added that a person could be committed if he or she had an "utter inability" to control his or her impulses. In essence, the law allowed the state to indefinitely hospitalize sexual predators if their behavior was considered unstoppable.



Pam Poirier, at podium, lends her support to Katie, who was allegedly abducted and murdered. Poirier is accompanied by Rep. Karen Clark, Minnesota House Minority Leader Tom

Registering sex offenders

Sex offenders in Minnesota are separated into three different classifications, based on the risk the offender poses to re-offend in the community. Level 3 is the most serious classification. The state's community notification law requires information to be released according to the offender's classification.

Level 1: Victims and witnesses who have requested notification, people designated by the prosecuting attorney, and other law enforcement agencies are told of the offender's release and whereabouts.

Level 2: Schools and day care centers are added to the list of those to be notified. They also receive the offender's picture.

Level 3: Community notices are posted and hearings are held, where law enforcement informs the community of the offender's release and residence.



Support to legislation that would toughen the laws related to sex crimes during a Feb. 3 news conference. Poirier's daughter, who was killed by a convicted sex offender. Others attending the news conference were, left to right, Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Pugh, Minneapolis Police Sgt. Mick Ganley, Sen. Randy Kelly, Rep. Wes Skoglund, Rep. Joe Mullery, former Minneapolis Mayor Al Hofstede, and Rep. Erik Paulsen.

leased from prison and moving into their neighborhood.

Offenders are classified under three different levels and notification requirements vary for each level — the higher the risk level, the higher the risk for reoffending. Therefore, notification becomes more broad the higher the risk.

The state's community notification law is consistent with the national "Megan's law," which was named after 7-year-old Megan Kanka, who was kidnapped, raped, and killed in 1994 by a New Jersey neighbor, twice convicted of sexual assaults of young girls.

In 1999, the Legislature passed a law that would revoke the teaching license of anyone convicted of criminal sexual conduct. 

Brenda van Dyck is the editor/publications manager for the nonpartisan House Research Department.

In January 1994, the state Supreme Court upheld the law by a 4-3 vote. Wanting to bolster the law against court challenges, the 1994 Legislature set up a task force to study what to do with the law and sexual predators. That summer, the state Supreme Court ruled that two sexual offenders who had been civilly committed should be released because they didn't display behavior that would mandate their commitment under the law.

One of the men scheduled to be released was Dennis Linehan, who was civilly committed after serving 27 years of a 40-year sentence for the 1965 murder of a 14-year-old girl. Shortly after the murder, Linehan admitted raping a woman and assaulting a 12-year-old girl. He escaped from prison in 1975 and attempted to molest a 12-year-old girl in Michigan.

The Legislature met in special session to fix the law before any people who had been civilly committed could be released. Legislators settled on a law that created the category of "sexually dangerous person."

Such a person, according to the law, could be committed to a state hospital if he or she had a history of harmful sexual offenses, had a sexual mental disorder or dysfunction, and was considered likely to engage in harmful sexual conduct in the future. A key provision of this law is that it did not require showing that the offender was unable to control his or her impulses.

The law was upheld by the Minnesota Supreme Court in 1996.

That was also the year that the Legislature passed a community notification law, which required authorities to notify communities when convicted sex offenders were being re-

Still seeking solutions

Lawmakers propose new ways to combat sex crimes

Sex offenders would be subject to stiffer penalties, longer registration periods, and restrictions on legal name changes, under sex offender bills advancing in the House.

The bills come in the wake of the 1999 abduction and apparent killing of Katie Poirier. The suspect in that case, Donald Blom, has a criminal record dotted with sex offenses.

"You're going to see a very tough bill on sex offenders," said Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), who chairs the House Crime Prevention Committee. "It's our job to close loopholes, and we're doing it."

Stanek's committee approved a handful of bills Feb. 15 and Feb. 17 related to sex offenders.

Stanek is carrying a bill (HF2892) that would eliminate the statute of limitations for sex offenses.

Rep. Barb Haake (R-Mounds View) is sponsoring a bill (HF2746) that would increase penalties for not registering properly as a sex offender from a gross misdemeanor to a felony.

The state knows where only 35 percent of sex offenders live, Haake said. The existing penalty is not strict enough to make offenders care about filling out all the paperwork every time they move or change jobs, she said.

The maximum penalty for failure to comply with registration would be two years in prison and a \$4,000 fine. A second offense would lead to a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Another bill (HF2747) would restrict the rights of all felons to change their names. The sponsor, Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), said the public should be given the right to know when felons change their name.

Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie) is sponsoring a bill (HF2896) that would require the state to create a Web site with information on all Level 3 sex offenders. Currently, the state produces quarterly newsletters.

Police would have the right to impersonate children in Internet chat rooms, under a bill (HF3037) sponsored by Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls).

Skoglund is also sponsoring a bill (HF2993) that would allow, but not require, the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to publicly share information on sex offenders who have failed to register. The information could be shared with the media or on the Internet.

"I think the public would like to aid the (bureau)," Skoglund said. "I think it will have a positive impact in gaining compliance."

Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka) is sponsoring a bill (HF3309) that would increase the probationary period from 10 years to 20 years on Level 2 and Level 3 sex offenders.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji) is sponsoring a bill (HF2748) that would impose lifetime registration for three categories of repeat sex offenders.

Another measure (HF3112), sponsored by Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada), would allow the checking of databases in the state to locate the current residences of sex offenders.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) is sponsoring a bill that would require sex offenders to register secondary (non-homestead) property.

Stanek said all the sex offender bills will likely be rolled into one larger piece of legislation. The vehicle is expected to be HF2892, the bill related to the statute of limitations for sex offenses.

(C. Vetter)

Transit trouble

Some lawmakers now want to repeal funding for light-rail transit

By JON FURE

For several years, proponents of light-rail transit in Minnesota have proclaimed its potential benefits, including less traffic congestion, lower air pollution, and enhancing people's ability to get to work and other destinations like the University of Minnesota and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

In the last two years, the state has authorized \$100 million in bonding revenue to be spent on the Hiawatha Corridor light-rail project. But Republican members of the House would like to repeal that funding and look for less expensive ways to achieve the same benefits.

"Someone has to stand up for the public and say there is a wiser and more effective way to move people, and we are willing to do that," House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) said recently.

The project, which would cover 11.4 miles from downtown Minneapolis to Bloomington,

from companies that own underground utility lines where the project is to be built.

Criticism of the project surfaced during a Feb. 15 informational hearing conducted by the House Capital Investment Committee.

Opponents of the proposal object to the costs and to the prospect of spending more money in the future to expand the system throughout the region.

A recent cost-benefit analysis of the Hiawatha project, done by the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Office of Investment Management, found that the project would return about 42 cents for every dollar of construction and estimated operating costs.

Jason Lewis, a conservative radio commentator, spoke against the Hiawatha project during the Capital Investment Committee hearing. He said light rail is likely to take riders away from buses, but is not likely to get people to use transit instead of their automobiles.

Lewis said the project has other hidden expenses, such as costs of police patrolling the system and of moving utility lines to accommodate the construction.

Lynn Woodward of Edina, who specializes in real estate and urban land economics and opposes light rail, said Minnesota should spend more money to try and develop its own technology for transportation instead of using technology developed elsewhere. His suggestions included privatizing some buses and developing a

"personal rapid transit" system.

Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove) said the hearing was giving short shrift to supporters of light rail.

Marko said the state should consider a variety of transit options, and she argued it's unrealistic to think that any plan would elimi-

nate traffic problems in the Twin Cities.

"We're going to have to live with a certain amount of congestion," she said.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) asked, "if the goal is to get people out of their cars, couldn't we just let people ride buses for free?"

Woodward said he regularly takes the bus, and it's often standing-room only.

"I'm not in favor of reducing fees," he said. "People want speed and convenience, and they'll pay for it."

Woodward said only two factors cause auto drivers to switch to a transit mode — visible passing speed of the transit mode compared to other vehicles and door-to-door travel time not more than twice as long as it would take in a car.

Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview) said the project's cost estimate has risen since the House approved the \$100 million.

"We were sold a much different package during session last year than we are looking at right now," said Krinkie.

To date, three lawsuits have been filed regarding the Hiawatha project.

Krinkie and other lawmakers have filed a lawsuit against the Transportation Department and the governor, claiming that the department did not properly study the effectiveness of the project. A separate lawsuit filed by Leslie Davis and Earth Protector, Inc., said the proposed route for the project has changed, so the Transportation Department should study the project's environmental impacts again. In another lawsuit, a Ramsey County court found that the department wrongly excluded a company from submitting a bid on a \$400 million contract.

Nacho Diaz, Metropolitan Council transportation planning director, told the House Transportation Finance Committee on Feb. 16 that proposed bus-only transitways would cost about \$100 million each. Three such transitways are part of a long-term plan and would not replace the proposed light-rail line.

Diaz said the Metropolitan Council is seeking \$10 million this year for design and engineering costs for the bus transitways.

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska), chair of the Transportation Finance Committee, said that the bill to repeal funding for light rail has not been completed. The committee is also looking for alternatives to light rail for the Hiawatha Corridor and the entire metropolitan area. 

Writer Chris Vetter contributed to this article.



Bob Winter, center, of the Department of Transportation, responds to questions from the members of the House Capital Investment Committee on Feb. 15 after giving an overview of the state's light-rail transit plans. Also pictured are light-rail opponents, clockwise from top, Ed Anderson, Jason Lewis, David Strom, and Lynn Woodward.

is expected to cost \$548 million. Half of the funding is expected to come from the Federal Transit Administration. Hennepin County and the Metropolitan Airports Commission are set to spend \$70 million each on the project.

Of the state's contribution, \$34.3 million is already spent, mainly to acquire right of way

Monday, Feb. 14

**HF3302—Finseth (R)
Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**

Lawful gambling purpose definition expanded to include expenditures for periodic uniform cleaning reimbursement.

**HF3303—Entenza (DFL)
Crime Prevention**

Failure to pay over state funds criminal penalties provision expanded to include failure to remit a tax.

**HF3304—Seifert, J. (R)
Civil Law**

Seat belt and child passenger restraint system use admissibility into evidence prohibition repealed.

**HF3305—Skoe (DFL)
Taxes**

Mortgage registry and deed tax proceeds apportionment between county and state provided.

**HF3306—Wilkin (R)
Health & Human Services Policy**
Residential hospice program requirements modified.

**HF3307—Rest (DFL)
Taxes**
Job training program income tax credit and participant income limit modified, authorized credit amounts increased, and permanent credit provided.

**HF3308—Finseth (R)
Jobs & Economic
Development Policy**
Distance work projects grants-in-aid provided to promote technology in rural areas.

**HF3309—Abeler (R)
Crime Prevention**
Previously unregistered predatory offenders required to register when convicted of specified crimes.

**HF3310—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy**
Health plan contract stacking regulated and remedy provided.

**HF3311—Dawkins (DFL)
Civil Law**
Parenting plans provided, terminology modified, and money appropriated.

**HF3312—Finseth (R)
Agriculture Policy**
Meat and poultry inspection uniformity provided.

**HF3313—Kielkucki (R)
K-12 Education Finance**
School district equity revenue definition modified and money appropriated.

**HF3314—Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**
Minneapolis Police Relief Association additional post-retirement asset distribution provided.

**HF3315—Rhodes (R)
Civil Law**
Property attachable by garnishment limited.

**HF3316—Rhodes (R)
Civil Law**
Child support obligor appealing a judgment authorized to file a bond with the court pending the appeal outcome.

**HF3317—Van Dellen (R)
Taxes**
Property tax market value increases limited.

**HF3318—Luther (DFL)
Civil Law**
Standby and alternate custodians of children designation provided.

**HF3319—Jennings (DFL)
Transportation Policy**
Driver education programs combined with public safety responsibilities, automobile liability judgment satisfaction regulated, ignition interlock pilot program repealed, and driver's license renewal provisions modified.

**HF3320—Carlson (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance**
School district crime-related costs levy increased and proceeds usage modified.

**HF3321—Daggett (R)
Taxes**
Regional jails operation costs special levy provided.

**HF3322—Biernat (DFL)
Transportation Policy**
Photographic evidence pilot program studying the feasibility of issuing citations for failure to obey traffic signals authorized and money appropriated.

**HF3323—Biernat (DFL)
Education Policy**
Statewide school district employee insurance benefits task force created.

**HF3324—Seifert, J. (R)
K-12 Education Finance**
School District No. 6067, Tri-District, metropolitan magnet school grant provided to construct a new building, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

**HF3325—Westrom (R)
Agriculture Policy**
Seed germination test time period extended.

**HF3326—Westrom (R)
Agriculture Policy**
Dairy product sales below cost exception provided for class I and II products sold the day preceding the open dating stamp.

**HF3327—Broecker (R)
Local Government &
Metropolitan Affairs**
Local government authorization to petition to amend or repeal rules sunset eliminated.

**HF3328—Hackbarth (R)
Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**
Iron Range off-highway vehicle recreation area addition in St. Louis County provided and previous appropriation availability extended.

**HF3329—Wolf (R)
Commerce**
Minnesota telecommunications act adopted.

**HF3330—McCollum (DFL)
Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**
Campaign finance reform provided and money appropriated.

**HF3331—Howes (R)
Crime Prevention**
Department of crime victims and violence prevention created, office of prevention of violence against women established, consolidating programs within the department, and money appropriated.

**HF3332—Swenson (R)
Agriculture Policy**
Dairy research and promotion council alternative term expiration dates authorized.

**HF3333—Nornes (R)
Higher Education Finance**
Fergus Falls Community College improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

**HF3334—Lenczewski (DFL)
Local Government &
Metropolitan Affairs**
Outdoor sports and entertainment facility environmental impact statement required.

**HF3335—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**
Noncompetitive promotions prohibited in specified cases and confidential employee definition modified.

**HF3336—Hilty (DFL)
Local Government &
Metropolitan Affairs**
Silver election to join the Moose Lake Area Fire Protection district clarified and district equipment certificate issuance authorized.

**HF3337—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy**
Licensed dentists authorized to bargain collectively with dental health plans.

**HF3338—Holberg (R)
Local Government &
Metropolitan Affairs**
Scott County Board authorized to reorganize and delegate duties.

**HF3339—Dempsey (R)
Taxes**
Historic structure rehabilitation expenditure income tax credit provided.

**HF3340—Holsten (R)
Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**
Agricultural petroleum storage tank removal reimbursement provided.

**HF3341—Van Dellen (R)
Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**
Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) uncredited Hennepin County employment service credit purchase authorized.

**HF3342—Mariani (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy**
Foster care agency and foster parent requirements for children who rely on medical equipment to sustain life or monitor a medical condition provided.

HF3343—Daggett (R)**Taxes**

Lake improvement district special levy authorized.

HF3344—Stang (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Volunteer fire departments authorized to conduct annual raffles and conditions provided.

HF3345—Entenza (DFL)**Civil Law**

Child support enforcement provisions modified.

HF3346—Stanek (R)**Crime Prevention**

Criminal and juvenile justice information policy group membership modified, technology infrastructure improvements authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3347—Gleason (DFL)**Civil Law**

Chief administrative law judge authorized to establish a subject matter specialization system for judges.

HF3348—Jennings (DFL)**Taxes**

Improvement order notices to property owners required to contain an assessment estimate.

HF3349—Skoe (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Experimental waters designation and fishing contest provisions modified.

HF3350—McCullum (DFL)**Taxes**

Elderly and disabled federal taxable income subtraction created.

HF3351—Jennings (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Right-of-way acquisition loan fund created, fund uses and transfers provided, and money appropriated.

HF3352—Gerlach (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Lighted fishing lures authorized.

HF3353—Jennings (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Overpass improvement fund created, fund uses and transfers provided, advisory committee established, and money appropriated.

HF3354—McCullum (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. grant provided for a national monument and money appropriated.

HF3355—Tomassoni (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Re-employment insurance noncovered employment definition exclusion provided for smokechasers.

HF3356—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Essential community provider status application deadline extended for a nonprofit community health care facility serving Southeast Asian immigrants and refugees, and termination and renewal designation modified.

HF3357—Folliard (DFL)**Education Policy**

School guidance and counseling incentive grant program established and money appropriated.

HF3358—Bishop (R)**Ways & Means**

Human services, K-12 education, and family and early childhood education appropriation amounts adjusted reflecting state revenue forecast; and money appropriated.

HF3359—Ness (R)**Education Policy**

Uniform minimum length of school year established.

HF3360—Storm (R)**Taxes**

Farm rebate provided for agricultural assistance and money appropriated.

HF3361—Stanek (R)**Crime Prevention**

Board of Public Defense responsibility for specified criminal defense costs provided.

HF3362—Trimble (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Intensive intervention transitional employment training project for Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants provided, and money appropriated.

HF3363—Westerberg (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Clean water grants and public water accesses provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3364—Cassell (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Alexandria Technical College improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3365—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Vulnerable adult neglect provisions modified and health licensing boards required to make employment disqualification determinations.

HF3366—Gleason (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 280, Richfield, airport runway impact pupil unit aid provided.

HF3367—Clark, K. (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Spoken language and health care interpreter voluntary registry established, and money appropriated.

HF3368—Kahn (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

State-funded outdoor lighting fixture standards provided and outdoor light pollution restricted.

HF3369—Peterson (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Anhydrous ammonia tampering prohibited, and civil and criminal penalties imposed.

HF3370—Westerberg (R)**Crime Prevention**

Juvenile alternative residential programs established, report provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF3371—Peterson (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Livestock dealer bond amounts increased, grain buying transaction status clarified, and grain storage provisions modified.

HF3372—Holberg (R)**Crime Prevention**

Convicted defendants required to pay criminal prosecution and investigation costs.

HF3373—Pawlenty (R)**Civil Law**

Business discrimination based on national origin prohibited.

HF3374—Rest (DFL)**Taxes**

Property tax education homestead credit expanded to include seasonal recreational property and name changed to general education credit.

HF3375—Mulder (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Health care purchasing alliances modified.

HF3376—Stanek (R)**Crime Prevention**

Minnesota capitol police department created and merged with capitol complex security division, oversight committee created, governor security increased, and money appropriated.

HF3377—Johnson (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

School district technology needs grant program created and money appropriated.

HF3378—Tomassoni (DFL)**Local Government &****Metropolitan Affairs**

St. Louis County unclassified service position authorized number increased.

HF3379—Goodno (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Moorhead State University campus security building constructed and state property leased.

HF3380—Pawlenty (R)**Crime Prevention**

Dakota County integrated criminal justice information system pilot project created and money appropriated.

HF3381—Koskinen (DFL)**Commerce**

Convenience store security measures minimum requirements provided, security cameras tax credit provided, and penalties imposed.

HF3382—Rhodes (R)**Taxes**

Investment coins and bullion sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3383—Koskinen (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Board of Trustees campus closure moratorium imposed.

HF3384—Van Dellen (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

University of Minnesota Board of Regents type I diabetes research grant provided and money appropriated.

HF3385—Dorman (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

RIM: fish facilities and wildlife management areas improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3386—Abeler (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Critical habitat matching account funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3387—Ozment (R)**Environment &****Natural Resources Finance**

Water pollution control appropriated money.

HF3388—Westerberg (R)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate provided and money appropriated.

HF3389—Rukavina (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Small gasoline retailer petroleum storage tank removal reimbursement provided.

HF3390—Erickson (R)
Education Policy
Academic achievement charter schools authorized.

HF3391—Kubly (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Trunk Highway No. 71 bridge over the Minnesota River designated as William Angermeyer Memorial Bridge.

HF3392—Seifert, M. (R)
Civil Law
District Court fine and fee transfers clarified related to the state takeover.

HF3393—Goodno (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Recreational access to water bodies restricted.

HF3394—Hasskamp (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Senior drug program eligibility expanded and qualified Medicare beneficiaries asset limits increased.

HF3395—Nornes (R)
Education Policy
Teacher contract deadline date and penalty repealed.

HF3396—Hasskamp (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Conditional use zoning permit decision timeline extended.

HF3397—Gleason (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Airport noise: Congress memorialized to direct the Federal Aviation Administration to release airport impact zone bonds revenue.

HF3398—Sykora (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Early childhood learning and child protection facilities appropriated money.

HF3399—Sykora (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Newspapers with a known or secondary office of issue given priority for official publication for a public body.

HF3400—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Sewage treatment system and wastewater treatment facilities public notice required prior to approval.

HF3401—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minneapolis Firefighters' Relief Association annual post-retirement benefit provided.

HF3402—Entenza (DFL)
Education Policy
Nonlicensed classroom instructor criminal background checks required.

HF3403—Luther (DFL)
Commerce
No call list: specified telephone sales calls regulated, civil remedies provided, and money appropriated.

HF3404—Peterson (DFL)
Commerce
Biomass mandate modified.

HF3405—Van Dellen (R)
Civil Law
Medical malpractice action statute of limitations reference clarified.

HF3406—McCollum (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Passenger automobile maximum registration tax set and statutory language clarified.

HF3407—Rest (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Passenger automobile registration tax reduced, vehicle depreciation schedule modified, minimum additional registration tax reduced, and statutory language clarified.

HF3408—Tomassoni (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 2142, St. Louis County, alternative facilities bonding and levy program authority provided.

HF3409—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Persons with disabilities continuing care services provisions modified.

HF3410—Lenczewski (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Burnsville tax-increment financing district authority repealed.

HF3411—Lenczewski (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Burnsville admissions tax authority repealed.

HF3412—Wagenius (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Water quality and safe drinking water standards risk evaluation required.

HF3413—Vandever (R)
Crime Prevention
Three strikes; minimum imprisonment term provided defendants convicted of a third offense involving a firearm.

HF3414—Leighton (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Child labor law violations provided increased penalties.

HF3415—McCollum (DFL)
Taxes
Permanent sales tax reduction or rebate to local governments provided, and property tax levies reduced to reflect any sales tax rebate.

HF3416—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund real property acquisition conditions specified.

HF3417—Opatz (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities provided funding comparable to national peer institutions, and money appropriated.

HF3418—Peterson (DFL)
Judiciary Finance
Narcotics; drug-sniffing dog purchase grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF3419—McGuire (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Ramsey County; Gibbs Farm interpretive/visitors center construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3420—Larsen, P. (R)
Taxes
Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3421—Bakk (DFL)
Commerce
Electric cooperative's election to be regulated petition and balloting provisions modified.

HF3422—Dempsey (R)
Crime Prevention
Delinquent juveniles and juveniles convicted of crimes confined at same facility, and per diem cost of confinement set at Minnesota Correctional facility-Red Wing.

HF3423—Greiling (DFL)
Commerce
Motor vehicle glass repair and replacement regulated.

HF3424—Pawlenty (R)
Civil Law
Electronic filing of real estate documents task force established, and report to the Legislature required.

HF3425—Peterson (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Dawson; Johnson memorial nursing home renovation and assisted living and adult and child day care space addition authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3426—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Constitutional amendment proposed to dedicate a portion of sales tax receipts on taxable sales for natural resource purposes.

HF3427—Bakk (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Orr-Ely North American Bear Center land acquisition and construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3428—Molnau (R)
Transportation Finance
Wetland replacement provided for public road repair, maintenance, and rehabilitation; bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3429—Davids (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmsted, Wabasha, and Winona counties trout angling provisions modified.

HF3430—Luther (DFL)
Taxes
Sales tax rebate provided payable in year 2000, eligibility expanded and deadlines extended for the 1999 sales tax rebate, payment provided for at-risk farmers based on acreage of agricultural use land, and money appropriated.

HF3431—Finseth (R)
Transportation Policy
Driver's license application provisions modified relating to anatomical gifts.

HF3432—Dawkins (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, Achievement Plus facility in Frogtown planning and design grant authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3433—Osthoff (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
St. Paul Port Authority recreation facilities and purposes powers and jurisdiction provisions modified.

HF3434—Mariani (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) sanctions provisions modified.

HF3435—Otremba (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Value-added agricultural product processing and marketing grant program scope expanded.

HF3436—Seifert, M. (R)
Education Policy
State Board of Teaching prohibited from adopting institution and teacher preparation program approval rules prior to Sept. 1, 2002.

HF3437—Pawlenty (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Gillette Children's Hospital improvements authorized in Ramsey County, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3438—Seifert, J. (R)
Commerce
Insurance companies required to provide written notice of adverse underwriting decisions made on the basis of credit information obtained from a consumer reporting agency.

HF3439—Abeler (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Specified Anoka fire marshal retirement coverage authorized.

HF3440—Pugh (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Debt service tuition rebate provided to public post-secondary students, and money appropriated.

HF3441—Harder (R)
Agriculture Policy
Pesticide and fertilizer law technical changes provided.

HF3442—Harder (R)
Agriculture Policy
Corporate and partnership farming law qualifications provisions modified.

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HF3443—Orfield (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Council housing policy plan adoption required, council prohibited from providing facilities for municipalities not participating in the metropolitan livable communities program, and revised housing goals negotiated.

HF3444—Rukavina (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medical assistance program pharmacy participation conditions provided.

HF3445—Stang (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislative employment provisions modified.

HF3446—Tuma (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Community-based planning sunset removed.

HF3447—Tomassoni (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Mesabi Range Community and Technical College improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3448—McCullum (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Campaign finance reform provided and money appropriated.

HF3449—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Volunteer firefighters lump sum service benefits provided to an eligible former St. Paul employee.

HF3450—Bishop (R)
Ways & Means
State departments supplemental appropriations bill.

HF3451—Mulder (R)
Education Policy
Special education program contracts between private facilities and education entities provided.

HF3452—Mahoney (DFL)
Judiciary Finance
Judiciary finance bonding bill providing public improvements of a capital nature, bond issuance authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3453—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Economic development property tax exemption time period extended.

HF3454—Mariani (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Ethanol producer payment eligibility expanded.

HF3455—Howes (R)
Education Policy
Labor Day; districts prohibited from starting the school year prior to Labor Day.

HF3456—Holberg (R)
Crime Prevention
DWI: four-time offender felony penalties imposed, mandatory minimum sentence and conditional release provided, and corrections conditional release supervision plan required.

HF3457—Holberg (R)
Crime Prevention
Sexually dangerous or psychopathic committed persons transfer to correctional facilities provisions modified.

HF3458—Haas (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Brooklyn Park economic development authority's tax increment financing district No. 18 parcel inclusion regulated.

HF3459—Kelliher (DFL)
Taxes
Minneapolis downtown library construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF3460—Kelliher (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Metropolitan State University instructional and parking facility designed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3461—Haas (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Employer-subsidized health insurance coverage program created for families with children and eligibility requirements provided.

HF3462—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Class 1c and 4c resort improvement materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

HF3463—Mariani (DFL)
Commerce
Brewpub off-sale liquor licenses authorized for malt liquor brewed on premises.

HF3464—Rukavina (DFL)
Commerce
Merged or consolidated electric cooperative members authorized to re-establish former electric cooperative.

HF3465—Larsen, P. (R)
Crime Prevention
Assault in the fifth degree defined as a crime of violence.

HF3466—Harder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Redwood County nursing facility rate setting modified and money appropriated.

HF3467—Larsen, P. (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Operating referendum authorized on an alternate day for specified independent school districts.

HF3468—Kelliher (DFL)
Transportation Policy
State open bottle law federal conformity provided, school bus driver stop signal activation requirement exception provided, odometer regulations adopted, and emergency vehicle siren standards modified.

HF3469—Van Dellen (R)
Taxes
Charity care aid paid to counties for indigent nonresident medical care expenses and to reduce reliance on property taxes.

HF3470—Otremba (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Rural health clinics and federally qualified health centers cost-based medical assistance reimbursement continued, and rural hospital capital improvement grant program appropriated money.

HF3471—Skoe (DFL)
Education Policy
Teacher loan forgiveness program established, rulemaking provided, and money appropriated.

HF3472—Van Dellen (R)
Taxes
Single factor sales apportionment adopted for the purposes of corporate franchise taxes.

HF3473—Peterson (DFL)
Taxes
Tax increment financing district property tax abatement authority modified.

HF3474—Osthoff (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
East Como Lake restoration project provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3475—Anderson, B. (R)
Transportation Policy
State vehicle identification requirements modified.

HF3476—Smith (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Board of Psychology access to client records modified.

HF3477—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Speech language pathology services medical assistance reimbursement clarified.

HF3478—Bakk (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Cook County higher education project appropriated money.

HF3479—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Auxiliary hazard lighting systems required on all new snowmobiles.

HF3480—Gunther (R)
Agriculture Policy
Wholesale produce dealer regulations scope clarified.

HF3481—Gunther (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Housing and redevelopment authority member number modified, and per diem limit increased.

HF3482—Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Department of Agriculture principal offices required to be located outside the metropolitan area.

HF3483—Seifert, M. (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Reports to the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board electronic filing and Web site publication required.

HF3484—Otremba (DFL)
Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy
Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) disability benefits application authorized for an eligible employee.

HF3485—Westrom (R)
Transportation Policy
Specified motor carriers record of duty status requirement exemption provided.

HF3486—Westrom (R)
Transportation Policy
Farm truck quarterly registration beginning date modified.

HF3487—Fuller (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Forest Resources Council activities and forest inventory assessment appropriated money.

HF3488—Van Dellen (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Private attorney retention sunshine act adopted authorizing state agencies to employ private counsel.

HF3489—Larsen, P. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Council abolished with exceptions, powers and duties transferred, metropolitan wastewater control commission established, and money appropriated.

HF3490—Abeler (R)
Education Policy
Minnesota new teacher project established for recruitment and retention, and money appropriated.

HF3491—Davids (R)
Commerce
Insurance technical changes provided.

HF3492—Entenza (DFL)
Commerce
Telecommunications consumer privacy act adopted.

HF3493—Westfall (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Department of Agriculture laboratory facility designed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3494—Cassell (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) limited purpose allowable service credit grant authorized for an eligible teacher.

HF3495—Anderson, B. (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State purchases open bidding authorized.

HF3496—Sykora (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Voluntary interdistrict integration efforts expanded, metropolitan magnet schools start-up aid created, west metro education program capital project funding recipients modified, integration aid funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3497—Tuma (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State of Minnesota attorney fees recovery regulated, federal conformity provided, fee application procedures established, and existing law clarified.

HF3498—Johnson (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) specified annuity formulas modified.

HF3499—Mariani (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Public utilities additional hydropower purchase environmental impact statement required.

HF3500—Stang (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Entertainment agencies provisions repealed.

HF3501—Stang (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Department of Labor and Industry information exchange with the Department of Revenue provisions modified.

HF3502—Leighton (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Polling places required on college campuses with 500 or more students.

HF3503—Erickson (R)
Education Policy
Charter school students Profile of Learning exemption provided.

HF3504—Rukavina (DFL)
Commerce
No-fault auto insurance basic economic loss benefits regulated through termination and denial arbitration requirements.

HF3505—Davids (R)
Commerce
Commerce Department; managing general agents, securities broker-dealers, investment advisors, contractor recovery fund, collection agencies, and notarial acts provisions modified.

HF3506—Rhodes (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Commissioner of public service remaining duties transferred to the commissioner of commerce.

HF3507—Schumacher (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Minnesota veterans homes maintained and repaired, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3508—Osskopp (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Timber wolf designated as the state mammal.

HF3509—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
School immunization requirements modified.

HF3510—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Taking two deer authorization extended in specified counties.

HF3511—Otremba (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medical assistance pharmacy dispensing fee increased, and demonstration providers required to reimburse at or above medical assistance rate.

HF3512—Anderson, B. (R)
Crime Prevention
Local and state correctional facility inmate telephone access regulated.

HF3513—Otremba (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Special choose life license plates authorized.

HF3514—Gerlach (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Office of technology name changed to the technology policy bureau and business license responsibilities modified.

HF3515—Paymar (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Crime prohibiting possession of a firearm or dangerous weapon on school property exemption for permit holders eliminated.

HF3516—McCollum (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Natural resources provisions modified.

HF3517—Biernat (DFL)
Civil Law
Child support provisions clarified, notice to remove filing period modified, and specified requirements repealed.

HF3518—Smith (R)
Civil Law
Juvenile and adult criminal history data practices provisions modified.

HF3519—Biernat (DFL)
Civil Law
Expedited child support process provisions modified.

HF3520—Osthoff (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Environmental response and liability settlement reimbursement provisions modified.

HF3521—Hackbarth (R)
Transportation Finance
Express bus service between downtown Minneapolis and Anoka County Trunk Highway No. 22 provided, and money appropriated.

HF3522—Davids (R)
Commerce
Credit union lending authority regulated and financial institution examination fee assessments equitable adjustment provided.

HF3523—Reuter (Ind.)
Taxes
Indoor ice arena construction materials sales and use tax exemption extended retroactively.

HF3524—Bakk (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Lake Superior safe harbor developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3525—Rhodes (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Technology policy bureau's long-range plan approved.

HF3526—Lenczewski (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Public services privatization procedures and standards established, and public accountability provided.

HF3527—Winter (DFL)
Taxes
Sales and use tax rate reduced, and political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3528—Winter (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Assigned risk plan and workers' compensation reinsurance association surpluses distributed.

HF3529—Larsen, P. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Council made a state agency.

HF3530—Abrams (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan area transit and paratransit additional bonding authority provided for capital expenditures.

HF3531—Pelowski (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Winona tax-increment financing district continued.

HF3532—Jennings (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Social anxiety disorder health insurance coverage required.

HF3533—Juhnke (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Community education revenue provided for youth programs and money appropriated.

HF3534—Harder (R)
Agriculture Policy
Agricultural contract requirements and enforcement procedures modified.

HF3535—Winter (DFL)
Commerce
Automobile insurance medical claim denial and coverage terminations prohibited unless determined by a neutral health care professional.

HF3536—Winter (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Workers' compensation; injured employee examination by employer's physician requirement repealed, and benefits discontinuation prohibited unless determined by a neutral health care professional.

HF3537—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Downsized or closed nursing facilities special rate adjustment process provided, and budget neutrality required.

HF3538—Dorn (DFL)
Transportation Finance
Large construction projects charge for public cost recovery provided, DM & E Railroad mitigation grants authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3539—Lieder (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Surface multi-modal transportation fund established, receipts deposited, motor vehicle sales tax portion dedicated, and money appropriated.

HF3540—Kuisle (R)
Transportation Policy
I-35E maximum speed limit established between West Seventh Street and I-94 in St. Paul.

HF3541—Kuisle (R)
Agriculture Policy
John's Disease: Board of Animal Health paratuberculosis diagnosis information classified as nonpublic data.

HF3542—Kuisle (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School district property tax equity provided and money appropriated.

HF3543—McElroy (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Legislative proceedings rules required and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3544—Chaudhary (DFL)
Taxes
Long-term care income tax credit expanded and money appropriated.

HF3545—Westfall (R)
Taxes
Special property tax levy and levy limit adjustments provided.

HF3546—Westrom (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Traverse County nursing facility rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

HF3547—Westrom (R)
Transportation Policy
Motor vehicle weight records retention and inspection provisions, and overweight evidence provisions repealed.

HF3548—Molnau (R)
Transportation Policy
Commuter rail funding restricted.

HF3549—Storm (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Rural finance authority program appropriated money and bonds authorized.

HF3550—Hilty (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Commissioner of Public Safety rule authority continued, and Private Detectives and Protective Agents Board members per diem payments and training program rules modified.

HF3551—Kielkucki (R)
Commerce
Electric signaling circuit rule definition repealed.

HF3552—Larsen, P. (R)
Judiciary Finance
Ramsey County law enforcement and firefighting training facilities constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3553—Holberg (R)
Crime Prevention
Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services battered women's shelter per diem guidelines established.

HF3554—Rostberg (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Veterans affairs commissioner duties technical changes provided, and agent orange information and assistance program expanded.

HF3555—Westerberg (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Snowmobile metal traction device sticker requirement civil enforcement provided.

HF3556—Pelowski (DFL)
Education Policy
Profile of Learning graduation requirements application delayed, and contract for independent review of state's standards and assessments required.

HF3557—Krinkie (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Previous Mankato area growth management and planning study completion transferred to the Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning, and technology initiatives inventory required.

HF3558—Haake (R)
Crime Prevention
Commissioner of public safety authorized to award public safety grants.

HF3559—Molnau (R)
Transportation Finance
Transit system grants authorized for the public transit subsidy program, metropolitan area transit operations, rolling stock and intelligent transportation system technology, and transit hubs, and money appropriated.

HF3560—Wenzel (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Little Falls, Minnesota, fishing museum construction grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3561—Lieder (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Payment of preliminary engineering costs from the town bridge account authorized.

HF3562—Harder (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Agricultural chemical response and reimbursement account maximum reimbursement amount increased.

HF3563—Clark, K. (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

Minneapolis Hiawatha Corridor affordable housing and mixed commercial and residential development appropriation provided; streets, infrastructure and capital improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3564—Kahn (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Commissioner of administration duties modified relating to public lands, procurements, easements, designer selection, parking, energy efficiency, project redesign, and appropriations, and state archaeologist authority modified.

HF3565—Smith (R)**Civil Law**

Human rights technical changes; discriminatory practices definition extended relating to receipt of public assistance or housing subsidies.

HF3566—Dawkins (DFL)**Civil Law**

Liens; motor vehicles towed at request of law enforcement lien provided, extent of lien clarified, and notice provided to owner for towing, sale, and right to reclaim.

HF3567—Mares (R)**Education Policy**

Education; facilities levies consolidation provided, and handicapped access and fire safety program revenue cap eliminated.

HF3568—Otremba (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Commercial turtle seller's helper license created, and general duties of natural resources commissioner statement modified.

HF3569—Skoglund (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Minneapolis Employees Retirement Fund service credit purchase authorized for a specified employee.

HF3570—Dorman (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) institutions health care benefits costs equalized.

HF3571—Osskopp (R)**Crime Prevention**

Dangerous weapon possession at gambling establishment felony penalty provided, signage required, detention of suspects provided, shipment of gambling devices regulated, and definitions and penalties provided for cheating.

HF3572—Rukavina (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

Virginia Silver Lake storm sewer outlet relocation provided, and money appropriated.

HF3573—Knoblach (R)**Transportation Policy**

Minnesota Highway Safety Center at St. Cloud State University alcohol and highway safety education in elementary and secondary schools grants administration transferred to commissioner of public safety.

HF3574—Olson (R)**Civil Law**

Ethical standards for the chief administrative law judge provided, administrative law judges, and compensation judges, and tape recordings included with file of hearings.

HF3575—Cassell (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Agricultural production certification methods pilot program established in conjunction with University of Minnesota, Department of Trade and Economic Development, and the Board of Animal Health; and report to Legislature required.

Thursday, Feb. 17**HF3576—Osskopp (R)****Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Solid waste and wastewater treatment facilities reporting requirements modified, and toxics in packaging exemption period extended.

HF3577—Holberg (R)**Civil Law**

Creditors' garnishments, executions, and levies regulated; forms revised; notification provided; attorneys' execution levies increased; and technical changes provided.

HF3578—Rostberg (R)**Civil Law**

Plats, coordinates, maps, and surveys provisions enacted; and criminal penalties imposed.

HF3579—Ness (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Driver education requirement modified to allow for classroom and behind-the-wheel integrated training.

HF3580—Finseth (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Wolf depredation payments per animal limit removed.

HF3581—McElroy (R)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

Board of Electricity inspection fee rules codified.

HF3582—Holsten (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Phosphorus plant food use prohibition provisions modified for specified counties, and adulteration factors clarified.

HF3583—Pelowski (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) and University of Minnesota Board of Regents asset preservation and replacement capital improvements authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3584—Lindner (R)**Jobs & Economic****Development Policy**

Manufactured homes limited dealer license requirements clarified.

HF3585—Biernat (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

K-12 education finance appropriations provided.

HF3586—Larsen, P. (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Alternative dispute resolution process use clarified.

HF3587—Swapinski (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Genetically engineered organism permits moratorium imposed.

HF3588—Molnau (R)**Transportation Finance**

State trunk highway and state transportation bonds issued, trunk highway and bridge improvements funded, and money appropriated.

HF3589—McElroy (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Habitat for Humanity of Minnesota, Inc. loan provided, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) recipient rental housing funded, and money appropriated.

HF3590—McCollum (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Combat wounded veterans honorary plaque placed in the court of honor on the Capitol mall.

HF3591—Huntley (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Health care premium and provider taxes and surcharges repealed, purchaser savings required, tobacco settlement money deposited in the health care access fund, and civil penalties imposed.

HF3592—Hackbarth (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) members on leaves of absence notified of allowable service rights.

HF3593—Dorman (R)**Taxes**

Solid waste management tax rates reduced and automatic adjustment provided.

HF3594—Ness (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

School district adjusted pupil units modified.

HF3595—Gleason (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Airline tickets purchase by public entities limited.

HF3596—Ozment (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Special purpose districts with environmental responsibilities grants provided, special purpose district restructuring pilot projects authorized, and board of government innovation and cooperation pilot project grants provided.

HF3597—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

State investments; annual expense reimbursement disclosure eliminated, and medical education endowment fund and tobacco use prevention and local public health endowment fund investment options modified.

HF3598—Goodno (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Nursing home facility conversion loan program and nursing home grant program created, and money appropriated.

HF3599—Goodno (R)

Health & Human Services Policy
Child support and maintenance state distribution provided, block grant use expanded, federal child support recoveries reimbursed, and housing development fund and Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) employment services funded.

HF3600—Opatz (DFL)

Higher Education Finance
Northstar research coalition established.

HF3601—Dempsey (R)

Education Policy
Minnesota Correctional Facility-Red Wing educational services vendor selection process repealed.

HF3602—Osskopp (R)

Civil Law
Child support, maintenance, and wage garnishment limited; and notice required.

HF3603—Smith (R)

Civil Law
Juvenile and adult criminal history data practices provisions modified.

HF3604—Hackbarth (R)

Environment & Natural Resources Policy
All-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety training and youth operating provisions modified.

HF3605—Koskinen (DFL)

Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Birth and adoption leave program created, and money appropriated.

HF3606—Jennings (DFL)

Commerce
Rental automobile insurance coverage regulated.

HF3607—Wilkin (R)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Mendota Heights tax increment financing district continued.

HF3608—Kielkucki (R)

Taxes
High school league tournament admission sales tax exemption provided.

HF3609—Sykora (R)

Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Full-day enrichment kindergarten pilot grant program established and money appropriated.

HF3610—Goodno (R)

Health & Human Services Policy
Health care patient protections provided and medical clinical trials insurance coverage required.

HF3611—Wejcman (DFL)

Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
After-school enrichment grants modified to include Lyndale neighborhood in Minneapolis and money appropriated.

HF3612—Holberg (R)

K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 194, Lakeville, fund transfer authorized.

HF3613—Holberg (R)

Transportation Policy
Claims against the state limited relating to losses involving the operation of a recreational vehicle on a trunk highway right-of-way.

HF3614—Holberg (R)

Crime Prevention
Automobile theft prevention special revenue account funds provided for prevention activities, insurance surcharge exemptions provided for specified vehicles, and money appropriated.

HF3615—Holberg (R)

Civil Law
St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority and St. Paul economic assistance data classification provided.

HF3616—Mahoney (DFL)

Civil Law
Tax court abolished and district court tax law jurisdiction clarified.

HF3617—Mullery (DFL)

Agriculture Policy
Anhydrous ammonia tampering prohibited, and civil and criminal penalties imposed.

HF3618—Ness (R)

Education Policy
Profile of Learning statewide accountability and district autonomy balance provided, graduation rule independently developed, content standards number reduced, and scoring criteria and recordkeeping practices determined.

HF3619—Rest (DFL)

Taxes
Tax increment financing district pooling authorized for qualified low-income housing developments.

HF3620—Rest (DFL)

Taxes
Property tax refund amounts adjusted.

HF3621—Winter (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy
County detoxification services reimbursed by the state and liquor sales tax increased.

HF3622—Ozment (R)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan disposal system cost allocation modified.

HF3623—Entenza (DFL)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Constitutional officer ethical requirements clarified.

HF3624—Olson (R)

Crime Prevention
Character development program completion required for juvenile property offenders on probation and repeat offenders required to pay full restitution plus program completion.

HF3625—Olson (R)

Education Policy
Transitional and employment related contracts legislative approval required; basic skills test, curriculum, enrollment options, and education program provisions modified; and lifework development plan repealed.

HF3626—Mulder (R)

Health & Human Services Policy
Psychologist supervisory and disciplinary requirements modified.

HF3627—Mulder (R)

Health & Human Services Policy
Psychologist variance from supervision requirements modified.

HF3628—Olson (R)

Education Policy
Graduation rule assessments regarding student's personal characteristics and beliefs excluded.

HF3629—Olson (R)

Health & Human Services Policy
Public hospital executive directors, pharmacists, and psychologists compensation limit exemption provided.

HF3630—Buesgens (R)

Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Public entity construction debris recycling encouraged.

HF3631—Trimble (DFL)

Jobs & Economic Development Finance
St. Paul Rehabilitation Center job training and related services appropriated money.

HF3632—Haas (R)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Long-term care insurance advisory group and duties modified, and long-term care insurance program implementation delayed for advisory group input.

HF3633—Rhodes (R)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Mighty eighth air force week designated.

HF3634—Olson (R)

Health & Human Services Policy
Mental health professional defined for medical assistance coverage purposes.

HF3635—Smith (R)

Commerce
Beer keg off-sale prohibited.

HF3636—Clark, K. (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy
Healing touch therapy health plan coverage required

HF3637—Bishop (R)

Higher Education Finance
Deferred state building maintenance financed with state budget surplus.

HF3638—Pugh (DFL)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Manufacturer refusal to sell gambling supplies to a distributor conditions specified.

HF3639—McCollum (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy
Periodic well testing recommendation notice to property owners required, notice created, and money appropriated.

HF3640—Mariani (DFL)

Higher Education Finance
University of Minnesota showboat rebuilt and money appropriated.

HF3641—Kalis (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy
Smoking restricted in state or federally assisted rental housing.

HF3642—Huntley (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy
Medical education program funds application and distribution provisions modified.

HF3643—Stanek (R)

Crime Prevention
Minnesota identification card or driver's license seizure authorized from deported persons and cancellation provided.

HF3644—Bishop (R)

Civil Law
Board of public defense responsibility for specified criminal defense costs provided, search and rescue operations support authority expanded, and money appropriated.

HF3645—McCollum (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
 Well test disclosure to potential property buyer and liability for failure to disclose required.

HF3646—Bishop (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
 Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) workforce center locations plan developed.

HF3647—Lindner (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
 St. Anthony Falls mill ruins historic site and museum provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3648—Wenzel (DFL)
Transportation Finance
 North star corridor Rice to Camp Ripley alternatives analysis grant provided and money appropriated.

HF3649—McCollum (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
 Minnesota environmental report card required.

HF3650—Dawkins (DFL)
Civil Law
 De facto custodian rights clarified.

HF3651—Sykora (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
 Department of Children, Families, and Learning energy assistance responsibilities transferred to the Department of Economic Security; energy assistance program requirements provided; and report required.

HF3652—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
 Human services and pre K-12 education housekeeping bill and money appropriated.

HF3653—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Taxes
 Sales tax rebate provided in 2000, 1999 rebate eligibility expanded, filing dates extended, agricultural assistance provided to at-risk farmers, and money appropriated.

HF3654—Kelliher (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
 Genetically engineered seed permits moratorium imposed.

HF3655—Luther (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
 Youth enrichment facilities capital improvement grants provided and money appropriated.

HF3656—Trimble (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
 Pigs Eye landfill in St. Paul environmental response grant provided, previous environmental response capital costs bonding cancelled, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3657—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
 Pistol and semi-automatic military-style assault weapons mass purchases prohibited, and collectors exception provided.

HF3658—Smith (R)
Civil Law
 Germany and Japan; forced labor actions statute of limitations waived.

HF3659—Wenzel (DFL)
Crime Prevention
 Child abuse services professionals training requirements expanded, services determinations to consider risks of child living with unrelated adult, child endangerment felony penalties increased, and minimum sentencing imposed.

HF3660—Mariani (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
 Children's development fund created with tobacco settlement proceeds, advisory task force established, money appropriated, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3661—Rukavina (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
 City replacement heating systems and related energy conservation measures authorized.

HF3662—Olson (R)
Commerce
 Internet parent information act adopted.

HF3663—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
 Pet poison prevention program appropriated money.

HF3664—Larson, D. (DFL)
Transportation Policy
 Freeway ramp meter fair use standards imposed.

HF3665—Olson (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
 Federal agreements legislative approval required.

HF3666—Carruthers (DFL)
Crime Prevention
 DWI; motor vehicle forfeiture provisions clarified.

HF3667—Tingelstad (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
 Pesticide management report required.

HF3668—Seagren (R)
K-12 Education Finance
 School district net tax capacity assessment/sales ratio study annual adjustment modified.

HF3669—Clark, K. (DFL)
Crime Prevention
 Marijuana possession and sale for debilitating medical condition affirmative defense established.

HF3670—Wenzel (DFL)
Crime Prevention
 Camp Ripley law enforcement training center constructed and money appropriated.

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
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MONDAY, February 21

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: HF2518 (Haake) State employee government efficiency suggestion program developed, income tax check-off provided, and money appropriated.
 HF2629 (Tingelstad) K-12 educational facilities indoor air quality standards provided.
 HF2463 (Carruthers) Electronic government services and funding reviewed for the purpose of promoting public access.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: HF2716 (Bradley) Tobacco settlement revenues credited to the health care access fund, provider premium tax modified, and contingent elimination of MinnesotaCare provider taxes created.
 Discussion of federal funds application request process, Department of Finance.
 Discussion of federal funds application requests for the departments of human services and health.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: Overview of the governor's bonding request for energy investment loans.
 HF2966 (Gunther) Multicultural development grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2930 (Seifert, J.) Woodbury center for the arts construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2804 (Kubly) Lake Lillian community center construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2703 (Leighton) Austin Riverside Arena expanded and remodeled, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2704 (Leighton) Austin Historic Paramount Atmospheric Theatre restoration grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2894 (Opatz) St. Cloud Head Start Community Center grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF3069 (Wenzel) Little Falls Mississippi River cleanup and building demolition provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: HFXXXX (Molnau) Trunk highway bonds and local bridge bonds.
 Department of Transportation legislative study of state bridge grant funding for local bridges.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: HF2731 (Davids) Motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors, and factory branches unfair practices regulated.
 HF3220 (Smith) Common interest ownership communities, certificates of value, and redemptions of realty technical changes provided; and procedural requirements modified.
 HF3119 (Bishop) Children in need of protection representation by public defenders and court-appointed counsel limited to minors age 10 and older.
 HF3232 (Goodno) Business corporation and limited liability company shareholder and member rights regulated, director and governor conflicts of interest notification clarified, and share purchasing and contribution allowance agreements regulated.
 HF3304 (Seifert, J.) Seat belt and child passenger restraint system use admissibility into evidence prohibition repealed.
 HF3392 (Seifert, M.) District Court fine and fee transfers clarified related to the state takeover.
 HF3200 (Stanek) Driver's license photograph access allowed to businesses under certain circumstances.
Note: Any business not conducted during the morning session will be concluded at 4 p.m. or immediately after session in the Basement Hearing Room.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: HF2505 (Leppik) Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period.
 HF2582 (Tingelstad) Rice Creek Regional Trail in Anoka County previous capital improvement appropriation provisions expanded.
 HF2734 (Westfall) Pelican Rapids natural resources district office provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2765 (Cassell) Pope/Douglas, and Dodge and Olmsted counties materials recovery facilities construction provided; and money appropriated.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: HF3178 (Knoblach) St. Cloud State University capital improvements at Lawrence Hall, Riverview Hall, and Eastman Hall, and pre-design of a new athletic facility authorized; bonds issued; and money appropriated.
 HF2847 (Opatz) St. Cloud State University Eastman and Riverview halls building renovation authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2902 (Opatz) St. Cloud State University Centennial Hall renovation planning provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF2845 (Knoblach) St. Cloud Technical College public land and building acquisition and improvement authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF3082 (Tuma) Higher Education Facilities Authority bonding authority increased.
 University of Minnesota HEAPR presentation.
 Additional bills may be added.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF2384 (Carruthers) Independent School District No. 286, Brooklyn Center, facility grant provided, bond sale authorized, and money appropriated.
 HF2624 (Anderson, B.) Independent School District No. 728, Elk River, debt service levy rate provided.
 HF2726 (Ness) Litchfield City Library grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF3324 (Seifert, J.) School District No. 6067, Tri-District, metropolitan magnet school grant provided to construct a new building, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF3216 (Anderson, I.) School district outstanding capital loan bond sale limitation modified.
 HF3296 (Hasskamp) Crosslake library constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HF2645 (Trimble) Outdoor advertising devices considered taxable property.
 HF3261 (Erhardt) Residential homestead property tax classification rates modified.
 HF3139 (Abrams) Utility company property valuation proceedings and appeals provided.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Reports to Legislature: Consolidation Plan for Early Childhood Initiatives; Childcare (Employer Pre-tax Accounts); and Learning Materials (Distribution Partnership).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: HF2673 (Rest) Political subdivision corporation creation standards established and existing corporations continued. Continued from Feb. 16 meeting.

HF2737 (Solberg) Municipalities and veterans' organizations authorized to donate to all public school programs and facilities. Originally on Feb. 16 agenda.

HF3164 (Larsen, P.) Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority membership increased.

HF3169 (Gerlach) Dakota County additional personnel board of appeals member authorized.

HF3202 (Wilkin) Coroner, deputy coroner, coroner's investigator, and medical examiner compensation provisions clarified.

HF3229 (Abrams) Hennepin County obligations payment by electronic transfer or credit card provided.

HF3263 (Swapinski) Duluth Human Rights Commission additional powers authorized or new commission established.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF2996 (Wolf) Electric utilities required to provide cost and fuel information to utility customers.

Continuation of discussion from Feb. 14 meeting.

HF2820 (McElroy) Catalyst grants provided to promote Internet access in rural Minnesota and money appropriated.

Other bills to be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

TUESDAY, February 22

7:30 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF3188 (Tingelstad) Special transportation services medical assistance reimbursement study required.

HF3212 (Tingelstad) Home care and personal care provider transportation expense reimbursement studied.

HF2959 (Sykora) Child care assistant classification established for licensing and employment purposes.

HF3113 (Goodno) Pharmacies permitted an additional nationally certified pharmacy technician.

HF3279 (Goodno) Prepaid medical assistance capitation rates for nonmetropolitan counties increased.

HF3306 (Wilkin) Residential hospice program requirements modified.

HF3375 (Mulder) Health care purchasing alliances modified.

HF2609 (Peterson) Physician licensure requirements modified.

HF3236 (Mulder) Vital record certified copy issuance provisions modified.

HF2994 (Fuller) Ambulance service and EMT requirements modified.

HF1383 (Wilkin) Optometrist licensing provisions modified.

Note: Meeting to continue from 4 to 7 p.m. in 5 State Office Building.

8 a.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF2901 (Anderson, B.) OSHA; deceased employee next of kin authorized to participate in occupational safety and health citing procedures, and presumptive penalties provided.

HF2604 (Hilty) Northern Technology Initiative, Inc. created.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: Final discussion of capital budget projects.

Governor's deficiency requests.

HF2112 (Murphy) Carlton County criminal prosecution expenses reimbursement provided and money appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF3145 (Swenson) School bus transportation, driver's license endorsement, and training provisions modified.

HF3274 (Workman) Utility-owned vehicles exempted from specified weight restrictions.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkle

Agenda: Department of Administration capital bonding requests.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HF3346 (Stanek) Criminal and juvenile justice information policy group membership modified, technology infrastructure improvements authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3322 (Biernat) Photographic evidence pilot program studying the feasibility of issuing citations for failure to obey traffic signals authorized and money appropriated.

HF3137 (Biernat) Peace officer assault provided increased criminal penalties.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: HF3359 (Ness) Uniform minimum length of school year established.

HF3436 (Seifert, M.) State Board of Teaching prohibited from adopting institution and teacher preparation program approval rules prior to Sept. 1, 2002.

HF3395 (Nornes) Teacher contract deadline date and penalty repealed.

Other items to be determined.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF2838 (Daggett) Percentage of moose licenses selected from previously unsuccessful applicants.

HF3012 (Ozment) Dakota County snowmobile trails grant-in-aid pilot program created.

HF3328 (Hackbarth) Iron Range off-highway vehicle recreation area addition in St. Louis County provided and previous appropriation availability extended.

HF2559 (Howes) Inland water sunken logs recovery provided.

HF3352 (Gerlach) Lighted fishing lures authorized.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF2742 (Dorman) Sales tax rebate provided and money appropriated.

HF3039 (Daggett) Wadena County provided a one-time penalty exemption to truth-in-taxation requirements and previous year's levy authorized.

HF2715 (Daggett) Lawful gambling tax rates reduced.

HF2608 (Westerberg) Telecommuting expenses income and franchise tax credit provided for employers.

HF2946 (Lenczewski) Sales tax rebate filing dates extended.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth

Agenda: HF3312 (Finseth) Meat and poultry inspection uniformity provided.

HF3575 (Cassell) Agricultural production certification methods pilot program established in conjunction with the University of Minnesota, Department of Trade and Economic Development, and the Board of Animal Health; and report to legislature required.

HF3480 (Gunther) Wholesale produce dealer regulations scope clarified.

HF3541 (Kuisle) Johne's Disease: Board of Animal Health paratuberculosis diagnosis information classified as nonpublic data.

HF3240 (Finseth) Agricultural land set aside and payment program established, and money appropriated.

HF3332 (Swenson) Dairy Research and Promotion Council alternative term expiration dates authorized.

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member with respect to self-insured employee health plans and money appropriated.
HF1841 (Davids) Insurance compliance self-audit privilege established.
HF2017 (Mahoney) Administration and Health departments directed to adopt newest editions of certain building code standards.
HF2829 (Clark, K.) Financial institutions required to process checks in numerical sequence during business day unless customer specifies differently. Other bills to be announced.

6 p.m.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: Consideration of the actuarial assumption changes and actuarial method changes recommended by the commission actuary.

Consideration of a change in the re-employment annuitant earnings maximums of the various retirement plans.

HF675 (Mares) Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS), Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), and Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) provisions modified; and service credit pilot program established.

HF3019 (Knoblach) Phoenix Treatment and Behavior Change Program employment service credit transferred from the general state employee retirement plan to the correctional retirement plan.

SF2275 (Betzold) Judges retirement plan final average compensation and contribution rate modifications, benefit maximum increases and early retirement penalty reductions.

HF2543 (Gleason); SF2358 (Ranum) Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, Teachers Retirement Fund Association prior service credit purchase authorized.

HF2685 (Wagenius); SF2506 (Ranum) Survivor benefits extended for spouses of deceased Minneapolis Fire Relief Association members.

HF3025 (Stanek); SF2463 (Betzold) Part-time Metropolitan Transit police officers provided pension coverage.

HF1466 (Dorman); SF1616 (Piper) Albert Lea police and fire survivor retirement benefit increase allowed.

HF1838 (Davids); SF1559 (Oliver) Public supplemental pension and deferred compensation plans investments availability expanded.

HF2979 (Abeler); SF3042 (Scheid) Compensation definition modified for the purposes of public employment retirement annuities limitations.

HF2925 (Haas); SF2431 (Betzold) Osseo and Osseo Volunteer Firefighters Relief Association unplanned liability increases offset, and money appropriated.

Other items as designated by the commission chair.

WEDNESDAY, February 23

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF3297(Paulsen) Technology business and activity defined, and regulations provided.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: HF2699 (Goodno) Nursing facility operating cost reimbursement floor established. To be announced.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Overview of the governor's bonding request for the Minnesota Historical Society.

HF3108 (Davids) Lanesboro Theater and Arts Center grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF1936 (Dempsey) Hastings LeDuc Mansion refurbished, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3291 (Dorman) Owatonna Heritage Halls appropriated money.

HFXXXX (Lindner) Funding for the Minnesota Historical Society's project at St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis.

HF2917 (Nornes) Parkers Prairie storm water sewer grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HFXXXX (Swenson) Funding for projects by county historical societies.

HF2580 (Kubly) Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission grant authorized for the Minnesota River Tourism Initiative, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: HF2730 (Dempsey) Port development assistance grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2844 (Knoblach) St. Cloud Department of Transportation facility renovation and addition provided, and money appropriated.

HF3011 (Swenson) Rail service improvement program grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HFXXXX (Molnau) Trunk highway bonds and local bridge bonds.

Metropolitan Council Transit transitways bonding request.

Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) Detroit Lakes headquarters bonding request.

MnDOT Moorhead truck station bonding request.

MnDOT Regional Transportation Management Center bonding request.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF3149 (Holberg) Geographic Information Systems (GIS) information tort liability exception provided.

HF2896 (Paulsen) Predatory offenders failing to comply with registration requirements provided increased criminal penalties and Level 3 sex offender information posted on the Internet.

HF2481 (Carruthers) Government data copy charges modified, copyright limited, local government private or confidential data dissemination authority limited, monitoring of citizens prohibited, data practices compliance officers required, and remedies provided.

HF2834 (McGuire) Political subdivision data access provided for purposes of child support and paternity actions, and specified court services data sharing authorized.

HF3105 (Hasskamp) Indigent persons represented by legal aid offices conflicts of interest studied by court-appointed attorney task force.

HF2655 (Leppik) Underage persons attempting to purchase alcohol or tobacco products with false identification provided increased penalties and driver license sanctions, and retailers authorized to seize false I.D.

Note: Any business not conducted during the morning session will be concluded at 4 p.m. or immediately after session in the Basement Hearing Room.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: HF3163 (Dorman) Blazing Star state trail bridge construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3086 (Bakk) Gitchi-Gami state trail developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2965 (Bakk) Two Harbors marina and harbor of refuge developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3524 (Bakk) Lake Superior safe harbor developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2955 (Davids) Shooting Star Trail completed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2576 (Tuma) Rice County Joint Powers Board grant provided for Dundas to Faribault Milltown Trail acquisition and betterment, and money appropriated.

HF3295 (Mulder) Rock County bicycle and pedestrian trail provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2767 (Kubly) Fair Ridge Trail in Renville County improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2848 (Opatz) St. Cloud Area Joint Powers Board parks and trails grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2690 (Solberg) Itasca County Taconite Trail head building constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF 3002 (Hasskamp) Pequot Lakes trailside information center grant provided and money appropriated.

HF3090 (Kahn) Mississippi Whitewater Trail public waters work permit exemption provided, white water course constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: HF2969 (Tuma) Certified public accountant licensing requirements modified.

HF3062 (Carlson) Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system (MnSCU) and intermediate school districts coordinating facilities and program planning grant authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3379 (Goodno) Moorhead State University campus security building constructed and state property leased.

Morris Student Association presentation. Additional bills may be added.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF2532 (Kielkucki) Five star school accreditation program established and money appropriated.

HF3097 (Tingelstad) Healthful school buildings: indoor air quality improved, portable classroom use limited, and operating capital revenue portion reserved for facilities purposes.

HF2811 (Davids) Independent School District No. 495, Grand Meadow, alternative facilities design grant authorized; bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2631 (Abeler) School district levy for crime prevention increased.

HF3141 (Trimble) School safety capital improvements grants authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2621 (Folliard) School district health and safety program expanded to include student and staff safety plans, and money appropriated.

HF3320 (Carlson) School district crime-related costs levy increased and proceeds usage modified.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: HF2468 (Harder) Homestead status provided for trustee-owned qualified property.

HF2781 (Mulder) Wind energy conversion systems assessment required.

Other bills to be announced.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth

Agenda: Continuation of Feb. 22 agenda.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: Adult Basic Education: discussion; bills; governor's initiatives.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: HF2691 (Dehler) Town officer and employee personnel data classification provided. HF3327 (Broecker) Local government authorization to petition to amend or repeal rules sunset eliminated.

HF3338 (Holberg) Scott County Board authorized to reorganize and delegate duties.

HF3399 (Sykora) Newspapers with a known or secondary office of issue given priority for official publication for a public body.

HF3205 (Rest) Impacted communities low income housing aid increased.

HF3458 (Haas) Brooklyn Park Economic Development Authority's Tax Increment Financing District No. 18 parcel inclusion regulated.

HF2591 (Anderson, I.) Koochiching County economic development commission created.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF2496 (Davids) Department of Public Service abolished, and powers and duties transferred.

Discussion of Telecommunication Proposals: HF2937 (Wolf) Telecommunications statutes modified and recodified, and money appropriated.

Other bills to be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

Immediately Following Session

Subcommittee on Land/ ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

400S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mike Osskopp

Agenda: HF2856 (Gunther) Martin County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF2077 (Lieder) Norman County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF3114 (Lieder) Polk County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF3154 (Lieder) Norman County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF2819 (Cassell) Stearns County land conveyance authorized.

HF2513 (Vandever) Washington County authorized to privately sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF2914 (Solberg) Aitkin County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF2998 (Broecker) Ramsey County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

HF3084 (Bakk) Lake County authorized to sell tax-forfeited land bordering public water.

THURSDAY, February 24

7:30 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN

SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF3301 (Goodno) Family and adult self-sufficiency provisions modified.

HF3128 (Goodno) Noncompliant Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) recipient sanctions and program eligibility requirements modified.

HF3150 (McElroy) Dakota County Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) diversionary assistance pilot project established and money appropriated.

HF2553 (Seifert, J.) Supportive housing and managed care pilot project appropriated money.

8 a.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: Governor's mini-cabinet report on workforce development presented by the Department of Economic Security, Department of Trade and Economic Development, Minnesota Planning, and MnSCU.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: HF1172 (Holberg) Harassment and stalking enhanced criminal penalty provision

expanded to include violations from another state. HF3029 (Dempsey) Per diem cost of housing juveniles to be shared by counties and the Department of Corrections.

HF2516 (Smith) Harassment definition and provisions modified relating to restraining orders.

HF3418 (Peterson) Narcotics; drug-sniffing dog purchase grants provided, and money appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF3053 (Workman) Collector vehicles authorized to display a blue light as part of rear brakes.

HF3070 (Workman) 800-MHZ trunked radio system source code access and two vendors required.

HF2952 (Workman) Transportation provisions modified.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: Department of Administration and Amateur Sports Commission capital bonding requests.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HF1159 (Stanek) Correctional officers discipline procedures act adopted.

HF3370 (Westerberg) Juvenile alternative residential programs established, report provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF2939 (Rhodes) Adult court jurisdiction provided over juvenile offenders charged with serious crimes involving firearms.

Other bills to be announced.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: To be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL

RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF304 (Tunheim) Shipment and possession of wild animals taken on the Red Lake Indian Reservation north of the 49th parallel authorized, and no state license required.

HFXXXX (Tingelstad) Pesticide management in public buildings.

HF3292 (Dorman) MTBE; gasoline blended with the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether sale prohibited in the state of Minnesota.

HF3131 (Osthoff) MTBE; gasoline blended with the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether sale prohibited in the state of Minnesota.

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: Department of Agriculture report on the Price-Reporting Program.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knobloch

Agenda: Overview of the Anoka Hennepin Technical College capital budget request.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF 3522 (Davids) Credit union lending authority regulated and financial institution examination fee assessments equitable adjustment provided.

HF 3491 (Davids) relating to insurance; providing technical changes.

HF 2757 (Jennings) Biomass power mandate regulated for electric generating facilities using poultry litter as a fuel source.
Other bills to be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

FRIDAY, February 25

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF3508 (Osskopp) Timber wolf designated as the state mammal.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Presentation on capital investment requests for northeast Minnesota.

HF3427 (Bakk) Orr-Ely North American Bear Center land acquisition and construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3266 (Huntley) Duluth/North Shore sanitary district improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3071 (Huntley) Seaway Port Authority of Duluth warehouse grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3269 (Jaros) Duluth Lake Superior College multipurpose recreation complex authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3270 (Jaros) Spirit Mountain recreation area improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3255 (Jaros) County capital improvements definition expanded to include historical society, museum, and cultural and art centers.

HF3265 (Swapinski) Duluth water and sanitary sewer service improvements for the Fond du Lac area authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3190 (Tomassoni) Iron Range Resource and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) capital improvement projects authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HF2774 (Broecker) Carisoprodol schedule IV controlled substance listing effective date delayed.

HF2958 (Mahoney) Persons escaping after lawful arrest prior to trial proceedings charged with escape from custody.

Other bills to be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: HF2933 (Swenson) Fort Ridgely State Park Golf Course upgraded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2674 (Finseth) Red River state recreation area established in Polk County, visitors' center and campground constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2626 (Kelliher) Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board flood mitigation grant provided for Lake of the Isles, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3171 (Trimble) St. Paul capital projects authorized including Willard Munger Trail connection, Upper Landing park development, Raspberry Island improvements, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: HF3195 (Leppik) University of Minnesota excepted from the designer selection board selection process.

HF3096 (Storm) Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) increased enrollment efforts appropriated money.

HF2812 (Opatz) St. Cloud State University nursing science program funded, and money appropriated.

Additional bills may be added.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF3234 (Abrams) Sales and use tax law recodified, and provisions clarified.

HF2523 (Harder) Bleacher safety materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2957 (Kuisle) Correctional facilities construction materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3254 (Huntley) Aircraft shipped to a purchaser outside Minnesota sales and use tax exemption provided.

SATURDAY, February 26

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF1646 (Boudreau) Extended family members provided child visitation rights.

HF764 (Smith) Grandparent visitation rights expanded, procedures specified, and mediation required.

HF1787 (Dawkins) Foster sibling visitation with a child formerly in foster care provided.

HF3311 (Dawkins) Parenting plans provided, terminology modified, and money appropriated.

HF460 (Smith) Custodial parent child support and public assistance accounting required upon request.

HF461 (Smith) Child support, custody, and visitation orders six-month review required.

HF3124 (Osskopp) Court-ordered child visitation enforcement provided and penalties imposed by courts authorized.

HF3318 (Luther) Standby and alternate custodians of children designation provided.

HF3345 (Entenza) Child support enforcement provisions modified.

What's on the Web

Session Daily is the new online companion to *Session Weekly* magazine, which is published by the nonpartisan House Public Information Office.

As the name suggests, the Web page offers news from the House on a daily basis, so you can stay on top of major events at the Capitol. Brief but informative updates about daily committee and floor action are posted before 8 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Session Daily includes the latest House committee schedule and offers links to useful resources, such as bill introductions and pages with information about lawmakers and committees. You can also view an archive of previous Session Daily postings.

Be sure to bookmark Session Daily and check back regularly.

To find the page, just go to the main Minnesota House of Representatives site (www.house.leg.state.mn.us), then click on the link labeled "Session Daily."



Minnesota House of Representatives 2000 Standing Committee Schedule

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8 to 9:45 a.m.	Health & Human Services Finance 10 Jobs & Economic Development Finance 200 Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy B Transportation Finance 5	Health & Human Services Policy 10 Jobs & Economic Development Policy 200 State Government Finance 300N Transportation Policy 5 Judiciary Finance B	Health & Human Services Finance 10 Jobs & Economic Development Finance 200 Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy B Transportation Finance 5	Health & Human Services Policy 10 Jobs & Economic Development Policy 200 State Government Finance 300N Transportation Policy 5 Judiciary Finance B	Health & Human Services Finance 10 Jobs & Economic Development Finance 200 Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy B
10 to 11:45 a.m.	K-12 Education Finance 5 Higher Education Finance 300S Property Tax Division 200 Civil Law B Environment & Natural Resources Finance 10	Education Policy 200 Taxes 5 Crime Prevention B Environment & Natural Resources Policy 10	K-12 Education Finance 5 Higher Education Finance 300S Property Tax Division 200 Civil Law B Environment & Natural Resources Finance 10	Education Policy 200 Taxes 5 Crime Prevention B Environment & Natural Resources Policy 10	K-12 Education Finance 200 Higher Education Finance 300S Taxes 5 Crime Prevention B Environment & Natural Resources Finance 10
12:30 to 2:15 p.m.	Family & Early Childhood Education Finance 5 Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs 200 Regulated Industries Subcommittee B	Capital Investment 5 Commerce 200 Agriculture & Rural Development Finance 10	Family & Early Childhood Education Finance 5 Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs 200 Agriculture Policy 10 Regulated Industries Subcommittee B	Capital Investment 5 Commerce 200 Agriculture & Rural Development Finance 10	
3 to 4:45 p.m.	HOUSE IN SESSION		HOUSE IN SESSION	HOUSE IN SESSION	

Ways & Means, Rules & Legislative Administration, and Ethics meet at the call of the chair.

2/15/00

B - Basement Hearing Room
All rooms in State Office Building
Full committees in bold

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

The state's ethanol industry

Gallons of ethanol produced statewide in 1999, in millions	218
Gallons of gasoline Minnesotans use each year, in billions	2
Bushels of corn used to produce ethanol statewide in 1999, in millions	84.5
Dollar value of corn committed by farmers to ethanol plants, in millions,	\$260
Number of ethanol plants operating in Minnesota, 1999	15
Number of ethanol plants operating in Minnesota, 1997	9
Highest capacity at a single ethanol plant, 1999, in millions of gallons	32
Lowest capacity at a single ethanol plant, 1999, in thousands of gallons	500
Percentage of the state's corn crop used to make ethanol and related products, 1999	17
Gallons of gasoline replaced with ethanol annually, in millions	200
Year mandate to use oxygenated gasoline expanded from metro area to entire state	1997
Percent of ethanol in a gallon of oxygenated gasoline	15
Amount appropriated by 1999 Legislature for ethanol producer payments in 2000-01 biennium, in millions	\$68.4
Amount appropriated as a loan for the Little Falls ethanol plant by 1999 Legislature, in thousands	\$500
Amount gasoline prices are increased by adding ethanol per gallon, in cents	2-3
Estimated cost to the state for ethanol programs, 1999, in millions	\$25
Estimated cost to consumers due to higher gas prices for ethanol, 1999, in millions	\$42
Estimated annual benefit to the state from ethanol industry, in millions	\$350

Sources: Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Ethanol Program; House Research Department; *Laws of Minnesota, 1999*; Senate Fiscal Analysis; *1998 Ethanol Resource Guide Supplement*, Minnesota Corn Growers Association; *Ethanol Programs: A Program Evaluation Report*, Office of the Legislative Auditor, 1997.

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SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

FEBRUARY 25, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 4

In this issue:

IMPROVING SCHOOL SAFETY &

MINNESOTA'S "ASSISTANT GOVERNOR"

HF3671-HF3903

SESSION Weekly

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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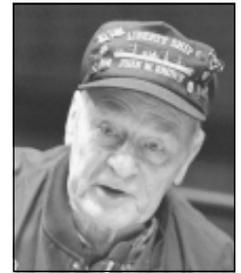
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On the cover: The Minnesota State Flag flies at half staff Feb. 21 in memory of the late cartoonist and St. Paul native Charles Schulz, creator of the "Peanuts" comic strip. Schultz died earlier this month of complications from colon cancer. He was 77.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Preventing school violence

Legislators pitch programs to identify problems before violence erupts and to equip schools with security in case it does

By **MIKE DELARCO**

Few in the field of education will soon forget the haunting aftermath of the Columbine High School tragedy in Littleton, Colo., last April.

The shooting spree, perpetrated by teenagers Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, left 12 students and one teacher dead and sent many more to the hospital.

Klebold and Harris, both described by peers as quiet yet quite intelligent, forced educators to examine district policies regarding violence prevention and prompted legislators near and far to ponder measures they could draft to make schools safer for learning.

“It’s absolutely essential that we ensure that people are safe in their homes, communities, and especially in their schools, and I think it’s the responsibility of government to see that that occurs,” said Rep. Jerry Dempsey (R-Hastings), speaking before the House K-12 Finance Committee on Feb. 23.

Most who speak about education, however, believe that schools *are* very safe places for students to be, regardless of what occurred in Colorado.

Statistics would serve to affirm that notion. According to the U.S. Justice and Education departments, of the more than 2,500 children who were murdered or committed suicide in

One sponsored by Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) would provide \$2.5 million in bond proceeds for capital improvements to generally improve the safety of students, teachers, and faculty who use public school buildings.

The bill (HF3141) would leave it to the direction of the commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning to award grants at the department’s discretion.

The measure does not include more specific details about what improvements might merit funding.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins) would take things a step further by requiring that school safety plans describe a process to make facilities safer and more secure.

The bill (HF2621) would appropriate \$10 million in state aid for fiscal years 2000 and 2001 to help districts fund safety-related measures such as installing security cameras or hiring police liaison officers and adult hall monitors.

“I truly hope that we, as legislators, will do something in the year 2000 to address issues of school safety,” Folliard said.

But what are things that make up a safe school? Experts say they share certain characteristics.

A report provided by the national Safe and Drug Free Schools Program suggests safe schools are ones with strong leaders, high academic standards, and resources and training programs to help teachers address students’ problems before they lead to violence.

Schools that develop partnerships in the community and establish good relationships with law enforcement, youth services, and other community agencies are likely to provide the type of learning environment where students feel comfortable, the report said.

Experts have also said that safety measures such as cameras in school hallways help to discourage school violence, but just as important are measures that address the root of problem.

“Many after-the-fact punitive reactions focus on deterrents rather than causes of the problem,” said Del Elliot, director of the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado at Boulder. “Serious violence continues because the underlying problems are never addressed.”



Grace Dymanyk keeps an eye on the lobby at Mounds View High School during school hours, as part of one of the initiatives the school is using to improve safety. Officials have also instituted a gated parking lot, and doors are locked from the outside to keep the school safer.

Photo by A. J. Olmscheid

In short, the shooting in Littleton created a sense of urgency to tighten rules and address problems so that the likelihood of another tragedy occurring in our nation’s schools would be minimal.

Several bills proposed in Minnesota this session seek to address the issue of violence prevention in schools.

the first half of the 1997-98 school year, less than one percent were at school or at a school sponsored event.

Four noteworthy bills pertaining to school safety and violence prevention have been debated by the K-12 Education Finance Committee.



Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins) testifies for HF2621 at the House K-12 Education Finance Committee Feb. 23.

Two other bills considered by the K-12 Finance Committee would attempt to tackle issues that lead to crime. Bills sponsored by Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka) and Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal) would increase the amount of aid available to districts for drug, crime, and gang prevention programs.

Abeler's bill (HF2631) would allow districts to levy up to \$1.50 per capita for crime prevention activities and require the state to match those efforts by a two-to-one ratio.

If Abeler's bill were to be fully funded, it would require \$14.3 million in state aid.

Dr. James Cole, assistant superintendent in the Anoka-Hennepin School District, spoke in support of Abeler's bill. Cole told committee members the additional revenue could go a long way in helping districts pay for programs and preventive equipment in the schools.

The committee referred Abeler's bill without recommendation to the House Crime Prevention Committee for review.

Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington), chair of the committee, said she wants the bill to return to the K-12 committee for further review, once the Crime Prevention Committee has considered it.

Carlson's bill (HF3320) is similar to Abeler's bill in design, but it would allow districts to levy up to \$3 per capita for crime prevention aid. Carlson's bill would not require the state to match funds levied.

Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park) voiced concern that plans by Abeler and Carlson to adjust levy limits for crime prevention encourages school districts to raise property taxes. She hinted at other ways to fund programs that would leave a property owner's tax bill undisturbed.

"If we agree there's a need out there for increased safety measures in schools, let's use some of the budget surplus money the state has to protect our children," Johnson said. 🐼



A life on the bench

Chief justice knew the long and the short of it

In early 1870, it appeared James Gilfillan's career on the Minnesota Supreme Court would be remembered for its brevity, not longevity.

Gilfillan was down, having been rejected by voters after serving only six months as chief justice of the court, but he wasn't out. He was on his way to an unprecedented comeback.

The Civil War veteran went on to become the state's longest-serving chief justice and the only chief justice to serve a split term.

He also has the distinction of being one of only two foreign-born Minnesota chief justices and one of two chief justices to die in office.

In 1869, Gov. Horace Austin appointed Gilfillan chief justice of the Supreme Court. The seat was up for election at the end of the year, an election Gilfillan wound end up losing. (Justices are elected to the court, and mid-term vacancies are filled by governor's appointment.)

Historians of the time note that Gilfillan was caught in political jockeying atypical of judicial elections. Justices were elected on nonpartisan ballots, but they sought and needed party support.

Gilfillan had been a Republican favorite, but the party wound up backing a relative unknown, Christopher Ripley, who ultimately won the election.

Five years later, after Ripley resigned because of poor health, Gilfillan was reappointed to the position of chief justice, a responsibility he would carry out for the remainder of his career and, for that matter, the rest of his life.

Under Gilfillan's leadership in 1881, the Minnesota Supreme Court expanded from three to five members. One of the justices appointed when the court expanded was William Mitchell, destined to be one of the state's great jurists.

During his tenure, Gilfillan authored

1,289 opinions and 43 dissents. His opinions as chief justice span 40 volumes of *Minnesota Reports*, the first 20 volumes of which he personally revised and annotated.

Gilfillan's family had immigrated from Bannockburn, Scotland, shortly after his birth in 1829, settling on a farm in Chenango County, New York.

He first showed an interest in law at the age of 16 and was admitted to the bar only four years later at age 20. Following seven years of practicing law in Buffalo, New York, Gilfillan moved to St. Paul in 1857, in what was then the Minnesota Territory.

Five years later, the young lawyer's life would take a quite different turn. In 1862, Gilfillan volunteered for military service and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Minnesota Infantry.

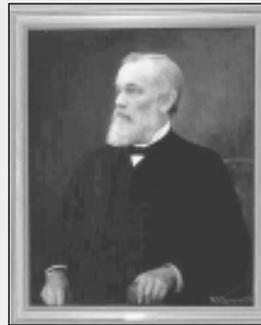
He was soon thrust into battle against the Sioux in the Dakotas and later saw action in the Civil War in Tennessee and Kentucky. Just two years after volunteering for military service, Gilfillan became a colonel in the Eleventh Minnesota.

After the war, Gilfillan returned to his law practice in St. Paul. His unusual career ended in 1894, when he died at the age of 65.

In the days following his death, he was described as a man "without fear or favor" whose "life was pure and his reputation stainless."

At a memorial service in Jan. 7, 1895, Justice Isaac Atwater said, "His fearlessness in expressing his honest conviction whenever demanded, even at the sacrifice of personal interest, his broad grasp of equity and his entire impartiality between suitors, whether persons, corporations, or political parties was unmatched."

(M. DELARCO)



Justice James Gilfillan

Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

★ AGRICULTURE

Aid for ailing farms

Factors such as crop disease and abnormal precipitation have, in successive years, resulted in economic hardship for farmers in certain areas of the state.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus) would attempt to address those issues by appropriating \$10 million of general fund money to the state Board of Water and Soil Resources for a set-aside program to provide short-term economic assistance to landowners.

The bill (HF3240) would allow farmers with land in a county under a presidential disaster declaration in 1998 or 1999 to set aside up to 160 acres of farming property for payment eligibility for a period of three years.

An amendment, offered by Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter) and incorporated into the bill by the House Agriculture Policy Committee on Feb. 23, would extend eligibility to include farmers in counties that receive presidential disaster declarations in the future.

The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

Bruce Kleven, a lobbyist for the Minnesota Wheat and Barley Association, pledged support for the bill.

"As the farming community is very aware, weather can, at times, be very unpredictable," he said. "Certainly this is an initiative that could help our guys out."

Language in the bill states that payments to farmers under the program would be based on soil rental rates established by the federal Conservation Reserve Program.

One complaint farmers have about aid available for disaster relief through the Conservation Reserve Program is that participation in the program ties up property for a period of 10 years, Finseth said. A three-year time limit on participation in the proposed land set-aside program is in response to such concerns, he added.

Under Finseth's bill, land already covered by the Conservation Reserve Program would not be eligible to receive additional aid.

Finseth said if the bill were to become law, a program application process would need to be established and landowners would likely apply for set-aside aid on a first-come, first-served basis.

★ CHILDREN

Warning labels for Web porn

Sexually explicit images on the Internet should have warning labels, says Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake), and those labels should be posted before any of those images appear.

Olson is sponsoring a bill (HF3662) that would require all sexually explicit images that originate in Minnesota to show the warning. Because the bill only refers to Minnesotans, Olson said he believes the bill would pass constitutional muster.

Dubbing the bill the "Internet Parent Information Act," Olson said he hopes the legislation would keep pornographic images away from children. The Regulated Industries Subcommittee of the House Commerce Committee approved the measure Feb. 23.

The Commerce Committee was scheduled to discuss the matter the evening of Feb. 24, after this edition of *Session Weekly* went to press.

Other forms of pornography already place warnings on the product, such as colored plastic wrappers covering magazines. The definition of a sexually explicit image would not change from current law, Olson said.

Internet providers and search engine operators would not be held responsible for the display of the images, according to the bill.

The bill also would create the ability for individuals to sue an Internet site for failing to comply with the act.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) wondered what percent of Internet pornography actually originates in Minnesota. Olson said he has not seen any research that shows where the images originate.

Kahn also asked if other states are pursuing similar laws. Olson said he is not aware of any. He said his bill could be a model for other states or the federal government to warn Internet users.

★ CONSUMERS

Privacy on the Internet

Internet patrons should know if information about them is being collected, said Rep. Jim Seifert (R-Woodbury).

Seifert is sponsoring a bill (HF3731) that would require a state or local government agency that provides online services to disclose

the privacy policy. Seifert said consumers should know who is collecting the information, how it is being used, and for how long it will be used.

The Regulated Industries Subcommittee of the House Commerce Committee approved the bill Feb. 23. The Commerce Committee was scheduled to take up the matter the evening of Feb. 24, after this issue of *Session Weekly* went to press.

Seifert's bill would prevent unknown harvesting of information by the government or Internet providers.

While federal lawmakers are working through bills to keep Internet information private, Seifert said the state can pass a bill that "creates a foundation."

If an organization can track what sites an Internet consumer has visited, the organization could predict whether the consumer has children, the consumer's income, race, and religion, Seifert said.

The bill would require state agencies and Internet providers to disclose any information collected on a person upon request by that individual. The individual would have the right to correct any errors in the information.

The measure would be enforced through civil penalties, Seifert said.

Plan seeks to halt fraud

A bill approved Feb. 23 by the House Civil Law Committee would grant certain businesses access to driver's license pictures to serve as identification for customers using credit cards.

The bill (HF3200), sponsored by Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), would allow stores to purchase photo equipment and access the photos, which are currently classified as private.

Here's how the program works. A customer steps to the cash register to purchase items with a credit card. The store employee swipes the card. Automatically, a picture of the customer appears on a screen, verifying the person is using his or her own credit card.

Cort Holten, an attorney who is lobbying for Image Data Corporation of New Hampshire, testified before the committee. Holten said the photos would be stored in a separate and "incorruptible" database. Customers could opt-in to the program; participation would not be mandatory.

The photo imaging program aims to curb

the high volume of fraud that stores continue to face, Holten said.

"This type of system so vastly eclipses what we currently do," Holten said. "This is a system where security people won't have to compete with the technology of crooks."

The computer screen would provide a large photo — about 3 inches by 5 inches. However, the screen would show nothing else, Holten said.

"The store clerk gets no other information. Your street address, your height, weight, whether you are an organ donor, is unavailable," he said.

Consumers would file paperwork choosing to participate at the bank or business. Consumers who choose to not participate could still show a driver's license to clerks.

Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) said clerks should still ask for a driver's license, even if this program is implemented.

"I think retailers would be making a mistake relying on these only," Carruthers said.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) wondered what the cost of the bill would be. Stanek said the fiscal impact has not been finalized.

The attorney general's office would handle any liability issues with improper display of pictures.

The bill now goes to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

"Once these are out there, people will drive differently," Biernat said.

Gillen said a study showed Minnesotans approve of using cameras at intersections by a four-to-one margin. He said the technology is blind to color, race, sex, or age — it catches all violators.

The camera is positioned purposely to catch the license plate and would not photograph who is inside the vehicle. Violators would be mailed a ticket. Because the fine is treated like a parking ticket, the violation would not affect a person's insurance or driving record.

The cities in the program would have the responsibility to determine the level of the fine, Gillen said.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) said she would like signs placed at intersections where the cameras are installed. Biernat dismissed that idea.

"We don't put up signs that say, 'Warning, speed trap ahead,'" Biernat said. "These people are breaking the law."

Cities would be required to pay for the equipment, Biernat said. Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Bloomington have expressed interest in the program.

The committee took no action on the matter, but the bill is expected to come up again this session.

Crime lab in bonding proposal

The House Judiciary Finance Committee voted Feb. 24 to recommend \$70 million in bonding funds for criminal justice projects.

The proposal, which goes to the House Capital Investment Committee, includes funding for five projects in the Department of Corrections, a grant program to fund public safety training facilities, and money to build a new lab for the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA).

It calls for a study of regional jail facilities, but does not call for bond funds to build any such facilities.

Full funding is provided in the proposal for sewer repair at the Faribault correctional facility, a mental health unit at Red Wing, a special high-security unit at Oak Park Heights, a prison-yard wall repair project at Stillwater, and remodeling of a unit at Lino Lakes.

The committee recommended \$30 million for the BCA lab, which is estimated to cost \$58 million.

Notable omissions from the proposal include requests for new health facilities at the Stillwater prison, a vocational building at the Lino Lakes facility, and an activities building at Willow River.

Scott Arneson, Aitkin County administrator, and Gary Waller, a jail consultant, gave a last minute plea to the committee to fund at least some of the proposed regional jail projects in the state that are ready to go.

Arneson said 21 counties have agreements and plans in place to build regional facilities, which would replace outmoded county jails. He said for many of those counties, their expenses are too high for their tax base to sustain and they need help from the state.

For example, Aitkin County's tax base has increased by about 3 percent annually, he said. The county's corrections costs have increased as much as 30 percent a year at the same time.

He said to cover those costs without substantially raising taxes, the county has taken money from human services benefits. He said many of those are prevention programs designed to keep people out of jail.

Members of the committee said they sympathized with the plight of counties, but they were too strapped by the governor's recommendations for bonding for this year.

"I don't think the issue is with the Judiciary Finance Committee. I think we all support the concept," said Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul). "The issue is that the fiscal parameters of this bonding bill are too small. This is inadequate funding for corrections and the judicial system."

★ CRIME

Photocop is watching

Cars that zip through red lights are not just breaking the law — they are dangerous to others, Michael Gillen, traffic engineer with the state Department of Transportation, told lawmakers.

The number of stop light violations in some areas of the Twin Cities is alarming, Gillen said. A recent motion imaging test project at Snelling and St. Anthony avenues in St. Paul yielded 5,300 violations in 700 hours of study — an average of 179 violations each day.

Gillen told the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 22 about the "photocop" program, where a camera placed on a pole takes a snapshot of cars that proceed through a stop light after the light has turned red.

"They are not photographed if they have passed through a yellow light," Gillen said.

Forty other countries and several U.S. cities are using the photographic tool to curb traffic signal violations, Gillen said.

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) is sponsoring a bill (HF3322) that would allow three cities to implement the program. The cities would be allowed to dispense fines similar to parking tickets — the vehicle owner would be responsible for paying the fine, regardless of who was driving the car.

KNOWING NOSE



Patrolman Jason Mork, Ortonville Police Department, holds his police dog Felony during Feb. 24 testimony before the House Judiciary Finance Committee in support of a bill that would provide up to \$150,000 in grants to buy and train drug-sniffing dogs.

Information on criminals

Law enforcement officers need the tools to solve crimes and catch lawbreakers, said Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), but officials lack the information-sharing technology they need.

Stanek is sponsoring a bill (HF3346) that would create an integrated statewide criminal justice network. The bill was approved Feb. 22 by the House Crime Prevention Committee.

The system, estimated to cost between \$15 million and \$22 million, would link all state law enforcement records — such as sex offender registration, probation records, and criminal records.

“I think people think this already goes on today,” Stanek said.

Minnesotans would be “horrified” to know law enforcement cannot access other systems, he said.

Stanek said too many defendants are slipping through the system because law enforcement agencies have no vehicle for sharing information.

He suggested the need for an integrated information system is more important than the need for a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension lab in St. Paul, a project backed by the governor in his bonding recommendations.

Bob Vanasek, former House speaker who now lobbies for Citizens for a Safer Minnesota, said the bill would cut costs elsewhere.

“We’re currently spending millions of



Hennepin County Sheriff Pat McGowan testifies for a bill that would improve the criminal justice information system throughout the state. McGowan spoke during a Feb. 22 hearing of the House Crime Prevention Committee.

Governor decides to forgo speech to Legislature

There will be no State of the State address this year.

Gov. Jesse Ventura's office put out a brief press release Feb. 22 citing the “fast pace of this off-year session” as the reason Ventura will not address the 2000 Legislature.

Last year, Ventura addressed a joint session of the Legislature in early March, about two months after his inauguration. He used that occasion to lay out the philosophy of his administration, which included his widely noted declaration that “the free ride is over.”

The Minnesota Constitution states, “The governor shall communicate by message to each session of the Legislature information touching the state and country.” That requirement can be satisfied by delivering a message in the first year of each two-year session, as Ventura did last year.

Since the Legislature began meeting

annually in 1973, the governor has delivered a message at the beginning of each session, but not always in the second year of the biennium, according to the Legislative Reference Library. In 1976, former Gov. Wendell Anderson sent only a written message to the Legislature.

In recent years, an annual State of the State has been commonplace. The only exception may have been in 1986. There is no record that former Gov. Rudy Perpich gave a State of the State speech that year, but the library did find that Perpich sent a message to the Legislature in late January of that year about how to handle a \$700 million shortfall.

Former Gov. Arne Carlson used the off year as an opportunity to take the show on the road. He gave State of the State speeches away from the Capitol on three occasions, including his 1996 speech at a Minnesota Chamber of Commerce event held at a Bloomington hotel.

dollars on the hodge-podge systems through the state,” Vanasek said.

Paul Aasen, assistant commissioner for the Department of Public Safety, spoke on behalf of the governor at the hearing. Aasen said Gov. Jesse Ventura is not supporting any supplemental funding this year.

Stanek said the committee cannot wait for the governor's support.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) said the system is needed now and legislators should not wait for next session.

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) cautioned Stanek to not create an “either/or” situation where legislators are choosing between integrated information system and the crime lab, estimated to cost \$58 million.

“We have the support to start tracking these criminals,” Mahoney said. “These are both important issues.”

The bill would require cities to provide a portion of the funding, although the legislation does not cite what the match would be. The committee rejected an amendment that sought to require the state to pay for the entire system.

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

Murder case strains finances

A bill to help Carlton County pay for the costs of a high-profile 1999 murder trial was considered Feb. 22 by the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

The bill (HF 2112), sponsored by Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown), would provide an

emergency appropriation to the county, which incurred nearly \$80,000 in expenses to prosecute the defendants in the Paul Antonich murder.

Antonich, a 17-year-old Two Harbors boy, was beaten and shot after a minor traffic accident in Duluth. Five men were ultimately convicted of varying roles in the crime.

The case became Carlton County's responsibility because Antonich's body was found in a ditch in the county, just inside the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation.

Pre-trial publicity for the trial of the triggerman, John Steven Martin, required that it be moved to Dakota County. As a result, all the prosecutors, court staff, and defendants had to be lodged and fed in Hastings during the trial.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) asked whether this was a routine or unusual request. Murphy said it is unusual, especially in light of the fact that Carlton County has investigated 13 murders in the past six years and only one of the defendants has been a resident of the county.

County officials also claim the investigation of the Katie Poirier abduction and murder has strained the county's resources, though the county is not yet requesting emergency funds from the Legislature to cover those expenses.

The committee also considered a deficiency request from the Public Safety Department's Division of Emergency Management for \$3.8 million to cover disaster payments from severe weather in 1998 and 1999.

Committee members will consider the requests for inclusion in the omnibus judiciary funding measure.

Shifting defense expenses

The state would pay for investigative work, expert witnesses, and other such costs incurred by public defenders, under a bill advancing in the House.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) is sponsoring a measure (HF3361) that would shift certain costs from the state's 87 counties to the state Board of Public Defense.

"I believe this type of fees should be controlled by the state," Stanek told the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 18. The committee approved the measure and sent it to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

Currently, counties pay for some of the costs generated by the public defender's office, including expert witnesses. When a high-profile trial occurs in an area that is not accustomed to such court cases, the county has to pay the enormous costs, Stanek said.

Counties cannot control or budget for these types of court cases because they are unexpected, Stanek said.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) agreed with Stanek.

"County boards have been talking about this for years, wondering why they have to pay for prosecution and defense," Murphy said.

Kevin Corbid, policy analyst for the Association of Minnesota Counties, told the committee that counties are irritated they pick up the tab.

"It is always easier to spend money when you are not the one paying the bill," Corbid wrote to legislators. "Moving this responsibility to the Board of Public Defense increases the accountability on behalf of defenders who request funding."

Rep. David Bishop (R-Rochester) said counties must be fiscally responsible, and that includes paying for court costs. He noted that the state does not pay for county attorneys.

Stanek said removing the defense fees would free law enforcement and county attorneys to investigate crimes and not be concerned about court costs that could be incurred by the defense.

"I want to de-politicize this process," Stanek said. "I want the county attorney to enforce the laws in this state."

Dick Schurman of the Board of Public Defenders spoke against the bill. He said that legislators have provided deficiency funding to counties in past years when the county had high public defense costs.

Crackdown on fake IDs

Minors who use false identification to purchase alcohol or tobacco could lose their driver's license and face increased penalties,

under a bill sponsored by Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley).

Leppik's bill (HF2655) would allow clerks at liquor stores to confiscate what they believe to be false identification cards. The clerk would then be required to turn the identification over to the police or return it to the card's owner within 48 hours.

"My bill is intended to create a meaningful deterrent," Leppik told the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 24. "Currently, there are very few penalties for using fake IDs."

However, there are heavy consequences for retailers, such as temporary loss of their liquor licenses, if they sell alcohol to minors, Leppik said.

Robert Pomplun of Loss Control Services has worked in the liquor business for 30 years. Because of the Internet, minors have easy access to obtaining false identification cards, Pomplun said.

"The amount of fake IDs used by kids is just huge," Pomplun said. "Minnesota has a real problem with fake IDs that isn't getting attention."

The committee delayed a vote on the bill while awaiting additional language for tobacco sales. The bill will be discussed further at an upcoming hearing.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji) said that if the identification was real, the card owner would probably stand at the counter and demand the police to come and authenticate it. If the card was false identification, the minors would probably run away, Fuller said.

Currently, people under age 21 who attempt to purchase alcohol with false identification face a misdemeanor penalty. Leppik proposed to increase the penalty to a gross misdemeanor.

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland) said a gross misdemeanor on a first offense was too harsh.

The committee agreed and amended the bill to make a second violation a gross misdemeanor.

David Hall, co-owner of the Mermaid Supper Club in Mounds View, said the gross misdemeanor language is needed.

"Nothing happens to these kids," Hall said. "The police know it; the kids know it. It's a joke."

Hall stressed that these offenders are 19 or 20 years old and they are fully aware that they are breaking the law when they attempt to buy alcohol.

★ EDUCATION

Background checks for assistants

A bill that would require unlicensed teaching assistants to undergo criminal background

checks before being hired was approved Feb. 22 by the House Education Policy Committee.

The bill (HF3402), sponsored by Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), would add educational aides, assistants, and specialists to the list of school employees required by law to submit to a check prior to employment.

Entenza said he introduced the bill because he is concerned that current state law allows for a small percentage of instructors to enter classrooms without having to undergo background checks.

"Unfortunately, and may I add recently, we've discovered there are some who slip through the cracks," he said.

As an example, Entenza said a background check on unlicensed foreign language instructor Kristin Osterbauer, who was accused of engaging in inappropriate conduct with a student last fall, would have revealed her past problems with alcohol that could have kept her from teaching junior high students.

Osterbauer, who served as an instructor at Eagle River Junior High School in Savage, was charged in November 1999 with first-degree criminal sexual conduct and providing alcohol to a minor shortly after accusations surfaced that she had sex with a 13-year-old student.

Although Osterbauer wasn't a licensed teacher, she taught two sections of Spanish in addition to working as an assistant. She was fired from her position in December.

"By making sure that everyone teaching in a classroom setting has undergone a criminal background check, we can avoid these types of situations," Entenza said.

Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan) asked whether an expanded scope of background checks would delay school districts' hiring processes.

"Remember, you're weighing the safety of students against the convenience of hiring," replied Bob Meeks, director of governmental



Fridley resident Connie Bernardy, a parent organizer for Save Our Schools, testifies Feb. 22 in support of a bill that would require criminal background checks for unlicensed classroom instructors.

relations for the Minnesota School Boards Association.

Criminal background checks cost between \$10 and \$30, which must be paid by the applicant.

The bill now moves to the House Crime Prevention Committee.

Sharing student information

School officials would be allowed to share information with teachers and other school staff about students who have a prior criminal history, under a bill sponsored by Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine).

The bill (HF2672) would allow the information to be distributed between school districts if it is shared in good faith. Districts would be immune from criminal or civil actions that might result from sharing the information.

The House Civil Law Committee considered the bill Feb. 21 and is expected to include the measure in a larger data privacy bill.

During his discussion, Westerberg mentioned shootings at schools in Jonesboro, Ark., and Littleton, Colo. While Westerberg acknowledged the bill would not eliminate concerns about violence, he said the legislation could help teachers and staff be aware of problems before they occur.

The bill has the support of the Department of Public Safety, Westerberg said.

Julia Corneil, a counselor at Centennial High School, told the committee that the information would be helpful to teachers.

"We value confidentiality," Corneil said. "But in some instances we'd like to be able to share that data. Right now, we don't feel we are legally able to do that."

Don Helmstetter, superintendent of the Spring Lake Park School District, said a student could be expelled from one school and transfer to another district. Then the second district would have no way of knowing why that student had been expelled.

"This is not a theoretical situation," Helmstetter said.

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) expressed concern about the bill. He asked if the information could be limited to people who have direct contact with the child.

"If this passes, it sounds like every adult in the school gets to hear this information," Mahoney said.

Don Gemberling, director of information policy for the Department of Administration, said the bill is narrowly targeted to students with criminal history, and not other problems, such as chemical dependency or family troubles.

Westerberg said he would like to see teachers get even more information on their students.

"I think we need to open the lines of information," Westerberg said. "The more we know about our children the better we can help them."

Coaches as bus drivers

In a school with only 365 students, it is common to transport very small groups to athletic and academic events, said John Hornung, superintendent of Nicollet Public Schools.

Hornung said his southern Minnesota school district often struggles to find drivers for such occasions.

Rather than paying drivers to transport mostly empty buses to events within 60 miles of Nicollet, Hornung would like to allow coaches to drive vans or minibuses carrying the small groups of students. But the superintendent doesn't believe the coaches should be required to obtain commercial driver's licenses.

Hornung testified at a Feb. 22 hearing of the House Transportation Policy Committee in favor of a bill that would allow that practice.

"If you check across the state, finding a bus driver is almost impossible," Hornung said.

Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet) is sponsoring a bill (HF3145) that would allow a per-

son with a Class D license (the basic driver's license in Minnesota) to drive a school bus if there were 15 or fewer passengers. That would allow coaches to drive a bus, minibus, or van to events.

The bill also calls for several other changes related to school bus drivers.

Under the measure, a person could drive a school bus for up to 180 days without the proper license if the person meets qualifications for license endorsement. That would allow drivers to begin training and working before they take the test to get the endorsement.

In addition, the bill would allow non-physicians such as chiropractors and advanced practice nurses to perform the required physical examinations on bus drivers.

Brad Lundell, lobbyist for Minnesota Association for Pupil Transit, spoke against the bill. Lundell said Minnesotans recognize the color and shape of Minnesota school buses, and they expect drivers to be qualified.

"The training has to be there, and the operators must be licensed," Lundell said.

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska) said she believes schools would require coaches to complete bus driving training.

"I have a feeling that there isn't a school district out there that doesn't understand the liability involved," Molnau said. Insurance companies would almost certainly require training, she added.

Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park)

LEARNING THE TRADE



Five-year-old Kyle Petersburg of Kennedy visits with Rep. David Tomassoni during a Feb. 22 hearing of the House Education Policy Committee. Kyle, who is a neighbor of Rep. Jim Tunheim, was shadowing his legislator all day.

said she favors the existing system.

"The issue is safety of children," Johnson said. "And that's why we have the endorsement."

The committee set the bill aside for further discussion.

★ ELECTIONS

Election law adjustments

A bill that would make minor changes in state election laws was approved Feb. 18 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

The bill (HF2826), sponsored by Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), would specify that some provisions related to general elections also apply to special elections, among other minor changes.

It would change the beginning date of the terms of office for soil and water conservation district supervisors, school board members, town officers, and hospital district officers to conform with those of other elected offices. Those terms would begin the first Monday in January instead of Jan. 1.

And voter registration forms that are submitted with driver's license applications would have to be sent within 10 business days to the county auditor, under the bill.

Currently, there is no time limit for the public safety department to send the forms to the county auditor. Sometimes there has been such a long delay that people find that they are not registered when they go to vote, said Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer.

Some committee members proposed amendments to the bill that would allow a major political party to designate a different date for a the party's caucus.

Current law requires caucuses to be held the first Tuesday in March of a general election year. But the state DFL party has scheduled its caucuses this year on the weekend of March 11 to try to encourage more participation. That date has not been publicized by the secretary of state. Election information that the office has published this year has used the statutory date, which is March 7.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said that traditionally, when a law interferes with such a change by a political party, the law has been thrown out.

Kahn and Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins) each proposed amendments that would require the secretary of state to notify the public in those types of situations. But both amendments were defeated.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

★ EMPLOYMENT

Penalties for safety violations

In 1998, Patrick Randel, a college student from Buffalo, Minn., was on his ninth day of work for Buffalo Bituminous, a construction company, when he died. Randel was sent down into a manhole with no oxygen, and he suffocated.

Randel's mother Margaret said that according to an Occupational Safety and Health Administration report, the company deliberately ignored safety regulations. Yet, she said, the only compensation the family was able to recover were the costs of Patrick's funeral.

"His death was a senseless tragedy that should never have happened," she said.

The House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee approved a bill Feb. 22 that would provide a minimum \$50,000 penalty, paid to the state, against an employer who commits a willful or repeated OSHA violation that leads to the death of an employee.

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township), the bill's sponsor, said that the measure offers a small step in addressing inadequacies in current state law.

The committee also approved an amendment, offered by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), which would set the minimum penalty for a serious violation at \$25,000.

McElroy's amendment also would allow the next of kin of a deceased employee to participate in the process of reviewing and challenging citations issued to the employer.

Roger McBride, safety director for Ames Construction in Burnsville, spoke against the bill.

"I'm concerned whenever we try to apply quick fix solutions to complex problems," McBride said.

McBride said that OSHA's definition of a "serious" violation differs from what many may regard as serious. He said that his company was once cited for a serious violation when an employee was not wearing his safety goggles but had them in his hand.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) offered an amendment that would allow workers injured on the job and descendants of workers killed on the job to seek civil damages. Rukavina said the bill as written would do little to address the problem. He said that fines would go to the state, rather than the families. The amendment failed on a 12-9 roll call vote.

Rep. Rob Leighton (DFL-Austin) offered a similar amendment designed to permit civil action when a worker is killed on the job, the employer knowingly violated a safety regulation, and the violation was substantial in contributing to the death. Leighton's amendment also failed by a 12-9 roll call vote.

The bill was sent to the Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.



Margaret Randel of Buffalo describes how her 19-year-old son died on the job as a result of unsafe work practices. She spoke Feb. 22 before the House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee in support of a bill that would penalize companies that violate safety regulations.

Itemizing energy costs

Electric utilities would have to itemize costs for generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity, under a bill approved Feb. 21 by the Regulated Industries Subcommittee of the House Commerce Committee.

Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville) is sponsoring a bill (HF2996) that would require industries to separate billing costs and pass that information on to consumers.

Each company would be required to develop its own system and guidelines on how it splits costs. The bill would require utilities to say the source of the power, be it nuclear, hydropower, coal, or wind.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) offered an amendment that would require the electric utilities to disclose emissions from the plants, such as carbon dioxide, mercury or spent nuclear fuel.

The emissions would be tracked under the standard guidelines already in place with the Department of Commerce.

The committee approved the amendment.

Linda Taylor, assistant commissioner of the Commerce Department's Energy Division, spoke in favor of Jennings' amendment, saying she wants to make sure consumers understand the information.

"If providing this information leads to people turning off lights, it will save many kilowatts of energy," Taylor said.

The subcommittee approved another amendment that stated utilities would have to provide the cost breakdown in customer's utility bills at least twice a year. Originally, the legislation said the separation information should be in all monthly bills.

The bill was sent to the full Commerce Committee.

Energy loan program

Officials from the Department of Commerce told the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee on Feb. 21 of the need to continue a loan program geared towards energy conservation measures.

Linda Taylor, an assistant commissioner of the department, said that the agency is requesting \$8 million for the Energy Investment Loan Program. The program extends loans to schools and local governments for projects to make buildings more energy efficient. The governor has recommended funding of \$2.5 million.

Janet Streff, the manager of the department's Energy Programs, Information and Technologies Division, said the program was created in 1983 as the Public School Energy Loan Program.

In 1987 the scope was expanded to include loans to cities and counties.

Streff said the program is financed by the state selling general obligation bonds. The bond proceeds are then issued as loans.

The program has not operated since 1998 because bonding authority has been exhausted, Streff said. The department would like to start issuing loans again.

"The program is 100 percent user-financed," she said. "Money to repay the loans is generated from the energy cost savings."

She said most school districts, cities, and counties own large energy consuming buildings that were built before concern over energy use and cost was an issue. She said that other budget needs prohibit governments from making energy conservation improvements high priorities, even though the improvements often pay for themselves.

Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) asked when the program would no longer be needed because energy efficiency goals have been met.

Jeremy De Fiebre, the program's grant specialist, said new technology continues to become available, creating an ongoing need for energy efficiency improvements.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) asked if the department would be opposed to changing the structure of the program into a revolving loan program.

Taylor said the department would support that type of change so officials don't need to continually come before the Legislature to request bonding funds.

The request may be considered for inclusion in the committee's bonding recommendations, which will be passed along to the House Capital Investment Committee.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Concerns about fuel additive

A ban on a gasoline additive that has caused severe water pollution in some states was debated Feb. 24 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Gas that is blended with methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) has contaminated water in some U.S. states.

The committee approved a bill (HF3292), sponsored by Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea), that would take a step toward banning MTBE in Minnesota by allowing gasoline to contain only 0.1 percent of the compound.

Currently, MTBE is not used in Minnesota's gasoline supply, but it is used in nearly one-third of the gasoline in the United States, Dorman said.

The compound is an alternative fuel additive to ethanol.

As other states ban the chemical, Dorman said the glut of gasoline with MTBE could be sent to Minnesota unless it is banned.

"This would be a pre-emptive strike," he said.

But some state officials said it would be impossible to keep out trace amounts of MTBE.

Dorman's bill had originally proposed banning MTBE, but the committee moved to allow 0.1 percent of the compound in gasoline, based on recommendations from the state Pollution Control Agency and the Weights and Measures Division of the Department of Public Service.

Gasoline is moved through common pipelines throughout the country, so traces of MTBE can be found in almost all gasoline. If the state completely bans the chemical, some retailers fear that they would be forced to shut down their gas pumps.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

Lighted fishing lures

Minnesotans can manufacture and sell lighted fishing lures, but under state law, they cannot use them while fishing.

A bill (HF3352) that would allow anglers to use those types of lures was approved Feb. 22 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley), sponsor of the bill, said the lures are used in neighboring

First committee deadline approaching

The House voted Feb. 24 to formally set the committee deadlines for the 2000 session, and the first deadline is coming up fast.

The first deadline will be **Friday, March 3**. By that date, policy bills must pass out of necessary committees in the house of origin.

The second committee deadline will be **Friday, March 10**. By that date, committees must act favorably on bills, or companions of bills, that met the first deadline in the other chamber. That means all bills other than those containing appropriations must pass out of committee in the both the House and the Senate to remain alive for consideration.

The third deadline will be **Friday, March 17**. All omnibus finance bills, which are exempt from the first two deadlines, must pass out of committee by that date.

Of course, there are exceptions to the deadlines. The taxes committees and rules committees in both bodies are exempt. And a bill can be heard after the deadlines if the rules committee in either body grants its permission.

states. The lures generally cost less than \$5.

Committee members questioned whether the bill would have an impact on the number of fish people are allowed to catch. Lighted lures alone are not expected to dramatically increase the number of fish caught in the state, said Ron Payer, chief of the fisheries section of the Department of Natural Resources.

However, Payer said, the combined effects of the lures and other types of new technology could lead to adjusting limits in the future.

Some committee members were concerned that batteries that are swallowed by fish or lost in the water would create environmental problems, but Gerlach said the surrounding states have not experienced such problems.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

Adding recycling at plants

A proposal to build two recycling facilities was heard Feb. 21 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

Both facilities would be built near waste-to-energy facilities, one of which serves Pope and Douglas counties and the other serves Dodge and Olmsted counties.

Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria), sponsor of the bill (HF2765), said it would help both areas conserve landfill space. The facilities burn solid waste and convert it to energy. The leftover ash from the facilities is put in landfills.

Cassell said the landfill space is limited and the populations in those areas are growing. Building the recycling facilities would cut down on the items sent to the waste-to-energy facilities. That would in turn reduce the amount of ash that is sent to the landfills.

Neither proposal is included in Gov. Jesse Ventura's capital investment plan.

The bill would spend nearly \$5 million for the two projects. The money would go to the Office of Environmental Assistance, which would then administer grants for the two projects.

The proposal could be included in the committee's omnibus bonding bill.

New DNR building proposed

A proposal to build a new \$5 million office building in Fergus Falls is among the top priorities of the Department of Natural Resources, but an alternative plan was discussed Feb. 21 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

Gov. Jesse Ventura has included the \$5 million request in his capital budget plan. The alternative is proposed in a bill (HF2734) sponsored by Rep. Bob Westfall (R-Rothsay) that would allow the DNR to buy a Pelican Rapids building for \$1 million.

Currently, the DNR employees in Fergus

Falls work in a renovated horse barn. The DNR leases space in the building for \$31,000 per year.

Deputy Commissioner Steve Morse said the DNR has been seeking to build a new facility for about six years. The Legislature had approved a plan for a new facility in 1996, but it was vetoed by former Gov. Arne Carlson.

The Pelican Rapids building is currently owned by the Lake Region Electrical Cooperative. Dave Weaklend, general manager of the cooperative, said a new headquarters was built because the organization needed an additional 60,000 square feet of space.

Weaklend said the offer to sell the old facility includes furniture in the building, so the DNR could move in immediately. The amount of office and storage space in the building and its adjacent out-buildings is comparable to the

amount that is proposed for the new Fergus Falls facility.

In addition, the facility would mainly house conservation agents, who would be doing most of their work outside the office.

But Morse said he and other DNR employees looked at the Pelican Rapids building and decided it would be more feasible to build a new building. The Pelican Rapids building is 40 years old, and the costs of renovating it to make it comply with Americans with Disabilities Act standards and other building code requirements would cost about \$2 million.

The major expenses would include adding an elevator, renovating bathrooms, and improving the insulation of the building to make it more energy efficient.

The committee will consider the matter again when committee members assemble their bonding recommendations for this year.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL GRAPH



Dag Knudsen, who does presentation and sales training for technical professionals, uses a three-dimensional graph to compare construction costs, left, and maintenance and operational costs, center, to fees collected by architects, engineers, surveyors, landscape architects, geoscientists, and interior design services, right. His testimony came Feb. 23 before the House Capital Investment Committee, which was considering a bill that would provide exceptions in the bid solicitation process. No action was taken on the measure.

FAMILY



Church day care centers

A bill that would permit a church or religious organization to operate a day care program under the rules governing family day care and group family day care was approved Feb. 22 by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), is an attempt to increase nonresidential childcare options for parents.

"What I like about this bill is that it gives churches a chance to step in and help both the families and communities they serve," Sykora said.

Under current law, a church or religious organization that provides nonresidential child care centers is required to operate under the rules for a child care center, which are considerably more strict.

This bill would allow private day care organizations greater flexibility to operate, while limiting the number of children served in a church setting to 14. A church participating in a partnership with a child care provider would likely donate the space and use of utilities, Sykora said.

Day care centers housed in churches would also still require a license.

The bill was referred to the House Family and Early Childhood Finance Committee.

Nursing mothers off juries

Nursing mothers would be excluded from jury duty under a bill the House passed Feb. 21. The vote was 128-0.

The bill (HF1865), sponsored by Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), originally applied only to women who are solely responsible for the daily

care of the child and are not regularly employed outside the household.

The bill was amended on the House floor, to include all nursing mothers, whether they are employed outside their homes or not.

According to the bill passed by the House, all nursing mothers would be exempted from serving on a jury.

The bill now moves to the Senate.

★ GAME & FISH

New revenue for resources

A proposal to expand who pays for the management of the state's natural resources was considered Feb. 18 by the House Taxes Committee.

The bill (HF1092), sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), would transfer what amounts to a sales tax on lottery tickets from the state's general fund to the game and fish fund.

The committee took no action on the measure, which may be considered for inclusion in this year's omnibus tax bill.

Holsten's plan is one alternative to add to the current revenue sources for the Department of Natural Resources, which officials say faces funding shortfalls in the coming years.

There is no actual sales tax collected when a person buys a lottery ticket. In lieu of the sales tax, an amount equal to 6.5 percent of the gross receipts collected from the sale of lottery tickets is credited to the general fund.

Forty percent of the remaining proceeds collected from ticket sales goes to the state's environmental and natural resources trust fund. Other proceeds also go to the general fund.

The game and fish fund receives much of its funding from the sale of fishing and hunting licenses.

Holsten said that under the bill the game and fish fund would receive between \$12 million and \$25 million more each year. He said that the state's philosophy toward managing its natural resources is shifting.

"There has been a change in management style from the fish to the water. We have stopped managing pheasants and started managing the habitat," Holsten said.

And because of that change, Holsten said it is only fair that all

Minnesotans, rather than just those who fish and hunt, should contribute toward managing natural resources.

Bill Berhjem, the director of the Department of Natural Resources Enforcement Division, said the additional funds would help restore staffing levels to 1993 standards. He said that many of the department's

conservation officers were hired in the late 1960s are now approaching retirement age.

"Our concern is that we're in a demographic bubble," Berhjem said.

He said that the department already is short 30 to 40 officers and in the next three years. Fifteen to 20 are expected to retire each year.

★ GOVERNMENT

New rule for House prayer

The House voted Feb. 24 to scrap requirements that the prayer that precedes each floor session be "nondenominational" and that it respect the "religious diversity of the House."

The Permanent Rules of the House now require only that there be "a prayer by the chaplain."

"It is difficult, if not impossible, to construct an individual prayer that respects the diversity of the entire House," said Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan). "If you're going to have diversity, you've got to allow it."

The measure to change the rule came in the form of a report from the House Rules Committee, which Pawlenty chairs. Two votes were taken on the measure — one to strike the word "nondenominational" (passed 79-52) and one to strike the language related to "religious diversity" (passed 71-60).

The rules related to the prayer have been a source of controversy since they were altered early in the 1999 session. The issue was raised after a choir performing as part of opening day events last year sang a song that included several references to Jesus Christ and that struck some as being uncomfortably sectarian.

Critics of the 1999 change said that the attempt to be sensitive to diverse religious beliefs resulted in a rule seeking "homogenized" prayer that would not allow that diversity to be expressed.

"I want to be able to be exposed to everything," said Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby). "I'm voting for this rule because I'm not afraid of other religious beliefs."

But some lawmakers expressed doubts that the rule change will do anything to foster the expression of diverse beliefs.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) said that the notion that the diversity is seen by considering all the prayers given throughout the course of the year, rather than focusing on each day, doesn't hold up.

"Over 10 years, I think I can count on one hand the number of times I have heard a rabbi lead us in prayer," she said. "I recall once that we had a Native American religious leader."

This is the second time this year that lawmakers have wrestled with the prayer rule. On

the first day back, Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) made a motion to ditch the changes made last year. His proposal won a 69-63 majority of votes, but it failed to muster the two-thirds support (or 90 votes) needed because it had not been through the committee process.

★ HEALTH

Tobacco money for health care

A proposal that would use tobacco settlement funds to offset health care costs and cut taxes cleared its second hurdle Feb. 21.

The House Health and Human Services Finance Committee approved the bill (HF2716), sponsored by Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), and referred it to the House Taxes Committee.

The bill would transfer some of the one-time tobacco settlement money and the ongoing payments into the state's health care access fund and provide for a contingent elimination of both the 1 percent premium tax and MinnesotaCare provider tax beginning Jan. 1, 2001.

Bradley's bill would attempt to provide some relief from rising health care coverage costs. The bill has the potential to provide the greatest amount of aid to low-income patients and fixed-income senior citizens with substantial pharmaceutical costs, Bradley said.

Information provided by the Minnesota Taxpayers Association notes the poorest 10 percent of Minnesotans account for only about 1 percent of income earned. However, that same group pays 2.6 percent of the MinnesotaCare tax, while the richest 10 percent pay a far less percentage of their total income to the tax.

A 1999 law used one-time tobacco funds to establish three endowments — one to fund tobacco use prevention, one to finance medical education programs, and one to pay for public health efforts.

Bradley's bill would not affect the endowments established last year. It would draw on separate revenues owed to the state from tobacco companies.

Air quality in schools

A bill that would set minimum air filtration standards for new school buildings and require future school facilities to monitor the quality of indoor and outdoor airflow was presented to the House K-12 Education Finance Committee on Feb. 23.

"Indoor air quality is becoming a leading health concern in public schools and I believe that we need to take steps to assure that the

schools we build in the future are places that are safe and healthy for students to learn," said Rep. Kathy Tingelstad (R-Andover), sponsor of the bill.

According to Tingelstad, 25 percent of Minnesota's population spends nearly every day inside a public school. More needs to be done to help prevent health problems caused by airborne particles, she said.

Her bill (HF3097) would take a proactive approach toward regulating air quality in school buildings, she said.

School buildings constructed after July 1, 2002, would be affected by the bill. The bill targets monitoring indoor and outdoor air-flow in new schools every 10 years beginning in 2010.

Rep. Jerry Dempsey (R-Hastings) asked if the bill were to later become law, what kind of fiscal impact would it have on the school construction process.

Norm Chaffer of the Department of Children, Families and Learning said the spending increase for improved equipment would be slight and that it would be offset in the form of cost savings down the road.

"In the long run, an improved system will be more efficient and cost effective," Chaffer said. The committee took no action on the bill, but will consider it at a later date for inclusion in the K-12 omnibus spending bill.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Effort to save college

Anoka-Hennepin Technical College would remain open, despite plans by the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system to close it, under a bill considered Feb. 18 by the House Higher Education Finance Committee.

The bill (HF2649), sponsored by Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka), would allot \$14.7 million to replace and repair the school's heating, ventilating, and air conditioning systems.

Supporters of the bill argue that the MnSCU board acted hastily and without proper research when they voted in January to close the facility.

"We intend to find a way to serve the students of MnSCU," Abeler said. "This is not a partisan matter; this is a battle about mission. Our missions are similar."

However, MnSCU officials said students would be best served at alternative institutions.

Morrie Anderson, chancellor of the system, recommended a "program realignment," which would involve a relocation of Anoka-Hennepin programs to the separate Hennepin Technical College and Anoka-Ramsey Community College.

He said the board decided to close the



Supporters of a bill that would appropriate \$14.7 million in bond proceeds to repair and remodel facilities at Anoka-Hennepin Technical College listen to Feb. 18 testimony on the bill before the House Higher Education Finance Committee.

school because of high building maintenance costs and low population projections. In fact, Anderson said, Abeler's bill "leaves future liability for work left undone."

Nearly 2,900 students are enrolled in Anoka-Hennepin Technical College this year.

Health care training programs are a primary function for the school. Health care industry officials expressed concern that the profession would lose the graduates the school provides to the field each year.

Cheryl Streit, director of corporate human resources at Fairview Hospitals, said Minnesota will need thousands of new health care workers next year. She said the field can't afford to lose one school or even one student.

Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) asked how many graduates of Anoka-Hennepin Technical College enter health care professions each year.

College officials estimated there will be 720 such graduates this year, well below the demand.

"We're not going to make it," Dehler said.

Although the college might not be able to fuel the health care profession on its own, proponents of the bill argue it is a quality institution and should not be closed.

"There are not frills at AHTC; this is strictly education for employment," said Ed Schones, a lobbyist for Education Minnesota. "The state may or may not save money by closing AHTC, but they would be giving up a valuable investment."

★ RECREATION

New terms for park permits

Annual permits for state park visitors would be valid for one year after the date of purchase, under a bill that was approved Feb. 21 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

Currently, annual park permits are only valid for the calendar year, which discourages people from buying them in the late summer or fall, said Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), sponsor of the bill.

She said the proposal would likely increase the number of annual permits that are sold and encourage more visits to state parks year-round.

Bill Morrissey, director of the Department of Natural Resources Parks and Recreation Division, said the department estimates it could sell about 5,000 more permits per year, based on survey results.

The change likely would make enforcement more difficult than the current system, where an annual permit is distinctive and easy for park employees to see. But Morrissey said it would not be much more difficult under Leppik's proposal because the sticker would be designed to clearly show the month and year it expires.

The bill (HF2505) now moves to the House floor.

★ TAXES

Cut in gambling taxes proposed

A bill that would reduce taxes on lawful gambling for the third straight year was considered Feb. 22 by the House Taxes Committee.

Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee), the sponsor of the measure, said her proposal would keep more charitable money in local communities where it belongs.

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

The bill (HF2715) would reduce the tax on paddlewheels, raffles, and bingo from 9 percent of gross receipts after prizes to 7.5 percent. The tax on pull-tabs and tipboards would be reduced from 1.8 percent of gross receipts to 1.5 percent.

Taxes on combined receipts or gross receipts from pull-tabs and tipboards for an organization receives more than \$500,000 annually would be reduced as little as 0.3 percent or as much as 0.9 percent. Under this provision, the more an organization takes in, the greater a tax reduction it would receive.

King Wilson, the executive director of Allied Charities of Minnesota, a nonprofit organization that lobbies for charitable gambling causes, said that in 1998 the gross receipts from charitable gambling were more than \$1.4 billion. Organizations paid out more than \$1.1 billion in prizes, contributed more than \$77 million to charity, and paid in excess of \$63 million in taxes.

Wilson said that gambling taxes in Minnesota are among the highest in the nation. For example, he said, in 1987 a Columbia Heights sports booster group had charitable contributions of \$22,464 while paying \$7,520 in state gambling taxes. But in 1999, the same organization contributed \$96,387 to charities while paying \$123,270 in taxes.

Mike Burress, president of the Dead Broke Saddle Club in Hugo, said the club contributes to causes such as the Minnesota Special Olympics. But when approached last year by a volunteer fire department that needed equipment including the “jaws of life,” the club couldn’t help out. Burress said it takes the club six months to raise enough funds to pay for taxes alone.

Looking to tax billboards

A proposal to change tax law related to billboards was debated Feb. 21 by the Property Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee.

Most personal property is exempt from property tax, and billboards are generally considered personal property.

The bill (HF2645), sponsored by Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul), would list outdoor advertising devices as personal property subject to property taxes.

Last year, St. Paul residents rejected a referendum question that would have banned billboards in the city. Trimble said the bill is not an attempt to pose any restrictions on billboard advertising in the state. Rather, he said, the bill is an attempt to clarify and bring fairness to a property taxation issue.

Until 1978, billboards were subject to property tax, but a ruling by a tax court that year held them to be exempt personal property. Trimble said currently some counties may be assessing billboards one way and other counties a different way.

Hennepin County Assessor Thomas May said that billboards are not subject to property tax but are considered in the overall property’s value when the assessment is made.

Tom Hauk, owner of Hauk Outdoor Advertising Company, opposed the measure. He said that during a time of a budget surplus, it is questionable why there is a need for new taxes.

He cited a Department of Revenue

document that says the proposal would not add administrative costs for the department but would create significant costs for local government assessors who would be required to evaluate outdoor advertising devices both when they go up and on a continuing basis.

“Billboards are already being taxed. This would amount to a double taxation,” Hauk said.

Reps. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) and James Clark (R-Springfield) questioned whether the definition of outdoor advertising in the bill is too broad and would open up other business signs to property taxation.

Trimble said the intent of the bill was to primarily address freestanding billboards and that he would agree to a more specific definition.

The bill may be considered for inclusion in this year’s omnibus tax package.

Homestead tax clarification

Last year, the Legislature expanded the agricultural homestead tax classification so that a person who farms the land but isn’t actually living on the farm could qualify for homestead status.

The change provided unexpected difficulties for the Department of Revenue.

“It is far and away one of our most difficult programs to administer,” Jennifer Engh, an assistant commissioner of the department, told the House Taxes Committee’s Property Tax Division on Feb. 18.

The new law allowed at least 40 acres of farmland not adjacent to a residence to be considered a homestead if certain conditions were met. Confusion arose over some of the new law’s definitions.

Engh said that the numerous combinations of agricultural partnerships that exist throughout the state are causing part of the problem. From father-son run farms to aunt-and-niece partnerships, the change last year left many wondering whether the new law applied to them. Also what the term “actively farming” actually means is still unclear.

Two bills attempt to clarify some of that confusion. HF2600, sponsored by Rep. Jim Tunheim (DFL-Kennedy), and HF2758, sponsored by Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet), would extend the agricultural homestead classification to certain shareholders of family farm corporations and partners who do not live on the agricultural property.

The bills are identical, and the committee may further consider each for inclusion in this year’s omnibus tax bill.

In order to qualify for full homestead status, both bills would require that the shareholders are actively farming the agricultural property and

they are Minnesota residents. The shareholders also would not be allowed to claim another agricultural homestead in the state, and they would have to live within four townships or cities of the agricultural property.

Rep. Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda) said he thought the intent of last year’s legislation was clear.

“It is simple. You don’t have to live on the land to get homestead status as long as you are actively farming the land and you live within the four townships,” Winter said.

★ VETERANS

Merchant marine honors

A proposal to recognize Minnesota’s members of the merchant marine who served in World War II was approved Feb. 18 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

The bill (HF3017), sponsored by Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls), would allow a memorial plaque to be placed in the court of honor on the State Capitol grounds. Biernat said the plaque would be paid for through private donations, so there would be no cost to the state.

Those who served in the merchant marine are not technically veterans, Biernat said, but they worked on ships during the war and many were killed at sea.

None of the committee members opposed the idea, but Paul Mandell, a planner on the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board, said there is some concern about the number of places left in the court of honor.

Mandell said he agrees that the merchant marine is worthy of being recognized, but there are only 11 spots left in the court of honor, and many more organizations could argue that they should be recognized.

The bill now moves to the House Rules Committee.



Howard Wilson, Minneapolis, testifies Feb. 18 in front of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee in favor of a bill that would place a plaque on Capitol grounds to honor the Minnesota members of the World War II merchant marine.

Meeting the demand

Low unemployment prompts lawmakers to focus on training skilled workers in developing industries

By DAVID MAEDA

Historically, Minnesota's economic development initiatives have focused on job creation, in an effort to move unemployed residents of the state into the workforce.

As the state's unemployment rate reaches record low levels at the same time technology is changing the world in the blink of an eye, policy-makers are looking at whether the state's workforce programs are adequately meeting needs.

To get a clearer picture of these issues, last year the Legislature asked for a report examining the way government supports workforce development.

A governor's "mini-cabinet" was established to examine employment and training programs. Its report, entitled *World Competitor — The Governor's Workforce Development Plan*, was released last week. The document is an examination of more than 80 state programs.

It contains several recommendations as to how the state should redirect the focus of existing programs, eliminate redundancy, and develop measurements to continually evaluate the effectiveness of programs.

The plan also recommends steps to address workforce shortages while at the same time moving people who are already employed into better paying jobs.

"This is a start, something we put on the table," Department of Economic Security Commissioner Earl Wilson told the House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee on Feb. 24. "It is not a panacea, not the whole answer, but it is a start."

According to the report, Minnesota's unemployment rate in 1999 was 2.5 percent, much lower than the 5.5 percent level that is considered to be the full employment level by many economists.

To increase the pool of available workers and to ensure that the workers of tomorrow are trained in growing occupational areas, the plan recommends transferring the state's portion of the Workers Development Fund to other areas.

Wilson said the program, which has been used to assist dislocated workers, would con-



Dr. Robert Musgrove, president of Pine Technical College in Pine City, testifies Feb. 22 before the House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee in support of a bill that would create an initiative to foster growth among existing businesses and attract technology companies to the northeast region of the state.

tinue with federal funding that amounts to between \$8 million and \$9 million a year.

Under the proposal, \$4 million of the funds would go to a new emerging worker program. The new program would provide specialized training for 11th and 12th grade students to move into targeted industries.

Some members met this recommendation with criticism. Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said that the current system already allows students to get adequate vocational training. He said that the state's dislocated workers program is the best in the nation and he questioned the wisdom of changing something that is working well.

Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter) questioned a recommendation to move the state's displaced homemakers program into the dislocated workers program. Storm said that homemakers who have been married for 25-30 years and are suddenly on their own with few marketable skills need the program. They also

need to know the program exists, she said.

Strengthening the connection between the state's higher education system and the marketplace is another component of the governor's plan.

The report also recognizes that because local economies differ, the state's various regions have different needs. The employment issues in the metropolitan area are much different than those in Greater Minnesota.

This is one area where legislators seemed to agree.

Already this session, several bills have been heard that address growing concern over how to keep young people in rural Minnesota and slow down the migration to the Twin Cities area.

A bill (HF2820) sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) would make a one-time appropriation of \$1 million for grants to promote Internet access in rural Minnesota.

McElroy's bill has been approved by the House Jobs and Economic Development Policy and Economic Development Finance committees, as well the House Commerce Committee. It is now waiting for action by the House Ways and Means Committee.

A separate bill (HF2604) sponsored by Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson) would establish a public-private corporation, Northern Technology Initiative Inc., that would focus on encouraging growth among existing businesses and attracting technology companies to the northeast region of the state.

Hilty's bill was approved Feb. 22 by the Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee and was sent to the House Government Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) criticized the governor's development plan's recommendation to eliminate agriculture improvement grants.

"Agriculture is still the state's largest industry. Businesses relating to agriculture are begging for people," Kubly said. "This is removing a small piece but it is a very vital piece. Agriculture is a necessary component of the Minnesota economy."

Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) agreed that many of the issues raised in the report need further discussion. But he also agreed with Wilson that the report is a necessary beginning to the discussion.

"It's not perfect but it is a giant step forward. It is the first time we have something on the table that will help the under-employed," he said. 🐼

A green legacy

Plan would provide millions to enhance and protect the environment

By JON FURE

A plan to provide \$195 million to enhance wildlife management and recreation areas, improve wastewater treatment facilities, and reduce water pollution was approved Feb. 18 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

The proposal would spend \$70 million more than Gov. Jesse Ventura's capital budget plan for environment-related initiatives. But proponents of the proposal say it covers only a fraction of the current state needs in those areas.

The bill (HF2651), known as Legacy 2000, is sponsored by Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield). Tuma said the goal of the initiative is to leave a positive legacy for future generations.

"If you talk to Minnesotans and ask them what they cherish most about the state, the majority of them would say something to do with the outdoors," he said. "Minnesotans place a high value on our natural resources."

Most of the money for the initiative would come from the sale of bonds, but some could come from the state's general fund.

One program in Tuma's bill would provide state funds to match donations from people or organizations that support improvements to critical wildlife habitats, which is part of the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) program. Since 1986, the program has received \$4.8 million in cash donations and \$16.7 million in land donations. Also, revenue from the critical habitat vehicle license plates brings in about \$615,000 per year for that program, which is administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

The Legacy 2000 initiative would spend \$3 million for the critical habitat program, while the governor recommended spending only \$1 million.

The DNR ranked the critical habitat program 11th out of its 19 non-building programs. Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), chair of the committee, said that he and other committee members would make that a much higher priority and that the low ranking "makes us question the direction of (the department)."



Whitney Clark testifies Feb. 18 on the shoreline protection portion of the Legacy 2000 bill approved by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

Another high priority of the committee that is reflected in the Legacy 2000 initiative is a proposal to fund conservation easements along the Minnesota River, known as the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

In some areas, surface water carries soil and chemicals from farm fields into the river. The easements require the landowners to stop cultivating the land, so that it can filter out soil and chemicals, help control flooding, and establish wildlife habitat.

Under the conservation program, each \$1 in state funds is matched by \$2.30 in federal funds. So far the state has spent \$10 million that has been matched by \$23 million in federal funds.

The federal matching funds are only available through September 2002. To qualify for the total \$140 million of the remaining federal funds, the state would have to pay \$60

million, which is the amount that is proposed in Tuma's initiative. Of that \$60 million, \$20 million would be funded through bonds to be sold after July 1, 2002, so those funds would not be counted as part of the total spending in the current biennium.

Steve Hansen, executive director of the Minnesota River Joint Powers Board, said the Legacy 2000 initiative would double the amount of land in the program. And he said it is supported by all of the affected counties.

The governor's recommendation is to spend \$25 million for that conservation program.

Other programs that would be funded under the Legacy 2000 initiative include:

- \$26 million to the Public Facilities Authority for grants to improve wastewater systems in the state, which would be matched by an equal amount of federal funds;
- \$14 million in grants to local governments to establish parks, trails, or scenic areas, which would require 50 percent in matching local funds;
- \$10 million to acquire land for metro greenways;
- \$10 million for improvements to state parks;
- \$10 million for grants to the Department of Agriculture for conservation easements, which would require 50 percent matching funds from counties;
- \$9.5 million to help reduce flooding and restore natural areas in the Red River Valley;
- \$5 million to protect the state's remaining native prairies; and
- \$5 million for a pilot grant program to protect lake shores and river banks from commercial development.

Timing is critical to maximize the benefits of many of the programs, said Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul). The metro greenways program, for example, is designed to acquire remaining natural areas for parks, trails, and scenic areas, and the money will go farther the earlier it is used.

"Land prices are skyrocketing while we're sitting here," he said.

Osthoff added that the bill would spend only about \$22 million in the metro area.

The legacy bill now moves to the House Capital Investment Committee, where it will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus bonding bill. 

Building bridges

Bonding plan would provide \$300 million more for transportation than the governor requested

By CHRIS VETTER

After weeks of discussing Minnesota's outdated transportation infrastructure — from faltering bridges to out-of-shape roads — the House Transportation Finance Committee Feb. 23 approved a \$382.6 million bonding proposal.

The proposal calls for \$55 million in general obligation bonds to be sold for transportation projects, primarily for bridge upgrades. The remaining costs would be paid by bonds paid off by the Trunk Highway Fund.

The plan now heads to the House Capital Investment Committee.

The funding request is dramatically different from the governor's proposal. Gov. Jesse Ventura recommended \$27 million in Trunk Highway Fund bonds; the committee topped that number by \$300 million.

In fact, the governor's total request, combining general obligation and trunk highway fund bonding, was \$67 million for transportation.

In a ranking of bonding priorities, Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska), chair of the committee, placed bridge replacement at the top. Bridges, unlike roads, can be funded through general obligation bonds.

More than 600 bridges in Minnesota need to be replaced in the next two years at a cost of \$44 million, said Ed Cohoon, chief financial officer for the Department of Transportation. There are currently 2,558 deficient bridges in county, city, and township systems.

Cphoon noted that Ventura, who vetoed bridge funding last year, submitted a general obligation bond request of \$30 million.

Julie Skallman, metro division engineer with the Transportation Department, said if the full \$44 million request is not met, the department will select bridges based on what projects have federal matching funds.

Molnau said that not providing funding for bridges would create hazardous conditions.

"The idea is we would actually close those bridges," Molnau said recently.

"They'll probably be in Greater Minnesota, so it doesn't matter anyway," she added sarcastically.

"That bridge would be closed if we thought it was unsafe," Cohoon told the committee. "But I don't think we're at that point."

Delaying repairs on a bridge can hurt a town financially if a bridge is closed, Molnau said. Towns that do not receive funding for a bridge this year can expect to wait for repairs, Molnau said. Because the governor vetoed bridge funds a year ago, it is unlikely he would approve a bonding request in 2001, she added.

Transportation officials predict the total annual investment needed to replace bridges for the next 10 years is \$68 million.

The bridge replacement project was initiated in 1976 and has received an average of \$8 million each year since 1990, according to a department report.

Though bridges are critical needs, road repair is the key component of the trunk highway fund bonding proposal. Approximately \$200 million would be spent in the metropolitan area, with another \$100 million for outstate roads.

"The costs of doing projects in the metro is much greater than the outstate area," Molnau said.

The committee approved funding for a new

\$10.4 million Department of Transportation facility in St. Cloud, along with an \$8.7 million upgrade at its Detroit Lakes headquarters. The Regional Transportation Management Center in Roseville would get \$6.7 million for a new facility, but would be ordered to sell its old facility within three years. The facilities are required by the Minnesota Constitution to be financed through the Trunk Highway Fund.

The committee also approved funding for rail projects. The Minnesota Rail Service Investment program, which initially sought \$12 million for rail upgrades on short lines in the state, was approved for \$5 million in general obligation bonds.

The Capital Investment Committee will consider a proposed \$5 million for the planned upgrades on the DM&E rail line crossing the southern part of the state from Winona to Lake Benton. The railroad sought \$50 million. The DM&E project was sent to the Capital Investment Committee without recommendation to pass and is not included in the Transportation Finance Committee's \$382.6 million bonding request.

Neither rail project was included in the governor's request.

Another \$5 million in general obligation bonds would be appropriated for port development assistance grants, under the committee's plan.

One notable request that was not approved was \$10 million to design a transitway in the Twin Cities. The money would have been used to begin engineering and designs on one bus-only road. The governor has recommended planning and constructing three bus-only transitways at a cost of about \$110 million each.

Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington) was critical of the committee's decision to not fund the transitways, saying the bus-only roads are a better option than light rail.

Molnau said the committee will hear a bill later this session that would transfer about \$400 million of the state surplus from the general fund to the trunk highway fund for road upgrades. 🐼

The assistant governor

African-American aide served 14 chief executives from 1904 to 1957

BY LECLAIR G. LAMBERT

When Governor-elect John A. Johnson prepared to move into the new Capitol building late in 1904, he sent a telegram to William F. “Billy” Williams, a young acquaintance and semi-pro baseball player. Johnson wanted him to handle the transfer of official documents, papers, and other details for the office.

The governor-elect felt that only a few men he knew could handle such important duties, and one was Billy Williams. The skill, daring, and determination Williams showed as a star on the baseball field, and the wit and intelligence he displayed when the two first met on the baseball diamond, had impressed the newly elected governor.

Johnson’s offer to Williams created some indecision for the black athlete, who had just been offered a chance at a baseball career with a couple of professional teams. But knowing that discrimination would limit

his chances in baseball and faced with the advice from one big-league scout that he deny his ethnicity and claim to be an American Indian, Williams turned down his chance to pursue a life in baseball.

The governor-elect convinced him that a job at the Capitol would be more meaningful for him as a bellwether for his race’s sparse population in the area.

So Williams, who was a St.

Paul waiter at the time, took Gov. Johnson’s offer, which allowed him to continue playing baseball on weekends.

A lifetime of service

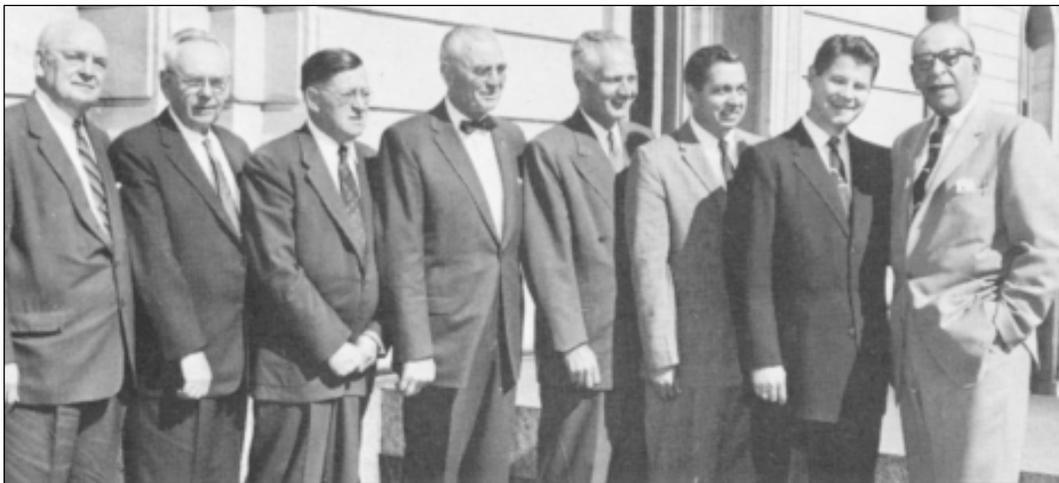
Johnson was sworn in on January 4, 1905, with Williams as his aide and confidant. When Johnson died in office in 1909, Williams was so respected around the Capitol that he did not lose his job when Lt. Gov. Adolph O. Eberhart was sworn in.

And Williams didn’t leave the governor’s office until 1957, when he retired after 53 years of public service.

Williams served 14 governors of different political parties. As part of a tribute to 50 years of service, the 1955 Legislative Manual is dedicated to him and contains his photograph and biography.



Billy Williams at work in the governor’s office.



Pictured with Billy Williams, right, at his retirement in September 1957 are seven of the 14 governors he served. They are, from left, Govs. J.A.A. Burnquist (1915-1921), Hjalmer Peterson (1936-1937), Elmer A. Benson (1937-1939), Edward J. Thye (1943-1947), Luther W. Youngdahl (1947-1951), C. Elmer Anderson (1951-1955), and Orville Freeman (1955-1961).

Williams was known to some as the “assistant governor” because of his vast knowledge about the office and his continual closeness to all the chief executives he worked for. On many occasions he encouraged legislators to promote equal rights and other issues he believed were important for all Minnesotans.

Born, raised in St. Paul

Williams was born on a cool October evening in 1877, in his family’s home on West Ninth Street in St. Paul. He grew up in the shadow of the second State Capitol.

The experience of being one of few African Americans in the state’s capital city made him understand what a tremendous opportunity Johnson had given him.

“No other Negro in the state will be in the position you’ll be in,” Johnson told Williams when he accepted the job. “The people you’ll meet, the friends you’ll make can be a tremendous asset for good racial harmony.”

He felt very strongly that his position with the governor’s office gave him a chance to advocate for issues important to members of his race.

But he also got the benefit of welcoming national and international dignitaries, as well as world-class athletes to the State Capitol.

Williams was always the first person to greet visitors to the governor’s office. In fact, among the 350,000 people he greeted were Woodrow Wilson (then governor of New Jersey), William Jennings Bryan, and six sitting U.S. presidents. Harry S.

Truman even attended a reception for him.

On different occasions, boxers Joe Louis and Jack Johnson visited.

Williams also met a group of four Sioux Indian chiefs who wanted to demand money for land along the Minnesota River. Williams diffused the situation before the potentially hostile situation could go any further.

Perhaps the most memorable visitor who met with Williams was Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia.

Honoring a legend

When Williams died in 1963 at the age of 86, seven Minnesota governors were honorary pallbearers for the legendary public servant. Former Gov. Harold Stassen wanted to attend, but could not

because he was working with the United Nations.

Hundreds of people mourned the loss of William F. “Billy” Williams, and a tribute to him was read into the U.S. Congressional Record.

Williams was replaced by Charles A. Graham, who died in January of this year at the age of 94. Graham also served as an executive aide in the governor’s office for many years. During his tenure, he worked for seven governors.

Graham’s son, Ralph, who died in January 1999 at the age of 73, served as assistant sergeant in the Senate for 33 years. Ralph Graham continued the high principles exhibited by Williams and his father by never faltering in preserving the dignity and decorum of the Senate. 🙏



Ralph Graham

Minnesota forever linked to the Dred Scott case

Perhaps the most noteworthy of all African-Americans in the region that would later become the state of Minnesota was a slave named Dred Scott.

Scott came to Fort Snelling in the late 1830s with his owner, Dr. John Emerson, an Army surgeon. When Scott was there, Fort Snelling was part of the Wisconsin Territory. The area would later be part of the Minnesota Territory, established in 1849 and granted statehood nine years later.

At the fort, Scott did not live wholly as a slave. He married Harriet Robinson, servant of Maj.

Lawrence Taliaferro, an Indian agent at the fort who allowed Robinson to become a part of Emerson’s household.

Scott and Emerson were from Missouri, then a slave state. In the coming years, Scott would use his residence at Fort Snelling to try to gain his own freedom.

Backed by abolitionists, Scott sued for freedom, saying that because he had been taken to the free territories including Fort Snelling and had lived as a free man, he should be free when he returned to his native Missouri.

Precedent seemed to be on Scott’s side. Others had sued successfully on the same grounds. For example, a 1836 Missouri case involving another slave who had been taken to Fort Snelling ended

with the slave being freed.

Scott would not succeed, but his case would be a turning point that propelled the nation toward the Civil War and, ultimately, the end of slavery in all states.

The U. S. Supreme Court, however, did not agree. Its famous decision of 1857 ruled that slaves taken to a free state were still property. As such, the court said, Scott was not a citizen and did not even have the right to sue.

Three years later, in 1860, a slave named Eliza Winston would use the same argument and be granted her freedom.

She was the servant to the wife of a

wealthy Mississippi plantation family that had a summer cottage on Lake Harriet in Minneapolis.

Winston wanted her freedom, so with the help

of a free black family and assistance from an anti-slavery group, a writ of *habeas corpus*, or unlawful imprisonment, was submitted to a judge on her behalf.

Though lawyers for Col. Richard Christmas, the slave owner, argued that the Dred Scott decision should have precedence over the case, the judge ruled that Winston should be freed. The judge based his ruling on the Minnesota Constitution, which said slavery was illegal in the state. He proclaimed Winston “free to go.”

(L. LAMBERT)



Monday, Feb. 21

HF3671—Swapinski (DFL)

State Government Finance

Duluth State Office Building renovated, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3672—Davids (R)

Taxes

Electric generation peaking facility personal property tax exemption provided.

HF3673—Ozment (R)

Environment &

Natural Resources Finance

Metropolitan Council regional trails developed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3674—Sviggum (R)

Education Policy

Student discipline reasonable force by teachers and other district employees authorized.

HF3675—Abrams (R)

Local Government &

Metropolitan Affairs

Tax-increment financing district property tax abatement agreements authorized and abatement duration limit extension provided.

HF3676—Solberg (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy

Itasca County family preservation services base adjusted.

HF3677—Wenzel (DFL)

Governmental Operations &

Veterans Affairs Policy

State and public retirement plan contributions, distributions, and fiduciary activities modified.

HF3678—Bakk (DFL)

Environment &

Natural Resources Finance

Lake, Cook, and St. Louis counties wildfire emergency communications equipment and response training grants provided; and money appropriated.

HF3679—Seagren (R)

Governmental Operations &

Veterans Affairs Policy

Charter school appeals considered by the Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation, and charter school approval process modified.

HF3680—Haas (R)

Health & Human Services Policy

Housing with services and adult foster care pilot project expenditure requirements modified, and expiration date extended.

HF3681—Seifert, M. (R)

Education Policy

Rural charter schools of excellence grants provided and money appropriated.

HF3682—Biernat (DFL)

Governmental Operations &

Veterans Affairs Policy

Lieutenant governor and attorney general salaries established.

HF3683—Paulsen (R)

Commerce

State fund mutual insurance company involvement with the state repealed.

HF3684—McElroy (R)

Taxes

Qualified low-income housing projects construction materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3685—Westfall (R)

Environment &

Natural Resources Policy

Aggregate resources management provided and money appropriated.

HF3686—Swenson (R)

Jobs & Economic

Development Finance

Minnesota Historical Society county and local preservation projects grants authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3687—Skoe (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy

American Indian child placement costs reimbursement provided.

HF3688—Molnau (R)

Transportation Policy

Midwest interstate passenger rail compact adopted.

HF3689—Westrom (R)

K-12 Education Finance

Independent School District No. 771, Chokio-Alberta, fund transfer authorized.

HF3690—Kielkucki (R)

Agriculture &

Rural Development Finance

Minnesota agricultural research grants board established, agricultural cropland levy authorized, school district and county ad valorem property tax exemption provided, and money appropriated.

HF3691—Boudreau (R)

Governmental Operations &

Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) previously exempt service credit purchase authorized for an eligible member.

HF3692—Kuisle (R)

Agriculture Policy

Feedlot permit provisions modified, manure applicator education and training requirements provided, and administrative penalty order requirements expanded.

HF3693—Mullery (DFL)

Family & Early Childhood

Education Finance

Early head start programs funded, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds transferred, and money appropriated.

HF3694—Dawkins (DFL)

Local Government &

Metropolitan Affairs

Metropolitan Council unnecessary requirements modified or eliminated, and facsimile and digital signatures authorized.

HF3695—Holberg (R)

Civil Law

Guardian and conservatorship system advisory committee established and report required.

HF3696—Holberg (R)

Civil Law

Data practices recodification conforming changes provided.

HF3697—Larsen, P. (R)

Transportation Policy

Emergency motor vehicle dealers provided licensing requirement exemption.

HF3698—Seagren (R)

K-12 Education Finance

Excellent teacher recruitment improved, loan forgiveness program created, and money appropriated.

HF3699—Tuma (R)

Health & Human Services Policy

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Board of Trustees property transactions and capital improvements authority provided.

HF3700—Kuisle (R)

Taxes

Manufactured home parks property tax class rate reduced.

HF3701—Paymar (DFL)

Taxes

Senior citizen property tax deferral eligibility criteria modified.

HF3702—Harder (R)

Taxes

Federal alcohol fuel subtraction from individual income and corporate franchise taxes authorized.

HF3703—Pelowski (DFL)

Higher Education Finance

Designer selection board process exception provided to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) and design-build construction method authorized.

HF3704—Seifert, M. (R)

Education Policy

Desegregation rule flexibility options provided for school districts located outside the metropolitan area.

HF3705—Tomassoni (DFL)

Higher Education Finance

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Board of Trustees debt service requirements on specified projects modified.

HF3706—Mares (R)

Education Policy

Teacher preparation program created and money appropriated.

HF3707—Swenson (R)

K-12 Education Finance

Independent School District No. 2859, Glencoe-Silver Lake, levy authority restored.

HF3708—Jennings (DFL)

Local Government &

Metropolitan Affairs

Municipalities required to issue building permits once special permits have been issued and environmental assessment worksheets have been completed.

HF3709—Rukavina (DFL)

Taxes

Independent School District No. 2154, Eveleth-Gilbert, joint recreation board tax levy authorized.

HF3710—Murphy (DFL)

Governmental Operations &

Veterans Affairs Policy

Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) normal retirement age definition and annuity formula modified.

HF3711—Huntley (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy

Telemedicine network established, interstate telemedicine services regulated, medical assistance reimbursement provided, grants authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3712—Huntley (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) education and training program participation modified, and money appropriated.

HF3713—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) education and training program participation modified, and money appropriated.

HF3714—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Children's toxic chemicals exposure minimized and standards provided.

HF3715—Otremba (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Eligible half-ton pickup trucks registered as farm trucks.

HF3716—Otremba (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 2170, Staples-Motley, fund transfer authorized.

HF3717—Westrom (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Spinal cord injury research board and trust account created, civil penalties imposed, and money appropriated.

HF3718—Westrom (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Diesel fuel biodiesel content mandate provided.

HF3719—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Consumer support program eligibility expanded.

HF3720—Van Dellen (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Eyeglasses and contact lenses prescription access provided to patients, and optometrists required to provide copies.

HF3721—Hausman (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Motor vehicle license plates and tabs renewal denial due to delinquent traffic fines, or nonpayment of support or maintenance provided; and money appropriated.

HF3722—Mullery (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grants transferred for early childhood family education programs funding and money appropriated.

HF3723—Molnau (R)
Transportation Finance
Major transportation projects account established in the trunk highway fund, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3724—Workman (R)
Transportation Finance
Major transportation projects fund established, uses specified, motor vehicle sales tax revenue allocated, and general fund transfers authorized.

HF3725—Sviggum (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School facility floor covering replacement costs included in health and safety revenue.

HF3726—Bishop (R)
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) chancellor separate salary subdivision created, and additional foundation compensation authorized.

HF3727—Anderson, B. (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Wright County nursing facility rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

HF3728—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Working family income tax credit increased.

HF3729—Jennings (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Wyoming and Chisago City orderly annexed property reimbursement duration limit exemption provided.

HF3730—McGuire (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Child care staff retention initiative created and money appropriated.

HF3731—Seifert, J. (R)
Commerce
Internet privacy policy provided for state and local government, model online privacy notice developed, and subscriber personal information release restricted.

HF3732—Entenza (DFL)
Civil Law
Prosecuting attorney cost and fee awards provided in public nuisance cases.

HF3733—McCollum (DFL)
Taxes
Lawful gambling tax rates reduced.

HF3734—Hasskamp (DFL)
Taxes
Lawful gambling tax rates reduced.

HF3735—Dorman (R)
Taxes
Lawful gambling tax rates reduced.

HF3736—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) participants receiving mental health of chemical dependency treatment services considered eligible for MFIP child care.

HF3737—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota food assistance program legal noncitizen eligibility expanded, sanctions modified, and Minnesota family investment program (MFIP) training and employment services appropriated money.

HF3738—Rhodes (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
St. Paul RiverCentre's Roy Wilkins Auditorium redevelopment planned, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3739—Mariani (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Noncash child care assistance programs created.

HF3740—Jennings (DFL)
Taxes
Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided, and mandatory levy reductions required.

HF3741—Jennings (DFL)
Taxes
Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3742—Smith (R)
Civil Law
Revenue recapture act collection of conciliation court judgements authorized, claims priority specified, and money appropriated.

HF3743—Dawkins (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Tax-increment financing redevelopment district definition expanded.

HF3744—Leighton (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Blazing Star State Trail bridge construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3745—Mulder (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 404, Lake Benton, fund balance penalty reimbursement grant authorized and money appropriated.

HF3746—Mulder (R)
Taxes
Agricultural property exempt from general education levies.

HF3747—Rukavina (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
School district declining pupil unit aid established and money appropriated.

HF3748—Fuller (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Local government in lieu of tax payments increased.

HF3749—Lenczewski (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Patient health records release to the health data institute and commissioner of health prohibited without consent.

HF3750—Seifert, J. (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Board of architecture, engineering, land surveying, landscape architecture, geoscience, and interior design licensing fees increased; and enforcement activities enhanced.

HF3751—Wenzel (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Dislocated worker program support services funding allocation increased.

HF3752—Mariani (DFL)
State Government Finance
University of Minnesota showboat rebuilt and money appropriated.

HF3753—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Freeway metered ramp study required and money appropriated.

HF3754—Paulsen (R)
Commerce
Brewers prohibited from requiring wholesalers to agree not to sell another brewer's products, and agreement terminations authorized.

HF3755—Chaudhary (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Weight training equipment in state correctional facilities prohibited.

HF3756—Abrams (R)
Commerce
Holocaust victims insurance relief act established and civil penalties imposed.

HF3757—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Patent, trademark, and copyright drawings and documents sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3758—Abrams (R)
Taxes
Tax-increment financing district property tax abatement agreements authorized and abatement duration limit extension provided.

HF3759—Chaudhary (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Level 2 predatory offender information disclosed to additional persons.

HF3760—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Small school enhanced equity revenue component added to general education revenue.

HF3761—Mullery (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Nontraditional career assistance and training programs established for low-income women with children, and money appropriated.

HF3762—Jaros (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Port authority electronic disbursement of funds authorized.

HF3763—Abeler (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Area learning center establishment criteria modified.

HF3764—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Health insurance purchasing pool account and nursing facility health insurance board established, duties specified, and report required.

HF3765—Ness (R)
Taxes
Relative homestead treatment requirement that agricultural property owner be a Minnesota resident eliminated.

HF3766—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Pawnbrokers providing electronic transaction records to law enforcement agencies required to use most current version of the interchange file specification format.

Wednesday, Feb 23

HF3767—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Red River basin flood hazard mitigation grant level increased, flood hazard mitigation funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3768—Kielkucki (R)
Education Policy
Profile of Learning portion of state high school graduation rule codified.

HF3769—Wenzel (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Garrison, Kathio, West Mille Lacs Lake sanitary sewer district wastewater infrastructure grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3770—Juhnke (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Gas theft crime created and driver's license suspension required for repeat offenders.

HF3771—Winter (DFL)
Taxes
Farm machinery sales and use tax definition modified to include equipment used to produce flowering or ornamental plants including nursery stock.

HF3772—McElroy (R)
Taxes
Individual income tax education credit modified.

HF3773—Tomassoni (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Federal child and adult care food program waiver requested for licensed child care programs under the department of children, families, and learning.

HF3774—Seagren (R)
Education Policy
School district electronic products and services contract criteria established.

HF3775—Larsen, P. (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minneapolis Employees Retirement Fund (MERF) prior temporary employment service credit purchase authorized for a specified employee.

HF3776—Winter (DFL)
Education Policy
Profile of Learning statewide accountability and district autonomy balanced.

HF3777—Dorn (DFL)
Education Policy
Charter school sponsorship denial appeal time limited.

HF3778—Rifenberg (R)
Commerce
Financial institution federal data privacy regulation conformity required and state enforcement provided.

HF3779—Clark, K. (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Youth shelter and juvenile prostitution prevention grant program established, and money appropriated.

HF3780—Westerberg (R)
Taxes
Nonprofit organization charitable purposes sales and use tax definition expanded to include purchases used for qualified accessibility modifications.

HF3781—Carruthers (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Three additional days of student instruction mandate funding provided and money appropriated.

HF3782—Westerberg (R)
Taxes
Private noncommercial aircraft storage hangars on leased airport land property tax exemption provided and classification specified.

HF3783—Smith (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Water quality cooperatives repealed.

HF3784—Vandever (R)
Transportation Policy
Centerville and Lino Lakes school zone speed limit authorized.

HF3785—Kelliher (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
Minneapolis Community and Technical College improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3786—Anderson, B. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Wright County ditch conveyance to St. Michael and Albertville authorized.

HF3787—Clark, J. (R)
Taxes
Passenger automobile registration tax reduced, motor vehicle sales tax deposited in the highway user tax distribution fund, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3788—Stanek (R)
Taxes
Political subdivision sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3789—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
Criminal and juvenile justice information policy group membership modified, data group created, technology infrastructure improvements authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3790—Larsen, P. (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Marginal cost funding applied to school districts with declining enrollment and money appropriated.

HF3791—Vandever (R)
Transportation Policy
Trunk highway fund expenditures for light-rail transit purposed prohibited.

HF3792—Opatz (DFL)
Education Policy
Statewide educational accountability and public reporting system guidelines established.

HF3793—Clark, J. (R)
Commerce
Invention developer contract requirements modified.

HF3794—Molnau (R)
Transportation Policy
Hiawatha Avenue light rail federal funding for transit capital projects application limited.

HF3795—Kuisle (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Rochester firefighter probationary period rules modified.

HF3796—Kuisle (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
New firefighter probationary period established.

HF3797—Chaudhary (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
General community education revenue increased and money appropriated.

HF3798—McElroy (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Distressed rural county training and telecommuting program created, and money appropriated.

HF3799—Stang (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
State meat inspection program supplemental appropriation provided.

HF3800—Seagren (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Charter school provisions modified and money appropriated.

HF3801—Erickson (R)
Education Policy
Profile of Learning moratorium established pending conditions, educational standards reviewed, technology needs addressed, student course grades scoring criteria provided, and curriculum and instructional practices improved.

HF3802—Westfall (R)
Agriculture Policy
Canadian geese crop depredation abatement materials purchased, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3803—Lenczewski (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Peace officer definition expanded to include licensed criminal investigators employed by prosecutorial offices and those offices included in law enforcement agency definition.

HF3804—Kuisle (R)
Taxes
Individual alternative minimum tax exemption amount increased.

HF3805—Dehler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded.

HF3806—Wolf (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Nonprofit organization reemployment compensation provisions modified.

HF3807—Abrams (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Minnetonka replacement service transit program authorized.

HF3808—Nornes (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Child care center employee annually required inservice training provided.

HF3809—Wagenius (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Aerial pesticide application regulated, honeybees protected, and civil penalties imposed.

HF3810—Kuisle (R)**Taxes**

Eligible interstate carrier vehicles and engines sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3811—Boudreau (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Alternative rate-setting methodologies authorized for day training and habilitation vendors, task force extended, and money appropriated.

HF3812—Larson, D. (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

Historic Grimm Farm program/support facility construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3813—Schumacher (DFL)**Environment &****Natural Resources Policy**

Public drainage system transfer to a water management authority permitted and definition provided.

HF3814—Anderson, B. (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Aggregate material importer definition clarified and Wright County exported materials production tax authorized.

HF3815—Mahoney (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

School district crime-related costs levy increased.

HF3816—Chaudhary (DFL)**Family & Early Childhood Education Finance**

Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) state aid increased and money appropriated.

HF3817—Olson (R)**Education Policy**

Student uncensored use of historical documents in school provided, violence prevention curriculum modified, and character development education provided.

HF3818—Otremba (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

County-based purchasing medical assistance per capita payment modified.

HF3819—Entenza (DFL)**Education Policy**

Advanced placement and international baccalaureate program student scholarships and teacher stipends provided.

HF3820—Winter (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Spread of specified genetically modified organisms liability established and damages specified.

HF3821—Winter (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Minnesota agricultural production contract fair practices act adopted and criminal penalty imposed.

HF3822—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Teacher leaves of absence rights expanded.

HF3823—Seagren (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Hennepin County unclassified service expanded to include a chief detention deputy sheriff.

HF3824—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association contributing member assessment reduced, and money appropriated.

HF3825—Smith (R)**Crime Prevention**

Tribal police departments annual insurance cap established.

HF3826—Jennings (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Medical response units voluntary registration provided.

HF3827—Kelliher (DFL)**Commerce**

Interactive service providers use of consumer information regulated, specified false or misleading electronic mail messages prohibited, and penalties imposed.

HF3828—Solberg (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

General education revenue isolation index modified.

HF3829—Greenfield (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, (TANF), federal block grant funds transferred to federal Title XX block grant for community social services.

HF3830—Daggett (R)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

New York Mills wastewater funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3831—Schumacher (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

School district small school revenue created, formula provided, and money appropriated.

HF3832—Smith (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Nursing facility property-related per diem increased.

HF3833—Goodno (R)**Commerce**

Uniform prescription drug information card issuance required of health benefit plans.

HF3834—Kelliher (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Minneapolis central library redevelopment tax increment financing, (TIF), district authorized.

HF3835—Workman (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Economic development district durational limits modified.

HF3836—Winter (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, (MnSCU), capital improvements authorized at Ridgewater Community and Technical College at Willmar, Moorhead State University, and Minnesota West Community and Technical College at Worthington.

HF3837—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

MinnesotaCare premium and other health care taxes repealed, savings to purchasers required, losses transferred, tobacco settlement funds disposed of, contingent repeal of health care access fund, and civil penalties provided.

HF3838—Reuter (R)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Owatonna infrastructure improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3839—Goodno (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Speech-language pathologist, audiologist, unlicensed mental health practitioners, alcohol and drug counselors, and hearing instrument dispensers training, practice, licensure, and registration practices modified.

HF3840—Krinkie (R)**Education Policy**

Alternative license provided teachers who received training in other states.

HF3841—Howes (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Workers' compensation offset applicable to disability provisions modified relating to public employees retirement association.

HF3842—Howes (R)**Crime Prevention**

Fireworks sales and use permitted under specified circumstances.

HF3843—Pelowski (DFL)**Taxes**

Taxing authorities authorized to provide information on the Internet in lieu of conducting truth-in-taxation hearings.

Thursday, Feb. 24

HF3844—Ness (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Farmer-lender mediation program made permanent, ethanol producer payment eligibility expanded, agroforestry loan program created, farm relief funded, and money appropriated.

HF3845—Ness (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Pupil unit definition modified and general education formula allowance increased.

HF3846—Bishop (R)**Crime Prevention**

Community notification law clarified.

HF3847—Clark, K. (DFL)**Jobs & Economic****Development Finance**

Publicly owned low-income disabled and elderly high rise air-conditioning grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3848—Ozment (R)**Taxes**

Farm machinery sales and use tax definition modified to include equipment used to produce flowering and ornamental plants including nursery stock.

HF3849—Tingelstad (R)**Taxes**

Commuter rail diesel fuel sales and use tax exemption provided, and money appropriated.

HF3850—McGuire (DFL)**Commerce**

Beer keg identification standards prescribed, retailer records maintained, and penalties imposed.

HF3851—Ozment (R)**Crime Prevention**

Cigarette fire safety standards required.

HF3852—Westfall (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

State government decentralized.

HF3853—Krinkie (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Internal service funds budgetary information and reports required.

HF3854—Gray (DFL)**Family & Early Childhood****Education Finance**

Basic sliding fee child care program appropriated money.

- HF3855—Wenzel (DFL)**
Taxes
Personal and dependent income tax exemption subtraction provided.
- HF3856—Dorn (DFL)**
Judiciary Finance
Mankato regional public safety training facility grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3857—Workman (R)**
Transportation Policy
New school buses required to have strobe lights.
- HF3858—Davids (R)**
K-12 Education Finance
Marginal cost pupil units definition modified.
- HF3859—Carruthers (DFL)**
K-12 Education Finance
General education formula allowance increased and money appropriated.
- HF3860—Carruthers (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Minimum wage increased and indexed.
- HF3861—Davids (R)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association deficits funded through tobacco settlement revenues and money appropriated.
- HF3862—Wenzel (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Hennepin Paper Company in Morrison County reemployment insurance claimants provided additional benefits and requirement exemption provided.
- HF3863—Sykora (R)**
Education Policy
Charter school districts provided.
- HF3864—Davids (R)**
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Administrative rules legislative and executive approval required.
- HF3865—Chaudhary (DFL)**
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Basic sliding fee child care assistance funded through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) fund transfers and money appropriated.
- HF3866—Rukavina (DFL)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Semi-independent living costs classified as remedial care costs and group residential housing payments provided.
- HF3867—Smith (R)**
K-12 Education Finance
Open enrollment special education aid provided.
- HF3868—Daggett (R)**
Agriculture Policy
Aquatic farm licensing requirements modified.
- HF3869—Greiling (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Voluntary paid parental leave program created and wage reimbursement provided.
- HF3870—Finseth (R)**
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District Nos. 595, East Grand Forks, and 2854, Ada-Borup flood loans interest provided and money appropriated.
- HF3871—Smith (R)**
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Aggregate material importer definition clarified and Wright County exported materials production tax authorized.
- HF3872—Mariani (DFL)**
Health & Human Services Policy
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) child care assistance made available to support participant employment and training work activities.
- HF3873—Luther (DFL)**
Education Policy
New school bus lap and shoulder belts required.
- HF3874—Wenzel (DFL)**
Crime Prevention
Aiding an offender criminal penalties increased, crimes resulting in death of a victim statute of limitations increased, and sentencing guidelines established.
- HF3875—Krinkie (R)**
Transportation Finance
Light-rail transit bonding and funding purposes modified for bottleneck congestion relief, and additional lanes provided.
- HF3876—Jennings (DFL)**
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Internet gambling study required.
- HF3877—Kubly (DFL)**
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Bird Island land exchange exempt acreage provided.
- HF3878—Davids (R)**
K-12 Education Finance
Debt service equalization program and capital loan provisions modified.
- HF3879—Trimble (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
United States Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun bust placement in the State Capitol provided and money appropriated.
- HF3880—Davids (R)**
Commerce
Workers' compensation reinsurance association required to adhere to government data practices provisions.
- HF3881—Trimble (DFL)**
Health & Human Services Policy
State public water service connection fee repealed.
- HF3882—Trimble (DFL)**
Transportation Policy
Motor vehicle additional titling fee eliminated.
- HF3883—Trimble (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Neighborhood Development Center, Inc. grant provided for neighborhood improvement and ethnic-based entrepreneurial support in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and money appropriated.
- HF3884—Trimble (DFL)**
Transportation Policy
Motor vehicle registration filing fee repealed.
- HF3885—Rhodes (R)**
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
State treasurer powers and duties transferred to the state auditor.
- HF3886—Krinkie (R)**
Transportation Finance
Light-rail transit funding cancelled and bonding reduced.
- HF3887—Vandevor (R)**
Transportation Policy
Personal rapid transit systems appropriated money.
- HF3888—Chaudhary (DFL)**
Education Policy
High school graduation rule provisions modified and codified.
- HF3889—Knoblach (R)**
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Governmental Accounting Standards Board infrastructure reporting standards implementation required.
- HF3890—Knoblach (R)**
Ways & Means
Unexpected funds carryover authorized for state-owned facilities repairs and maintenance.
- HF3891—Knoblach (R)**
Higher Education Finance
Unexpected funds carryover authorized for state-owned facilities repairs and maintenance.
- HF3892—Opatz (DFL)**
Higher Education Finance
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) issued revenue bonds aggregate principal amount increased, and bond requirements clarified.
- HF3893—Seagren (R)**
K-12 Education Finance
Special education base revenue modified and money appropriated.
- HF3894—Workman (R)**
Transportation Policy
Motor carriers; requiring certain exempt carriers of property to obtain certificate of registration from commissioner of transportation.
- HF3895—Rest (DFL)**
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Housing improvement area establishment authority modified.
- HF3896—Abrams (R)**
Taxes
Base blocks used in metalcasting sales and use tax exemption provided.
- HF3897—Rhodes (R)**
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Health-related boards authorized to carry forward balances.
- HF3898—Clark, J. (R)**
Commerce
Springfield; on-sale liquor licensee authorized to dispense liquor at a city owned facility New Year's event.
- HF3899—Jennings (DFL)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
North West company fur post interpretive center permanent exhibits constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3900—Abrams (R)**
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
New Guthrie Theater constructed in Minneapolis, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
- HF3901—Storm (R)**
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Housing Finance Agency community rehabilitation grants and loans authorized to for-profit organizations.
- HF3902—Boudreau (R)**
Health & Human Services Policy
State prevention council created for early childhood development and family support services, and home visiting programs appropriated money.
- HF3903—Westrom (R)**
Commerce
Cooperative income financing and distribution provisions modified.

Schedule is subject to change.
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MONDAY, February 28

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: HF3652 (Goodno) Human services and pre-K-12 education housekeeping bill and money appropriated.
HF178 (Boudreau) Abortion informed consent required and civil remedies provided.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: HF3437 (Pawlenty) Gillette Children's Hospital improvements authorized in Ramsey County, bonds issued, and money appropriated. Presentation of the governor's bonding request for MHFA Transitional Housing.
HF2679 (Sykora) Family homeless prevention and assistance program appropriated money.
HF2895 (Mulder) Pipestone County museum grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF3189 (Mulder) Laverne Carnegie Cultural Center capital improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF3191 (Mulder) Lake Benton Visitor Center and Railroad Depot grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
HF3144 (Lindner) Dayton wastewater infrastructure program grant provided, bond issuance authorized, and money appropriated.
Note: The committee will recess and reconvene 30 minutes after session in 200 State Office Building.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: HF2635 (Luther) Driver's license applicants authorized to make a donation for public education and information on anatomical gifts.
HF446 (Kuise) Passenger automobile registration tax depreciation rate decreased, and motor vehicle sales tax revenue allocated.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: HF3615 (Holberg) St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority, and St. Paul Economic Assistance data classification provided.
HF3696 (Holberg) Data practices recodification conforming changes provided.
HF3577 (Holberg) Creditors' garnishments, executions, and levies regulated; forms revised; notification provided; attorneys' execution levies increased; and technical changes provided.
HF3225 (Gerlach) Health maintenance organization personal information disclosure circumstances specified.
HF2655 (Leppik) Underage persons attempting to purchase alcohol or tobacco products with false identification provided increased penalties and driver license sanctions, and retailers authorized to seize false I.D.
HF2883 (Howes) Prescription drug discounts regulated and remedies provided.
HF3497 (Tuma) State of Minnesota attorney fees recovery regulated, federal conformity provided, fee application procedures established, and existing law clarified.
HF3650 (Dawkins) De facto custodian rights clarified.
HF3566 (Dawkins) Motor vehicles towed at request of law enforcement lien provided; extent of lien clarified; and notice provided to owner for towing, sale, and right to reclaim.
HF1201 (Ness) Family farm partnership definition modified.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: Finalization of committee recommendations to the Capital Investment Committee.
HFXXXX Environmental bonding bill.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: HF3230 (Koskinen) Public higher education system exempt from debt service costs.
HF3440 (Pugh) Debt service tuition rebate provided to public post-secondary students and money appropriated.

HF3699 (Tuma) Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) Board of Trustees property transactions and capital improvements authority provided.
Committee bonding priorities discussion.
Bills may be added.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF3689 (Westrom) Independent School District No. 771, Chokio-Alberta, fund transfer authorized.
HF2792 (Hackbarth) Independent School District No. 15, St. Francis, fund transfer authorized.
HF2772 (Tomassoni) Independent School District No. 2711, Mesabi East, severance levy authorized.
HF2773 (Lieder) Independent School District No. 2215, Norman County East, fund transfer authorized.
HF3038 (Mares) Independent School District No. 832, Mahtomedi, fund transfer authorized.
HF3283 (Otremba) Independent School District No. 787, Browerville, fund transfer authorized.
HF3366 (Gleason) Independent School District No. 280, Richfield, airport runway impact pupil unit aid provided.
HF3408 (Tomassoni) Independent School District No. 2142, St. Louis County, alternative facilities bonding and levy program authority provided.
HF3612 (Holberg) Independent School District No. 194, Lakeville, fund transfer authorized.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HF2795 (Ness) Specified county social service costs special levies authorized.
HF3343 (Daggett) Lake improvement district special levy authorized.
HF3321 (Daggett) Regional jails operation costs special levy provided.
HF3239 (Finseth) Polk County increased levy limit base provided.
HF3545 (Westfall) Special property tax levy and levy limit adjustments provided.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Adult Basic Education: Policy and fiscal discussion of HF2708 (Nornes) Adult Basic Education funding modified, policy review board established, and money appropriated.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: HF1182 (Kuisle) County economic development authorities authorized.

HF3057 (McElroy) Business subsidy provisions clarified.

HF3708 (Jennings) Kondirator; municipalities required to issue building permits once special permits have been issued and environmental assessment worksheets have been completed.

HF3586 (Larsen, P.) Alternative dispute resolution process use clarified.

HF3529 (Larsen, P.) Metropolitan Council made a state agency.

HF3260 (Olson) Lake improvement district provisions modified.

HF3016 (Stang) Contiguous city or town annexation to a city or town contiguous to a hospital district authorized.

HF3661 (Rukavina) City replacement heating systems and related energy conservation measures authorized.

HF3336 (Hilty) Silver election to join the Moose Lake area fire protection district clarified and district equipment certificate issuance authorized.

Note: It is anticipated that the committee meeting will continue after session in 316 State Capitol and that additional bills will be heard.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF2496 (Davids) Department of Public Service abolished, and powers and duties transferred.

Discussion of telecommunication proposals:

HF2937 (Wolf) Telecommunications statutes modified and recodified, and money appropriated.

HF3329 (Wolf) Minnesota telecommunications act adopted.

HF3464 (Rukavina) Merged or consolidated electric cooperative members authorized to re-establish former electric cooperative.

HF3421 (Bakk) Electric cooperative's election to be regulated petition and balloting provisions modified.

HF2717 (Anderson I.) Intrastate long distance call toll charges prohibited.

Other bills to be announced.

Note: This meeting will be continued 30 minutes after session in 500S State Office Building.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

30 Minutes after Session

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HFXXXX (McElroy) Extension of the Boxing Board's sunset.

HF3581 (McElroy) Board of Electricity inspection fee rules codified.

HF3204 (Gunther) Redevelopment account funded, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3750 (Seifert, J.) Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience, and Interior Design licensing fees increased; and enforcement activities enhanced.

HF2854 (Chaudhary) Alien labor certification program appropriated money.

HF3631 (Trimble) St. Paul Rehabilitation Center job training and related services appropriated money.

6 p.m.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: SF1846 (Pogemiller) Minneapolis Teachers Retirement Fund Association union business agent coverage.

HF2285 (Kalis); SF2239 (Larson) Eligible retiring teachers permitted to elect the improved money purchase benefit plan in lieu of the formula benefit plan.

HF2587 (Westfall); SF2345 (Langseth) Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) improved money purchase plan annuity election authorized for an eligible teacher.

HF2776 (Johnson); SF2523 (Betzold) Spring Lake Park Fire Department, Inc. member prior service credit purchase in the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) authorized.

SF650 (Pogemiller) Teachers retirement associations retirement annuity formula modifications and Minneapolis and St. Paul TRA basic member early retirement discounts.

HF2605 (Wenzel); SF2311 (Pogemiller) Higher education retirement specified vendor contracts extended, supplemental retirement plan participants prior service credit purchase authorized, and maximum contribution limits increased.

HF3341 (Van Dellen); SF3193 (Olson) Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) uncredited Hennepin County employment service credit purchase authorized.

HF3569 (Skoglund); SF3365 (Flynn) Minneapolis Employees Retirement Fund (MERF) service credit purchase authorized for a specified employee.

HF2606 (Hilty); SF2798 (Lourey) Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) prior service credit purchase authorized for an eligible member.

HF2816 (Marko); SF2475 (Price) Payment of omitted salary deductions to the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) authorized for an employee of Dakota County.

HF3314 (Kahn); SF3135 (Pogemiller) Minneapolis Police Relief Association additional post-retirement asset distribution provided.

HFXXXX (Larsen, P.); SFXXXX (Laidig) MERF; Purchase of service credit for prior Minneapolis city temporary employment.

HF2654 (Seifert, M); SF2310 (Pogemiller) Post-retirement earnings limitations raised for specified Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) plan participants.

HF2467 (Mares); SF2275 (Betzold) High three-year average salary used to compute judges' retirement benefits, member and employer contribution rates increased, early retirement penalties reduced, and increased benefit maximums provided.

HF2619 (Murphy); SF2312 (Stumpf) Public employees post-retirement health care task force created and specified supplemental plan contributions authorized.

HF2999 (Mares); SF2796 (Pogemiller) State employees health care reimbursement fund created.

HF3449 (Mares); SF2374 (Price) Volunteer firefighters lump sum service benefits provided to an eligible former St. Paul employee.

HF3484 (Otremba); SF3163 (Sams) Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) disability benefits application authorized for an eligible employee.

HF2543 (Gleason); SF2358 (Ranum) Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis, Teachers Retirement Fund Association prior service credit purchase authorized.

HF2979 (Abeler); SF3042 (Scheid) Compensation definition modified for the purposes of public employment retirement annuities limitations.

HF675 (Mares) Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS), Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA), and Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) provisions modified; and service credit pilot program established.

TUESDAY, February 29

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF2945 (Sykora) Safe place for newborns; immunity and anonymity provided for leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms, and procedures established. Consideration of bills recommended by the Healthcare Directives Subcommittee.

HF3196 (Osskopp) Nursing facility employee pension benefit costs treated as PERA contributions.

HF2994 (Fuller) Ambulance service and EMT requirements modified.

HF3310 (Abeler) Health plan contract stacking regulated and remedy provided.

HF3365 (Abeler) Vulnerable adult neglect provisions modified and health licensing boards required to make employment disqualification determinations.

HF3610 (Goodno) Health care patient protections provided and medical clinical trials insurance coverage required.

HF3824 (Bradley) Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association contributing assessment reduced, and money appropriated.

Note: The committee will reconvene after session.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF3646 (Bishop) Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) workforce center locations plan developed.

HFXXXX (Storm) Community Rehab Loan Program eligibility expanded to include for-profits.

HF3500 (Stang) Entertainment agencies provisions repealed.

HF3501 (Stang) Department of Labor and Industry information exchange with the Department of Revenue provisions modified.

HF3414 (Leighton) Child labor law violations provided increased penalties.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: HF2745 (Stanek) Omnibus DWI bill.
To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF2953 (Workman) Motor vehicle registration and titling provisions, plate impoundment provisions, and interstate commercial vehicle registration modified.
HF1491 (Larsen, P.) Annual overweight permit for firefighting equipment authorized.
HF3697 (Larsen, P.) Emergency motor vehicle dealers provided licensing requirement exemption.
HF3486 (Westrom) Farm truck quarterly registration beginning date modified.
HF3091 (Tomassoni) Motor vehicles driven in the right-hand lane requirement clarified, exceptions provided, and money appropriated.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkle

Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HF3457 (Holberg) Sexually dangerous or psychopathic committed persons transfer to correctional facilities provisions modified.
HF3553 (Holberg) Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services battered women's shelter per diem guidelines established.
HF3558 (Haake) Commissioner of Public Safety authorized to award public safety grants.
HF3550 (Hilty) Commissioner of Public Safety rule authority continued, and private detectives and protective agents board members per diem payments and training program rules modified.
HF3376 (Stanek) Minnesota capitol police department created and merged with capitol complex security division, oversight committee created, governor security increased, and money appropriated.
Other bills to be announced.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: Public testimony on Profile of Learning legislation.

Note: If necessary, the committee will reconvene at 3 p.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF2761 (Rostberg) Omnibus land bill.
HF2819 (Cassell) Stearns County land conveyance authorized.
HF2940 (Workman) Drycleaner environmental response and reimbursement law modified.
HF2949 (Holsten) Solid waste management tax account created and excess revenue adjustment provided.
HF3596 (Ozment) Special purpose districts with environmental responsibilities grants provided,

special purpose district restructuring pilot projects authorized, and Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation pilot project grants provided.
HF3748 (Fuller) Local government in lieu of tax payments increased.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF2743 (Finseth) Farm rebate provided and money appropriated.
HF2786 (Kubly) Additional agricultural assistance provided to at-risk multiple farmers on a single farm operation and money appropriated.
HF3166 (Ozment) Filing deadline extended for 1999 agricultural assistance aid.
Other bills may be added.
Presentation by Steven Taff, professor, University of Minnesota Department of Applied Economics, on agricultural assistance payments.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: HF3215 (Gunther) Swine pseudorabies control program appropriated money.
HF3799 (Stang) State meat inspection program supplemental appropriation provided.
HF3562 (Harder) Agricultural chemical response and reimbursement account maximum reimbursement amount increased.
HFXXXX (Ness) Department of Agriculture grant for Center for Farm Financial Management to develop farm marketing plan software.
HF2558 (Ness) Career and technical agricultural education program funding authorized, and money appropriated.
HFXXXX (Ness) Agroforestry loan program funding provided.
HF3690 (Kielkucki) Minnesota agricultural research grants board established, agricultural cropland levy authorized, school district and county ad valorem property tax exemption provided, and money appropriated.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF2656 (Wolf) Auto glass repair and replacement regulated, rebates and incentives limited, and prompt payment required.
HF2996 (Wolf) Electric utilities required to provide cost and fuel information to utility customers.
HF3756 (Abrams) Holocaust victims insurance relief act established and civil penalties imposed.
HF2464 (Olson) Health care provider discriminatory charges for goods and services prohibited.
HF3001 (Milbert) Fire insurance; failure to provide timely proof of loss regulated.
HF2974 (Davids) National Association of Insurance Commissioners model legislation conforming state statute changes provided.
HF1748 (Haas) Franchise definition expanded and modified related to motor vehicle fuel franchises, and right of first refusal upon assignment or sale of marketing premises created.
HF3683 (Paulsen) State fund mutual insurance company involvement with the state repealed.
HF3121 (Howes) Insurance coverage, notice and filing requirements, and rate increase disclosures provided; and motor vehicle insurance contracts and workers' compensation self-insurance regulated.
HF3238 (Swenson) Farm equipment

manufacturers and dealers regulated.
Other bills to be announced.

Note: This meeting will be continued 30 minutes after session in the Basement Hearing Room.

6 p.m.

WAYS & MEANS

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dave Bishop

Agenda: February Revenue Forecast: Pam Wheelock, Commissioner, Department of Finance; Peggy Ingison, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Finance; Tom Stinson, State Economist.
House Budget Resolution.
HF178 (Boudreau) Abortion informed consent required and civil remedies provided.

WEDNESDAY, March 1

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF2809 (Howes) Ah-Gwah-Ching Nursing Center admissions criteria clarified, and center required to provide information on and promote geriatric rapid assessment stabilization program.
HF2935 (Larsen, P.) Dental services disclosures and consumer protection requirements clarified, and specified dental benefits disclosures required.
HF2623 (Anderson, B.) Infant inborn metabolic defect testing and follow-up program expanded to include medium chain acyl-CoA dehydrogenase deficiency, rules amended, and money appropriated.

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<http://www.leg.state.mn.us>

HF3278 (Abeler) Seniors' agenda for independent living program expanded, congregate housing services project administration modified, and money appropriated.

Note: The committee will reconvene after session.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF1510 (Erhardt) Filing fees modified for securities issued by open-end management companies and unit investments trusts.

HFXXXX Guthrie Theater project, money appropriated.

HF3299 (Wejcman) Minneapolis empowerment zone sub-projects infrastructure improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3073 (Solberg) Fort Snelling Building No. 17 restored for use as an international hostel, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2702 (Osthoff) St. Paul: new Maxson-Dale business center roads constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3117 (Mahoney) St. Paul Phalen Corridor Initiative west segment construction gap financing grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3182 (Paymar) St. Paul Trunk Highway No. 5 landscaping improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3227 (Dawkins) St. Paul; Pierce Butler Avenue relocated and extended, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3419 (McGuire) Ramsey County; Gibbs Farm interpretive/visitors center construction authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3298 (Entenza) Minnesota Children's Museum permanent exhibits grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

Note: The committee will recess and reconvene at 6:30 p.m. in 200 State Office Building.

Joint TRANSPORTATION POLICY/ TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chrs. Rep. Tom Workman,

Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: HF2891 (Molnau) Motor vehicles sales tax portions deposited in the highway user tax distribution fund and the multimodal transportation fund, exclusive bus transit ways established, transit improvement financed, and money appropriated.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF3742 (Smith) Revenue recapture act collection of conciliation court judgments authorized, claims priority specified, and money appropriated.

HF3695 (Holberg) Guardian and conservatorship system advisory committee established and report required.

HF1267 (Pawlenty) Economic loss arising from the sale of goods provisions established related to the Uniform Commercial Code.

HF3574 (Olson) Ethical standards for the chief administrative law judge, administrative law judges, and compensation judges provided; and tape recordings included with file of hearings.

HF3347 (Gleason) Chief administrative law judge

authorized to establish a subject matter specialization system for judges.

HF3105 (Hasskamp) Indigent persons represented by legal aid offices conflicts of interest studied by court-appointed attorney task force.

HF3756 (Abrams) Holocaust victims insurance relief act established and civil penalties imposed.

HF3658 (Smith) Germany and Japan; forced labor actions statute of limitations waived.

HF2751 (Stanek) Financial institutions provided limited liability for information furnished for investigative purposes, stolen and counterfeit check reporting or transfer provided criminal penalties, and racketeering expanded.

HF47 (Bishop) Domestic abuse victim civil cause of action provided.

HF591 (Anderson, B.) Property owner costs and fees reimbursement provided in specified eminent domain proceedings.

SF551 (Fuller) Orders for protection service short form notification authorized, domestic abuse crime sentences and provisions modified, cash bail increased, domestic assault defined as crime of violence, and criminal penalties imposed.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: To be announced.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: HF2611 (Dehler) Community and technical college resident tuition rates provided to nonresidents and contract requirements specified.

Finalize committee bonding priorities.

Bills to be added.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF3231 (Seagren) General education, special programs, lifework development, facilities and technology, education excellence, nutrition programs, and libraries provisions modified.

HF3668 (Seagren) School district net tax capacity assessment/sales ratio study annual adjustment modified.

HF2753 (Skoe) Three additional days of student instruction mandate funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2874 (Carlson) General education funding increased for class size reduction and full-day kindergarten, and money appropriated.

HF2754 (Dorn) Teacher mentorship programs funded through increased general education revenue and money appropriated.

HF2756 (Kelliher) Intervention programs funded through additional general education revenue and money appropriated.

HF3747 (Rukavina) School district declining pupil unit aid established and money appropriated.

HF3760 (Ness) Small school enhanced equity revenue component added to general education revenue.

HF3594 (Ness) School district adjusted pupil units modified.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: HF3672 (Davids) Electric generation peaking facility personal property tax exemption provided.

HF3765 (Ness) Relative homestead treatment

requirement that agricultural property owner be a Minnesota resident eliminated.

HF3746 (Mulder) Agricultural property exempt from general education levies.

Additional bills may be added.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth

Agenda: HF3214 (Knoblach) Partition fence law applicability limited.

HF3582 (Holsten) Phosphorus plant food use prohibition provisions modified for specified counties, and adulteration factors clarified.

HF2796 (Ness) Farm real estate or operations third-party debtor disclosure required and remedies provided.

HF3325 (Westrom) Seed germination test time period extended.

HF3692 (Kuisle) Feedlot permit provisions modified, manure applicator education and training requirements provided, and administrative penalty order requirements expanded.

HF2877 (Peterson) Attorney general agri-business investigative unit established, "support family farms" license plates authorized, and money appropriated.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: HF3300 (Boudreau) Community Action, Head Start, and food shelf data classification provided; child care program provisions modified; and Learning Readiness Program plan submission requirement modified.

HF3660 (Mariani) Children's development fund created with tobacco settlement proceeds, advisory task force established, money appropriated, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3533 (Juhnke) Community education revenue provided for youth programs and money appropriated.

Additional agenda items may be added.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen

Agenda: To be announced.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: Discussion of telecommunication proposals:

HF2937 (Wolf) Telecommunications statutes modified and recodified, and money appropriated.

HF3329 (Wolf) Minnesota telecommunications act adopted.

And other bills to be announced.

Note: This meeting will be continued 30 minutes after session in 500S State Office Building.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

6:30 p.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF2916 (Erickson) Mora Workforce Center elevator provided bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3738 (Rhodes) St. Paul River Centre's Roy Wilkins Auditorium redevelopment planned, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HFXXXX (Rhodes) Schubert Theater project, money appropriated.

HF3186 (Trimble) Minnesota Council for Quality grant authorized, and money appropriated.

HF3072 (Kubly) Olivia agricultural innovation center established, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3560 (Wenzel) Little Falls Minnesota fishing museum construction grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3563 (Clark, K.) Minneapolis Hiawatha Corridor affordable housing, and mixed commercial and residential development appropriation provided; streets, infrastructure and capital improvements authorized; bonds issued; and money appropriated.

HF2266 (Skoe) Bagley stormwater and sediment control project appropriation provided.

HF3572 (Rukavina) Virginia Silver Lake storm sewer outlet relocation provided, and money appropriated.

HF3812 (Larson, D.) Historic Grimm Farm program/support facility construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3830 (Daggett) New York Mills wastewater funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3269 (Jaros) Duluth Lake Superior College multipurpose recreation complex authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF3838 (Reuter) Owatonna infrastructure improvements authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

THURSDAY, March 2

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF3209 (Seifert, J.) Health care cost containment major commitment expenditure report requirements modified.

HF2553 (Seifert, J.) Supportive housing and managed care pilot project appropriated money.

HF3356 (Abeler) Essential community provider status application deadline extended for a nonprofit community health care facility serving Southeast Asian immigrants and refugees, and termination and renewal designation modified.

HF1757 (Haas) Health insurer and health maintenance organization regulations simplified.

HF3642 (Huntley) Medical education program funds application and distribution provisions modified.

Note: This meeting will be continued after session.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: HF3806 (Wolf) Nonprofit organization reemployment compensation provisions modified.

HF3290 (Dorman) Specified discrimination complaint communications classified as privileged.

Bills will be added.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker

Agenda: HF2892 (Stanek) Omnibus sex offender bill.

To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF3613 (Holberg) Claims against the state limited relating to losses involving the operation of a recreational vehicle on a trunk highway right-of-way.

HF3753 (Workman) Freeway metered ramp study required and money appropriated.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

What's on the Web

You can find online postings for jobs currently available with the Legislature.

The Legislature's Web site includes information about jobs with the House, Senate, and joint departments such as the Revisor of Statutes, the Legislative Reference Library, the Office of the Legislative Auditor, and the legislative commissions.

There is also information about internship programs for college students and educational programs for high school students.

To find the job listings, just go to the Legislature's main Web page (www.leg.state.mn.us), then click on the link labeled "General Information." That link will take you to a menu that includes the list of employment opportunities.



CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HF3614 (Holberg) Automobile theft prevention special revenue account funds provided for prevention activities, insurance surcharge exemptions provided for specified vehicles, and money appropriated.

HF3624 (Olson) Character development program completion required for juvenile property offenders on probation and repeat offenders required to pay full restitution plus program completion.

Other bills to be announced.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: To be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF3416 (Holsten) Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund real property acquisition conditions specified.

HF3630 (Buesgens) Public entity construction debris recycling encouraged.

HF3576 (Osskopp) Solid waste and wastewater treatment facilities reporting requirements modified, and toxics in packaging exemption period extended.

HF2823 (Howes) Artificial light use provisions modified during hunting season.

TAXES

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF2941 (Daggett) Individual income tax rates reduced, health insurance premium subtraction provided, and corporate franchise tax appointment formulas modified.

HF3028 (Abrams) Individual income tax long-term capital gain exclusion authorized.

HF3101 (Abrams) Individual income tax long-term capital gain exclusion authorized.

HF3175 (Sykora) Personal and dependent income tax exemption subtraction provided.

HF2348 (Larsen, P) Automatic income tax rebate provided and money appropriated.

HF3728 (Rest) Working family income tax credit increased.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth

Agenda: Continuation of March 1 agenda.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: Continuation of bills not heard on Feb. 29, and bills passing out of Regulated Industries Subcommittee.

HF2394 (McGuire) Violent video games sale to children prohibited, display in public places restricted, and remedies provided.

Other bills to be announced.

Note: This meeting will be continued 30 minutes after session in 500S State Office Building.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

4 p.m. or after Session

WAYS & MEANS

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dave Bishop
Agenda: To be announced.

FRIDAY, March 3

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley
Agenda: To be announced, if meeting is required.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: HF2564 (Workman) Public utility facilities relocated due to light rail construction entitled to expense reimbursement from the state. HF3030 (Seagren) Truck traffic prohibited on Hennepin County Road No. 1 between Trunk Highway No. 169 and Flying Cloud Drive. HF3573 (Knobloch) Minnesota Highway Safety Center at St. Cloud State University alcohol and highway safety education in elementary and secondary schools grants administration transferred to Commissioner of Public Safety.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek
Agenda: HF3766 (Skoglund) Pawnbrokers providing electronic transaction records to law enforcement agencies required to use most current version of the interchange file specification format. HF3369 (Peterson) Anhydrous ammonia tampering prohibited, and civil and criminal penalties imposed. HF3402 (Entenza) Nonlicensed classroom instructor criminal background checks required. Other bills to be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: To be announced.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: HF2906 (Peterson) University of Minnesota College of Agriculture report to the legislature required. HF3417 (Opatz) Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) provided funding comparable to national peer institutions, and money appropriated. HF3726 (Bishop) Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) increased enrollment efforts appropriated money. Bills to be added.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HF3044 (Dehler) Income tax long-term care insurance credit inflation protection requirement removed. HF3089 (Tomassoni) Income tax long-term care insurance credit modified. HF3544 (Chaudhary) Long-term care income tax credit expanded and money appropriated. HF3469 (Van Dellen) Charity care aid paid to counties for indigent nonresident medical care expenses and to reduce reliance on property taxes.

Reflections

The Legislature is constantly in a state of flux. As new members get elected every two years, others may lose at the polls or retire from service. Change may also occur when new laws are made or old and outdated laws get replaced.

Change is an ongoing process for the Legislature. Currently, the Legislature is debating with a possible change in its very nature — one house or two. The same issue was introduced in the 1930s, but never went far.

Other big changes possible this session could effect a new part of the Graduation Standards in schools and plans for light-rail transit.

The memory of some event or the anticipation of the results of some future proposal may also influence change. In the early 1600s, Shakespeare noted that we often "...summon up remembrances of things past" to deal maturely with the changes of things present.

And the popular early 1960s songster Sam Cooke evoked the need by crooning, "A Change is Gonna Come."

Memories affect change because they remind us of something different that evolved out of a former act or deed or set the tone for future achievements. The accomplishments of deceased lawmakers Barb Vickerman, Ken Otremba, Janet Johnson, Jim Rice, and Willard Munger are remembered because their good deeds are positive results on issues each one strongly believed in.

Their achievements may or may not be remembered in time because memories can be vulnerable to new changes that erase former deeds.

Whether change is motivation to create good government, or whether it is an every day method for improving the status quo, it controls how important each debate can be.

And the certainties of change plus compromise become deciding factors for what issues become law in the Legislature.

But to many people, the change we at the Legislature take for granted is jarring.

Nowhere else is that more evident than in the world of the city of St. Paul's late hero, "Peanuts" cartoonist Charles Schulz.

There, change always seemed to be uncertain or unexpected. It's possible that many diligent "Peanuts" fans recognized vulnerability in the cartoon and identified with its characters.

For sure, uncertainty has prevailed for the "Peanuts" family, more than any recent legislative action designed to change the status of important issues.

Maybe if changes were the norm and had always been available for Linus, Schroeder, and Peppermint Patty, Lucy would have allowed the football to be kicked. Even so, she probably still would have vocalized, "Good Grief, Charlie Brown," as a surprise to a change she had not come to expect.

Change is as certain as it is uncertain — for the Legislature and its constituency, and for "Peanuts" and the fans who avidly read it.

—LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Motor vehicle crash facts

Licensed drivers in Minnesota, 1998	3.53 million
Registered motor vehicles, 1998	3.9 million
Traffic crashes in Minnesota, 1998	92,926
Motor vehicles involved	169,938
Drivers involved	163,082
People injured in crashes, 1998	45,115
in 1997	46,064
People killed in crashes, 1998	650
in 1997	600
in 1968 (record high)	1,060
Men killed in traffic crashes, 1998	432
Women	218
Male drivers involved in crashes, 1998	92,493
Female drivers	62,742
Drunken driving arrests, 1998	30,892
Percent male	80
Drunken driving arrests, 1997	30,168
Known alcohol-related traffic fatalities, 1998	273
in 1997	179
Bicyclists killed in collisions with a motor vehicle, 1998	9
Pedestrian fatalities, 1998	56
in 1997	58
in 1971 (record high)	157
Fatalities on two-lane, two-way roads, 1998	361
on freeways and other divided highways	155
Fatal crashes in which illegal or unsafe speed was a contributing factor, 1998 ...	142
Injury crashes	4,862
Fatal crashes in which weather was a contributing factor, 1998	22
Injury crashes	1,478
Fatal crashes in which driver use of a cellular phone or CB radio was a contributing factor, 1998	0
Injury crashes	52
Motorcycles registered in Minnesota, 1998	118,275
Licensed motorcycle operators, 1998	301,992
Motorcycle crashes, 1998	1,065
Motorcyclists killed, 1998	40
Those wearing helmets	3

Source: *Minnesota Motor Vehicle Crash Facts, 1998*, Office of Traffic Safety, Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

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SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

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In this issue:

FORECAST SURPLUS GROWS,

PROFILE OF LEARNING PLANS & FARM AID

HF3904-HF4029

SESSION Weekly

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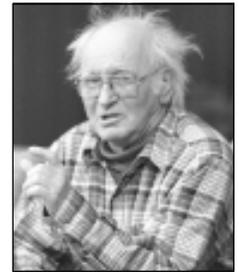
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On the cover: Farmers and supporters from Minnesota religious organizations rally in the rotunda March 1 to seek help for farmers, especially for small and mid-size farms being pinched by corporate farms and low commodity prices.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Another sunny forecast

An increase in the projected surplus prompts calls for permanent tax cuts from House leaders, deferred tax reform from governor

By JON FURE

A clearer picture of the projected state budget surplus was presented Feb. 29, as the state Department of Finance released its most recent forecast of state revenues and expenditures.

The budget surplus for the 2000-2001 biennium is projected to be more than \$1.8 billion, which is \$229 million more than the department had projected last November. The latest report was the 16th consecutive state forecast to predict a budget surplus.

The news prompted some lawmakers to call for permanent tax cuts to avoid consistent surpluses.

beginning of the 2000 session to reduce the percentage of state income tax charged in each bracket — by 0.75 percent in the middle bracket and 0.5 percent in the upper and lower brackets. Those figures would match the income tax cuts that were made last year.

But Ventura said at a March 1 press conference that the numbers are still only projections and he plans to stick to his previous proposals

Finance Commissioner Pam Wheelock gave further explanation of issues related to the forecast during a House Ways and Means Committee meeting Feb. 29.

Wheelock stressed that the forecast is based on current law. Any changes in law that are proposed, such as tax cuts, will need to be judged on how they affect future biennia. To determine whether such a proposal is affordable, Wheelock said a key figure is the projected structural balance — the difference between the state's revenues and expenditures in a given year.

For example, an income tax cut that would go into effect in 2001 would affect the amount of revenue in the 2002-03 biennium.

The Finance Department would examine how such a tax cut would affect the projected difference in revenues and expenditures for fiscal year 2003, among other factors, to determine whether the proposal would be affordable for a sustained period of time.

The recent forecast projects a \$549 million structural surplus for fiscal year 2003 — if current law remains in effect. Therefore, this year's proposals to permanently change annual expenditures or revenue — either by spending more or collecting less — should only add up to that amount in order for the state to maintain a balanced budget, according to Wheelock.

"In terms of permanent commitment, \$549 million is the yardstick we will use to measure if (proposed changes) are affordable," Wheelock said.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) said it seems that the entire \$549 million would be taken up by the governor's proposals to cut vehicle license tab fees and to fund light-rail transit on the Hiawatha Corridor.

Wheelock agreed and said any other proposal by the Legislature would probably mean that Ventura would have to be persuaded to change his priorities.

Many factors influenced the changes between the November and February forecasts.

For the 2000-01 biennium, net general fund revenues are projected to be \$24.6 billion, which is \$222 million (0.9 percent) more than the amount that was projected in the November forecast.

Projected spending has decreased by \$12 million, partly due to reductions in health care spending. Declining costs of long-term health care and fewer people enrolled in the Department of Human Services' Minnesota Family



A swarm of media and legislators from the House and Senate surround House Speaker Steve Sviggum during a Feb. 29 news conference outside Gov. Jesse Ventura's office. Sviggum called for income tax cuts that would be paid for with the state's forecast budget surplus.

"Folks, enough is enough in regard to the overtaxation, the overcollection of hardworking families' and hardworking taxpayers' dollars in Minnesota," said House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) during a press conference outside the office of Gov. Jesse Ventura. "We need permanent tax reduction."

In response to the forecast, House Republicans re-emphasized their proposal from the

to cut vehicle license tab fees and use some of the surplus to reform property taxes in 2001.

The twice-yearly forecasts are based on information from the state's national economic consultant, Data Resources Inc. The state Finance Department and the Council of Economic Advisors study the information and make projections based on current laws and historic relationships between state and national data.

Investment Program (MFIP) are the two biggest factors of the reduction.

Projected spending in those areas decreased by \$42 million, but \$30 million in projected increases in education and other areas makes the net reduction \$12 million.

And interest earnings in the Property Tax Reform Account have increased by \$5 million since the November forecast. (The reform account serves as a quasi-reserve fund for the purpose of reforming property taxes. It was established in 1997.) That plus the \$222 million increase in revenue and \$12 million decrease in expenditures adds up to the \$229 million increase in the surplus.

State Economist Tom Stinson said the data provided by the consultant for the new forecast indicates only a slightly higher risk of a recession. A bigger concern is that the economy will "underperform" compared to its current rate of growth.

Officials point to a 3 percent decrease in the projected corporate income tax revenue for 2000-01 since the November forecast. That was based on a reduction in the projected corporate profits through 2002. Stinson attributed that to higher interest rates, higher energy prices, increasing wages for employees, and spending related to Y2K preparation.

Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) expressed concerns about the farm economy, which is bleak despite the good outlook overall for Minnesota.

According to the Finance Department's report on the February forecast, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has projected that this year soybeans will sink to their lowest price since 1973. In addition, corn, wheat, and milk prices will be as low as they have been in about 10 years.

"If you are in agriculture, times are not going to be good in 2000," Stinson said.

Unless crop yields this year are higher than normal for the second consecutive year and the federal government sends more financial assistance to farmers, the projected low prices will cause Minnesota's farm income to decrease significantly, Stinson said.

Minnesota farmers received \$314 million in federal disaster aid in 1999, according to the report.

Whether the projections in the forecast come true remains to be seen, but it provides some of the most up-to-date information that lawmakers and the governor will use to negotiate the major spending proposals before the end of the session in April. 🐾

Correction

A story in the Feb. 18 edition of Session Weekly incorrectly reflected the views of Edina resident Lynn Woodward, a critic of the state's light-rail transit plans for the Hiawatha Corridor. Woodward is not a supporter of personal rapid transit. We regret the error.

IT'S A FACT



Too good to be true

Legislation aimed to protect consumers from slippery salesmen

The fast-talking, glad-handing merchants offering to sell Minnesotans swampland in Florida or the Brooklyn Bridge were dealt a blow during the tenure of former Gov. Karl Rolvaag.

In 1960, Walter Mondale, then the state's attorney general, appointed a 16-member Consumer Protection Advisory Council to protect consumers from fraudulent practices.

Composed of representatives from business and labor, the council was charged with the task of making recommendations to the Legislature of how the state could do that.

In a special message to the 1963 Legislature, Rolvaag urged members to pass several consumer protection related bills. In the speech, Rolvaag said that a free market economy depends on fair competition among producers and sellers for the business of an informed buying public.

Rolvaag said consumer deception and fraud cost legitimate businesses millions of dollars each year that were diverted to undeserving "unethical, shabby, inefficient, and incompetent" businesses.

He asked lawmakers to support legislation incorporating the ideas of the Consumer Protection Advisory group.

One of the bills proposed required people selling subdivided real estate located both inside and outside of the state to register with the commissioner of securities. Rolvaag said the bill addressed a growing problem in the state — naive consumers being swindled out of their retirement funds and ending up with worthless land.

Up until that point the state had no laws regulating the sale of subdivided land, defined in the bill as "land divided or proposed to be divided for the purpose of sale or lease, into five or more lots or parcels."

The measure proposed adopting a spe-

cific plan of registration for land sales. First, those attempting to sell subdivisions would go through the formal registration process, which would require the seller to submit to an investigation, verifying the legitimacy of the land sale.

Then, when the commissioner had completed the investigation, he would issue a public report, which would act as a prospectus to potential buyers.

The bill received unanimous support in both houses — passing the House on a 127-0 vote and the Senate by a 58-0 tally.

Two other consumer protection initiatives also were passed during the 1963 session. One expanded the powers of the attorney general to deal with fraud, deception, and misrepresentation in connection with the sale of merchandise.

The other had a little less obvious consumer spin to it. The measure imposed a \$500 limit on the amount of contracts a person could sign for dance lessons at any given time.

Rolvaag said the measure addressed a serious problem in the state, where "glib-tongued, high-pressured salesmen for dance studios, who prey upon the lonely, the widowed, and the friendless" were inducing people to sign contracts for dance lessons far in excess of their needs.

Mondale described the problem, as follows: "Sums as high as \$17,000 could be contracted for if a lonely widow is made to think that her refusal will incur the displeasure of her 'teacher.'"

Other consumer protection initiatives that failed to pass that session continued to be debated throughout the decade and several later became part of the state's laws protecting the buying public.

(D. MAEDA)



Gov. Karl Rolvaag and then-U.S. Senator Walter Mondale in 1967.

Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

★ AGRICULTURE

Feedlot permit deadlines

A bill that would set deadlines to assure timely review of feedlot permits was approved March 1 by the House Agriculture Policy Committee.

The bill (HF3271), sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), would require an authority granting permits to provide the applicant a detailed checklist of obligations and requirements to obtain a permit within 30 days of receiving the permit application.

An applicant would then have all the time necessary to satisfy conditions of permit application and report back to the authority at the time all conditions are met, Ness said.

After all items on the checklist were satisfied, the bill would require that the authority either issue the permit or send a detailed order explaining why the permit was denied.

"The purpose of the bill is not to cause any trouble or to shake up the process, but rather to help farmers, the (Minnesota Pollution Control Agency), and all individuals involved in the process," Ness said.

Under the bill, an applicant denied a permit would be allowed to petition the denial in court. The permitting authority would then be required to pay 80 percent of the applicant's petition costs, Ness explained.

A Senate version of Ness's bill awaits a vote on the Senate floor. It would require that a decision on a request for a feedlot permit be made within 60 days of receipt of the permit application.

HF3271 now moves to the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

★ CHILDREN

Funds for kids' programs

Some lawmakers want the state to distribute currently unused federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds that it's already getting.

The House Family and Early Childhood and Education Finance Committee heard several bills March 1 that would invest the assistance funds in projects aimed at children. The committee set all the bills aside for later consideration.

None of the bills would create a new state appropriation. They all aim only to spend the federal dollars sent to the state.

Rep. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley) is sponsoring a bill (HF3865) that would transfer \$35 million to the Department of Children, Families and Learning for the Basic Sliding Fee child care assistance program.

There are between 3,700 and 4,000 families on waiting lists to receive child care assistance, Chaudhary told the committee. The bill pertains to families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

(Poverty guidelines vary based on the size of a household and income levels. The 1999 poverty level for a single person is \$8,240.)

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) offered a bill (HF3722) that would appropriate \$15 million over the next three years for grants that would increase participation of low-income families in early childhood programs. Another Mullery bill (HF3693) would spend \$7.5 million over the next three years on grants for local Head Start programs.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) questioned the Head Start funding, wondering what specific unmet needs would be solved with the money. Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) said that 40 percent of children in his district that qualify for Head Start are not enrolled in the federal program because of a lack of money.

Minnesota spends more money on Head Start than any other state except Ohio, noted Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior).

The committee heard from several people who testified that having their children in Head Start has benefited the whole family because it frees up more of the parents' time to work.

The state receives \$267 million annually in TANF funds. Finance Department officials estimate the state would have reserves totaling \$173 million by the end of fiscal year 2000 if no laws are changed. The department predicts the unspent revenue would climb to \$223 million for fiscal year 2003.

★ CONSUMERS

Drug discount cards

Prescription drug discount cards are not always what they seem and they should be labeled clearly so there is no confusion, said Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack).

Howes is sponsoring a bill (HF2883) that would require such labels. He told the House Civil Law Committee on Feb. 28 that many senior citizens purchase the cards, believing

the discounts are good at all pharmacies. The cards usually pertain to a specific store.

The committee approved the bill. It now heads to the House floor.

William Bond, chief executive officer of the Minnesota Pharmacies Association, told the committee that some seniors buy the cards, usually for \$8 a month, thinking the cards are accepted everywhere.

The cards may be accepted at all pharmacies in the Twin Cities, for example, but not accepted anywhere in rural Minnesota, Howes said.

Wording on the card should be printed in "bold and prominent type, prominently placed" so it is easily seen, the bill states.

The bill also includes civil penalties for companies that don't comply. The bill would require that an action must be brought within two years of the time the offense was committed or within two years of the time the offense was discovered.

No criminal penalties are included in the bill.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) praised the measure, calling it a good consumer-protection bill.

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) suggested adding language to the bill that would require a minimum type size for the words on the cards so seniors can read them, but the committee did not approve Mahoney's proposal.

★ CRIME

Some seek cheaper BCA plan

A proposal for a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) building is not part of the House State Government Finance Committee's bonding recommendations.

The committee's bonding plan was presented Feb. 29 to the House Capital Investment Committee.

Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview), chair of the state government panel, said the Department of Public Safety already has enough money to plan and design a smaller project on its current site that would satisfy its need for expansion.

The department has received \$7.2 million in previous years to plan a new BCA building, Krinkie said, and \$2.1 million of that has not been spent.

Officials are most concerned about the bureau's laboratory facilities, Krinkie said, and those problems could be resolved by

repairing the current building and using the \$2.1 million to design an adjacent lab building.

The bureau has requested \$58 million for the new building, which also has been recommended by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The House Judiciary Finance Committee recommended \$30 million for the project.

Krinkie said the \$58 million project seems to be the result of a "self-fulfilling prophecy," because it has been pushed forward without an appropriate study of the other options.

Department of Public Safety Commissioner Charlie Weaver stressed the need for a new building, calling the bureau the "nerve center of the entire criminal justice system." He listed severe problems with the existing building, including pipes that have recently burst and mold that is growing in the walls due to condensation.

Weaver said the current work environment is dangerous to employees and will eventually lead to evidence being compromised, among other problems.

That prompted Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) to question how the problem ever got so bad.

"We need to make sure that the BCA employees — wherever they're located — don't have these kinds of problems," he said.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) said it would be a mistake to leave the project unfunded.

Most of the committee's other recommendations fall in line with the governor's plan. They include \$23.6 million for maintenance and repairs in state buildings, such as \$4.3 million for the Department of Health building and \$2.5 million to upgrade electrical systems throughout the Capitol complex.

Another committee recommendation is \$250,000 in grants to public television stations to prepare for a federal mandate to switch to a digital broadcast signal. The governor vetoed \$113,000 for that purpose in 1999.

Felony for repeat DWI offenders

In principle, a House proposal to create a felony penalty for multiple drunken driving offenses has received bipartisan support.

But when it comes down to the significant financial impact the plan could have on both state and local resources, the plan is more difficult to sell.

The House Judiciary Finance Committee approved the bill (HF2745) that would make a person's fourth conviction for drunken driving within a 10-year period a felony.

But members expressed concern that the state might not be able to afford all the fiscal effects that could accompany the measure.

"I'll vote for the bill, but in some ways, I

think this might be an exercise in futility," said Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul).

Beyond making the fourth offense a felony, the bill, sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), also would require anyone convicted of felony drunken driving to serve at least five to seven years in prison and pay up to a \$14,000 fine.

The bill would allow a judge to stay a prison sentence and instead require the person to serve six months in jail, and after serving that time, successfully complete a 10-year probationary period with no drug or alcohol use or subsequent offenses.

Currently, the highest penalty in Minnesota for drunken driving is a gross misdemeanor, which calls for up to one year in prison and a maximum \$3,000 fine.

Initial fiscal analysis of the bill projects it will cost the state \$3.3 million in fiscal year 2001, \$10.8 million in 2002, and \$18.6 million in 2003.

Progress Report

BILL: HF2745

SUMMARY: Felony penalties for fourth DWI conviction within 10 years

ACTION: Endorsed by Judiciary Finance Committee after earlier approval by Crime Prevention Committee

UP NEXT: Awaits hearing in State Government Finance Committee

SENATE: Companion bill introduced and referred to Senate Crime Prevention Committee

The analysis was based on the number of people convicted of a fourth DWI in 1998, or 1,388 people. Several formulas were used to determine how many of them would go to trial, what percentage would go to prison, and how many more appeals the state would handle.

State officials said that beyond the costs of incarcerating drunken driving offenders in either state prisons or county jails, the new felony penalty would create several new positions for probation officers, lawyers, judges, and forensic scientists.

Officials testified that some of their assumptions have changed since the initial study and the fiscal impact might be less than originally anticipated. However, analysts said it will still be significant.

Analysts have not determined the full impact of costs passed down to counties if judges choose to depart from prison sentences and send offenders to jail.

Jerry Soma, division manager for Anoka County Human Services, said he anticipates the felony designation could cost the county between \$1 million and \$2 million. Soma said the county would need 35 to 40 new jail beds, as well.

The bill now goes to the House State Government Finance Committee.

Penalties for fake IDs

A bill that would increase penalties for attempting to purchase alcohol with false identification was approved March 2 by the House Crime Prevention Committee.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) is sponsoring a bill (HF2655) that would make a person's second conviction for underage purchase alcohol a gross misdemeanor.

The bill also would allow the alcohol distributor — from a liquor store clerk to a bouncer at a nightclub — to confiscate identification cards that appear to be phony.

Leppik said the bill is needed to curb the widespread abuse of fake IDs.

"They can get it off the Internet, they can get it anywhere," she said. "It becomes a game."

The bill would require the ID to be turned over to the police or to the legitimate card owner within 48 hours.

Rep. Andrew Westberg (R-Blaine) offered an amendment that would allow the person who confiscated the card to return it to the parent or guardian of the card owner. The committee approved the amendment.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) opposed the bill, saying it gives bouncers too much leeway to confiscate identification cards.

"It's quite a hardship for someone who is there legally," Skoglund said. "There is going to be abuse."

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) opposed the gross misdemeanor charge for a second offense, saying it is too strict. He said he preferred keeping the penalty as a misdemeanor.

A gross misdemeanor conviction carries a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment and a \$3,000 fine. A misdemeanor conviction carries a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and a \$700 fine.

Leppik said that removing the gross misdemeanor would strip much of the impact from the bill.

The bill now heads to the House floor.

★ DEVELOPMENT

Guthrie funding pitched

The state would contribute \$25 million to help the Guthrie Theater move to a new Mississippi River site, under a proposal debated March 1 by the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

The bill (HF3900), sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), would send bond proceeds for a grant to the Minneapolis Community Development Agency to help the city plan, design, construct, and furnish the new theater.

The request was one of nearly 70 bills totaling over \$312 million the committee



Joe Dowling, artistic director of the Guthrie Theater, testifies March 1 before the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee in support of a proposed \$25 million in state funds for a new theater along the Mississippi River in Minneapolis.

considered in its recommendation to the House Capital Investment Committee for this year's bonding bill.

"The Guthrie is part of what makes our quality of life what it is," Abrams said. "It is an asset not only for Minneapolis, but for the Twin Cities, for the entire state, for the United States, and for the world."

Stephen Sanger, president of General Mills, said the Guthrie Theater helps distinguish the city from others and plays a vital part of attracting and keeping workers in the state.

"It's not a matter of competing with Pillsbury or 3M, it's about competing with Amazon.com and Microsoft. It's Minneapolis versus Seattle and all of Silicone Valley," Sanger said.

Joe Dowling, the theater's artistic director, said the total cost of the project is expected to be \$75 million. Dowling said the proposal would expand the existing artistic program and provide three separate stages.

In addition, education and community outreach programs and the artist-training program would be expanded. The scheduled opening date for the new site would be 2004, he said.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) questioned the bill's site-specific provisions because the location was not the Guthrie

Theater's first choice. And, he said, potential sites in St. Paul should have been considered.

Abrams said the theater's decision for the riverfront site reflected a loyalty to Minneapolis, where the theater has been located for 37 years.

Dowling said that the theater not only has metropolitan area appeal but that 40 percent of its customers come from outstate.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) agreed the theater is important for those in Greater Minnesota.

"I'm just a poor old farm boy but I'm behind this project 100 percent," Davids said.

★ EDUCATION

Teacher mentoring program

Rep. John Dorn (DFL-Mankato) is sponsoring a bill that would appropriate \$34 million from the general fund in fiscal year 2001 to fund teacher mentoring programs in school districts across Minnesota.

Dorn's bill (HF2754) would provide a source of funding for districts to increase opportunities for interaction between new teachers and mentors, he said.

The House K-12 Education Finance Committee heard the bill March 1. It will be con-



Simone Haugen, a fifth-grade teacher at Turtle Lake Elementary School in Shoreview, describes her positive experiences with a teacher mentorship program. Haugen spoke before the House K-12 Education Finance Committee on March 1 in support of a bill that would increase spending for such efforts.

sidered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus spending measure.

The money would be directed to the commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning, who would then distribute it to school districts on a need basis, Dorn said.

Under the bill, teacher mentoring revenue could be used by districts to hire mentors and coordinators, create release time for new teachers to spend with mentors, and allow new teachers to observe other teachers at work.

Money also could be spent to create after-hours, weekend, and summer programs for new teachers to work with mentors, and to establish mentoring programs for non-instructional staff, Dorn said.

Mentoring programs were identified by an interim subcommittee as a way to improve teacher training.

Pushing student achievement

Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Minneapolis) is sponsoring a bill that would authorize additional general education revenue for school intervention programs to improve student achievement.

The bill (HF2756), presented March 1 to the House K-12 Education Finance Committee, would appropriate an undetermined amount of general education aid in fiscal year 2001 to fund intervention programs targeting students at risk of performing poorly on third- and fifth-grade tests.

The appropriation also could be used to aid students who have not yet passed the basic skills tests in reading, math, and writing, Kelliher said.

Under the bill, money could be spent to create programs to train more teachers in appropriate early intervention techniques, and to establish reliable screening tools used to identify children who are not able to read at grade-appropriate levels, said Kelliher.

The bill would set a school district's intervention revenue at \$20 per pupil unit in kindergarten through grade six, and \$20 in grades nine through 12 per student for those who have not yet passed the three required basic skills tests.

Kelliher's bill also would encourage schools to select a nationally established, research-based early intervention reading curriculum that requires high parental involvement.

The committee took no action on the bill, but may consider it for inclusion in the committee's omnibus spending measure.

Child labor penalties

The House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee approved a bill Feb. 29 that would increase the penalties for violations of the state's child labor laws.

The bill (HF3414), sponsored by Rep. Rob Leighton (DFL-Austin), would increase fines tenfold for violations of existing child labor laws.

Currently, fines range from \$25 for employing a minor without proof of age up to \$500 for employing a minor under age 18 who is injured in hazardous employment. Under the bill, those fines would increase to \$250 and \$5,000.

Jobs considered to be hazardous employment include some construction work, working with hazardous chemicals, and other occupations that are considered potentially life threatening.

Beth Hartgarten, an attorney from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, said the increased fines would align the state closer to federal fines. She said in an economy of low unemployment, violations of child labor laws are increasing.

Hartgarten said that between July 1998 and June 1999, there were 36 complaints and three fines issued. The department issued 287 exemptions mostly for allowing individuals to work longer hours and denied 10 exemption requests primarily for hazardous employment.

Between July 1999 and September 1999, there were 20 complaints and six fines.



Beth Hartgarten of the Department of Labor and Industry testifies Feb. 29 before the Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee in support of a bill that would increase penalties for child labor law violations.

Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) cited a personal experience as one of his reasons for opposing the bill. Gunther said that the grocery store he runs with his brother was fined after two 15-year-olds "who loved their work" traded shifts with two 16-year-olds and ended up working past legal hours.

"I can guarantee you all we're going to do is make sure employers never hire 15-year-olds again," he said.

Leighton said that most people would agree that the state's child labor laws are there for a good reason and the bill would not prevent 15-year-olds from working reasonable jobs.

"They certainly can still work," he said. "But if they have to work more than eight hours a day or 40 hours a week, there is something wrong in this state, in our society."

The bill was sent to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

★ **ENVIRONMENT**

River funds ranked high

The House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee approved its list of bonding priorities Feb. 28.

The list recommends spending \$281 million on various projects, some of which are in Gov. Jesse Ventura's capital budget plan and others that have been proposed by House members. The governor recommended spending \$125 million on environment-related projects.

The committee's top priority is spending \$60 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which would establish conservation easements along the Minnesota River. The easements require landowners to stop cultivating the land near the river, so it can filter out soil and chemicals, help control flooding, and establish wildlife habitat.

The \$60 million in state funds would be matched by \$140 million in federal funds, but that money is only available through September 2002.

The governor's recommendation is to spend only \$25 million for that program, which would be matched by about \$58 million in federal funds.

Also high on the priority list is \$11.2 million for the Metropolitan Regional Parks Capital Improvement Program, which would be matched by \$18.1 million in federal and local funds.

The committee also gave high ranking to \$3 million for the critical habitat matching account, which is matched by private donations.

A \$6.5 million project would create a 5.1-acre public access area on Lake Minnetonka's Grays Bay. Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) said the proposal is critical because it involves purchasing property from a willing seller, an opportunity that is not going to last long considering the high demand for lakeshore property.

The project would feature boat ramps, a dock with several boat slips and parking for cars and trailers.

Some other projects the committee favored but are not included in the governor's recommendations include \$17.1 million for a Como Park education resource center, \$4.4 million to improve wildlife management areas and fisheries, \$4 million to acquire and develop a recreation area and campground near East Grand Forks, and \$13 million to control flooding in the Red River valley.

The committee also favored spending \$1 million to purchase an office building in Pelican Rapids instead of building a new \$5 million building in Fergus Falls for the Department of Natural Resources, against the governor's recommendations.

The committee's list of priorities now moves to the House Capital Investment Committee, where it will be considered for inclusion in the House bonding bill.



FYI

New publication available

There is a new publication available from the nonpartisan House Public Information Office. *Capitol Steps: How Six Bills Became Law* is a 34-page booklet that explains the legislative process in a simple, straightforward manner.

The booklet is an update of a popular publication originally printed by Public Information in 1990. The 2000 edition includes all new text and an updated design.

Short, easy-to-read chapters tell the story of six state laws and how they came to be. The process is followed from the time an idea for a new law comes up to the time a bill reflecting that idea is passed by the Legislature and signed into law.

Capitol Steps was designed to be a resource for junior and senior high school students, but it would be of interest to anyone who wants to gain an understanding of the basics of how the Legislature works.

If you would like to receive a copy of the new publication, call (651) 296-2146 or (800) 657-3550. There is no charge.

★ GAME & FISH

Hunting on reservation

A bill that would allow people to hunt on certain lands within the Red Lake Indian Reservation without a state hunting license was approved March 1 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

The Red Lake Band of Chippewa owns about 85 percent of the land within Minnesota's Northwest Angle. The band has hunting licenses for its members and for other area residents, but there has been some confusion over whether those hunters also need a state license.

The bill (HF304), sponsored by Rep. Jim Tunheim (DFL-Kennedy), would clarify the matter by making the Red Lake Band's license sufficient, and it would specify that the band has jurisdiction to regulate hunting in that area.

The Department of Natural Resources supports the proposal.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

★ GOVERNMENT

Increasing Capitol security

The Capitol complex would have its own separate police force under a bill sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove).

Stanek told the House Crime Prevention Committee on Feb. 29 that the Capitol security forces would add four additional licensed state troopers to the current staff of three troopers and 48 unlicensed security officers under the measure.

He said it is not his intention to displace the current security team.

"I'm not trying to match what we have right now, I'm trying to augment what we have," Stanek said.

The committee approved the bill (HF3376) and sent it to House Transportation Finance Committee.

The bill also would provide four additional state troopers to guard Gov. Jesse Ventura, bringing the total troopers assigned to the governor to 15.

A Capitol complex oversight committee, consisting of legislators from both houses and the chief justice of the Supreme Court, would be formed under the bill. The committee would set guidelines, develop short- and long-term plans and make budget recommends to the Legislature.

A report released in January recommended the Capitol close some of the building's 37 entrances and install metal detectors at the remaining open doors. The report also called for a card-access system.

Stanek's proposal does not feature any of those security measures. He said the oversight committee could make such specific recommendations in the future.

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) questioned whether a full-time police force is needed. Mullery noted that crowds gather at the Capitol during the legislative session, but there is less of a need during the interim.

Mancel Mitchell, deputy commissioner of the Public Safety Department, said he prefers that a Capitol force be comprised of state troopers. The state spends about \$100,000 annually per trooper, including salary, vehicle, and other expenses, Mitchell said.

Stanek said the Capitol has been left with only a few law enforcement officials in the past when the governor has left the complex,

taking state troopers with him. Stanek added that the bill does not require that Capitol law enforcement be state troopers.

In addition, only sworn troopers have the power to make arrests and that power extends statewide.

Stanek also noted that the law enforcement agency would answer to the oversight committee rather than the governor.

The licensed Capitol police would have distinct blue uniforms, while the non-licensed staff would be in a different color, Stanek said.

New plan for Public Service

The Department of Public Service would be abolished with most of its functions transferred to the Public Utilities Commission, under a bill the House Commerce Committee approved Feb. 29.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) is sponsoring the bill (HF2496), which would undo the governor's 1999 order to merge the Commerce and Public Service departments.

"If we do nothing, it stands as it is," said Davids, chair of the committee. "My intent is that commerce should be commerce, and the other things should go somewhere else."

Prior to Ventura's reorganization, the Public Service Department consisted primarily of the Energy Division, the Telecommunications Division and the Weights and Measures Division.

The Weights and Measures Division is responsible for checking the accuracy of all commercial weighing and measuring equipment, including gas pumps and grocery scales. The Energy Division was given the mission of ensuring reliable and affordable energy supplies are available in the state. The Telecommunications Division was set up to represent residential and business consumers in the regulatory process.

Under Ventura's action, the Energy Division and Telecommunications Division were then shifted to the Department of Commerce, leaving the Weights and Measures Division by itself.

Davids' bill would send the Energy Division to the Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning.

Linda Taylor, assistant commissioner of energy, told the committee the bill is not good policy. Taylor said the Energy and Telecommunications divisions should stay in the Commerce Department, which has strong enforcement powers.

Taylor said the enforcement powers would be lost if the Energy and Telecommunications divisions were placed in the planning office.

"We would lose our effectiveness," Taylor said. "We'd have monopolies out there doing what they want. That is not good public policy."



Capitol Security Lt. Alesia Metry looks on as the House Crime Prevention Committee passes a bill Feb. 29 that would create a new Capitol police department.

Taylor recommended the committee set aside the bill and require the Legislative Audit Commission to study the situation. Davids rejected the notion, saying a study should not be performed during the second year of a biennium.

Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina) proposed an amendment that would reverse the governor's changes, and restore both departments to their original makeup before the merger. The committee rejected the amendment.

Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) offered an amendment that would place all Weights and Measures functions in the Department of Agriculture except the functions related to petroleum. That amendment was adopted.

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

Naming new state symbols

Minnesota may be known as the "Gopher State," but it actually doesn't have an official state mammal.

The timber wolf would have that distinction under a bill (HF3508) that was approved Feb. 25 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

The committee also approved a bill to designate the monarch as the state butterfly.

The idea to designate the timber wolf as the state mammal came from a group of seventh graders at Wabasha-Kellogg High School in southeastern Minnesota. Students in that class discussed several possible creatures and narrowed the list down to three: the white tail deer, the gopher, and the timber wolf.

Wabasha-Kellogg seventh-graders Perry Hemmingson and Andrew Johnson were among the students who sent surveys to several schools throughout the state. The 13 schools that returned the surveys overwhelmingly voted for the timber wolf to be the official state mammal.



Hanna Nussbaum, a fourth grade student at OH Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi, asks lawmakers to name the monarch as Minnesota's state butterfly. The girl testified Feb. 25 before the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

Both boys were aware of the controversy surrounding wolves in the state. Lawmakers and other state officials are trying to develop policies for controlling the wolf population, while balancing the interests of animal-rights groups with landowners who have lost livestock due to wolf attacks.

Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins) asked if the state-symbol designation would grant special protection to wolves.

But Hemmingson said such treatment is not given to other state symbols.

"The walleye is the state fish, and you can go around catching them," he said.

The bill is sponsored by Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City).

The monarch butterfly would become a state symbol under a separate bill (HF2588) sponsored by Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake). That idea came from fourth graders at OH Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi.

The monarch is found throughout the state, and like many Minnesotans, it migrates south for the winter and returns in the spring.

Both bills now move to the House floor.

★ HEALTH

Abortion plan approved

A bill that would prohibit any woman from receiving an abortion in Minnesota unless she meets requirements for "informed consent" was approved Feb. 28 by the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

Sponsored by Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault), the bill (HF178) would require that

any patient scheduled to undergo an abortion receive specified information either by telephone or by mail at least 24 hours prior to the operation.

It would also establish civil penalties for clinics failing to comply with informed consent requirements.

The information provided to the patient would include the name of the doctor performing the procedure and other details.

"The purpose of this bill is to make sure that a woman is adequately informed about what will happen during an abortion procedure, and is not meant as an obstacle for a woman who chooses to have an abortion," Boudreau said.

The bill would also require a referring physician at the clinic where the operation will be performed to tell the patient about information regarding alternatives to abortion and the risks and possible side effects associated with the procedure.

Information provided to the patient would also include facts about medical risks and other factors involved with carrying the child to term.

"Sometimes when a woman is in a crisis-type of a situation, she can feel pushed to make a tough decision without having all the information she'd like available to her," said Boudreau. "This bill would put, at her fingers, answers to both procedural and other types of questions regarding abortion."

The woman would then have to provide written consent at least 24 hours before the abortion showing that she has received the required information.

The financial impact of the bill was the focus of the hearing before the Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE PROFILE

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Chair: Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park)

Vice Chair: Rostberg (R-Isanti)

Minority Lead: Kahn (DFL-Mpls)

Members: 23 (12 R, 10 DFL, 1 Ind.)

Scope: Reviews legislation related to the overall operation of state government, including the purchase of materials and services by state agencies; state employee contracts; agency rulemaking procedures; Capitol complex maintenance; and the composition of state agencies. Hears legislation related to veterans affairs and gambling.

The bill would appropriate \$167,000 to the commissioner of health in fiscal year 2001 to amass the information mentioned. The bulk of the expense, Boudreau said, would cover the cost of producing numerous lists of specific community resources and the process of updating old information.

The bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee for further consideration.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

New art facility supported

Some noteworthy projects shunned by the governor received high rankings from the House Higher Education Finance Committee.

Chief among them is the proposal for a new facility to replace the troubled Art Building on the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota.

The U of M wants to tear down the existing Art Building and replace it with a new structure considered the centerpiece of the “arts quarter” being developed on the West Bank. The new building would cost \$44 million, but only \$21 million would come from the state.

Gov. Jesse Ventura’s bonding proposal would fund three of the university’s top four bonding priorities. He left out the Art Building, which the university ranked third.

The Higher Education Finance Committee also ranked replacement of the Art Building third among 10 proposed U of M projects.

The committee voted March 1 to send a list of bonding priorities to the House Capital Investment Committee, which will compile this year’s omnibus bonding bill.

The bill assembled by the higher education panel does not include spending figures for all of the projects. It merely sets forth the priorities of the committee. In most cases, the Capital Investment Committee will rely on the dollar amounts requested by the campuses and the governor’s proposals.

The Higher Education Finance Committee’s priorities closely reflect those of the U of M and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system, but there are some significant differences.

Sixth among the committee’s priorities for MnSCU is the \$9.9 million plan to construct and remodel athletic facilities and academic space at Minnesota State University, Mankato.

The work, considered the second phase of a three-phase plan, would be part of a larger project spurred by Mankato businessman and Minnesota Timberwolves owner Glen Taylor’s \$9.2 million gift to the university.

The Mankato project was ranked just 17th by MnSCU, which listed 24 capital projects in

its request. Ventura recommended no funds for the Mankato proposal.

The committee’s top priority for both the U of M and MnSCU is bond funding for building maintenance and repair. The U of M is seeking \$16 million for such work, while MnSCU wants \$100 million for structures at its 36 institutions.

Under the committee’s plan, funds would be provided to make needed improvements at Anoka-Hennepin Technical College, which the system’s Board of Trustees voted to close rather than repair.

The higher education bonding plan, a committee bill yet to be assigned a house file number, was referred to the House Capital Investment Committee.

★ HOUSING

Homelessness prevention funds

Angela Soulvar, a mother of three, found herself without a home after her abusive husband forced her out of their house.

Soulvar told the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee Feb. 28 that her own family situation had been difficult. Her mother was an alcoholic and both her parents were abusive, she said.

She testified that she was 18 years old when she met her husband, and because of his abuse she tried to leave him four times in six years.

“He made me feel bad about who I was and what I was doing,” she said. “When my boys started getting mean, I knew I had to end it.”

Soulvar said that her experience with the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency’s Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program helped her get her life back on track.

“I got lots of emotional support and the financial support was very helpful,” she said.

A bill (HF2679) sponsored by Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior) would provide an additional \$2 million in fiscal year 2001 to the housing development fund for the homeless assistance program. The committee heard the bill and may consider it for inclusion in a possible omnibus funding measure.

The program provides grants to counties to assist families and individuals who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

Since her experience with the program, Soulvar received a degree from Anoka-Hennepin Technical College and works for an insurance company.

“The only assistance I get is child care,” she said.

Preventing people from becoming home-

less — rather than intervening after they do — is a more effective way to deal with the problem, said Michael Dahl from the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless.

“It is more humane, more cost effective, and better for the state in the long run,” he said.

Dahl said much of the program’s effectiveness is that it allows decisions to be made at the regional level to best decide where the grants should be used.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Newborn drop-off program

Six days after the January kickoff of a Dakota County pilot program for unwanted newborns, a baby only a few hours old was found dead inside a trash can in neighboring Hennepin County.

Lilly Riordan, co-founder of Dakota County’s Safe Place for Newborns initiative, appeared before the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee on Feb. 29 to ask that more be done to keep extreme cases of neglect from occurring, regardless of what part of the state they happen.

“There is great urgency associated with our cause,” Riordan said. “When a newborn child is left alone to die, it’s truly a situation where everyone loses.”

Riordan testified for a bill (HF2945) that



Laura Plummer Zrust, human services licensing supervisor from the Department of Human Services, speaks Feb. 29 before the House Health and Human Services Committee in support of a bill that would allow a mother to leave her unharmed newborn baby at a hospital emergency room while remaining anonymous and immune from being reported to social services or police.

would allow a mother (or a person of her consent) to leave an unharmed newborn at a hospital emergency room without fear of prosecution up to 72 hours following the child's birth.

The committee approved the measure. It now moves to the House Civil Law Committee.

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior) is sponsoring the bill, which would also provide anonymity by allowing the person bringing the child to the hospital to leave without providing identification.

Under current Minnesota law, a mother who willfully neglects a newborn when she is reasonably able to care for the infant can be charged with a gross misdemeanor.

Allowing a child to be left with a hospital would provide desperate mothers another option and could save lives, Sykora told the committee.

"I think this bill makes sense," she said.

As the bill reads, the hospital would be required to accept the child, if it has no visible injuries or sickness, and to notify a local welfare agency following the mother's departure from the premises.

A numbered identification bracelet would be issued to aid in linking the mother to the newborn at a later date if reunification was sought.

However, according to the bill's language, the newborn would technically be considered "abandoned," and the bracelet would not allow custody of the child on demand.

Officials do not know how many babies hospitals could realistically expect to be dropped off if the bill becomes law.

★ INSURANCE

Limiting windshield freebies

Customers may no longer receive free steaks, frequent flier miles, or savings bonds when they get a new auto windshield, under a bill endorsed by a House panel.

Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville) is sponsoring the bill (HF2656), which would cap free gifts from glass replacement companies at \$35 in value. The bill also would change current law from requiring insurers to pay "all reasonable costs" in windshield replacement to an "average cost" of repair.

"People understand windshield costs are too high," Wolf said.

The House Commerce Committee approved the bill Feb. 29 and sent it to the House floor. Wolf said he will ask that a vote on the



Pat Boldt of ABC Auto Glass in Cold Spring follows along as the House Commerce Committee debates a bill Feb. 29 that would place new regulations on auto glass companies. Boldt is opposed to the bill.

bill be slightly delayed, pending more negotiating between glass installers and insurance companies.

Jim Bernstein, acting commissioner of the Department of Commerce, said the legislation is needed to stem the increase of glass replacement costs. Consumers are aware that glass shop giveaways are a problem, Bernstein said.

"They are unhappy because they feel the insurance rates are going up and they are getting ripped off," Bernstein said.

In January, the state Court of Appeals ruled that free gifts are legitimate sales tools for glass service companies because the law says that "any cost necessary" must be paid by insurers.

Windshield replacement costs in Minnesota are 69 percent higher than the national average and are the highest overall, according to an insurance company's report released in December.

Under Wolf's legislation, insurance companies would contact three glass replacement companies in the county where the replacement is occurring. The insurance company would then be required to pay the average cost of the three estimates.

George Corporaal, owner of Glass Service Company in St. Paul, spoke against the bill. Corporaal began giving away a box of steaks with each job to draw customers to his business in 1991. Corporaal said insurance companies should not have final say in which glass companies are called for estimates.

Also, glass costs vary because of the quality of glass installed, Corporaal said. An insurance company could recommend low-quality glass that is less expensive, he noted.

"This bill is chaotic," Corporaal said. "It will cause nothing but trouble."

★ TAXES

Permanent tax cut proposal

A bill that would provide more than \$818 million in permanent tax cuts was pitched March 2 to the House Taxes Committee.

The bill (HF2941), sponsored by Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee), would reduce rates in all three income brackets and would allow individuals to subtract health insurance premiums from Minnesota taxable income.

The committee took no action on the measure but will consider it for inclusion in this year's omnibus tax package.

Daggett's bill would reduce rates in the lower bracket from 5.5 percent to 5 percent, from 7.25 percent to 6.5 percent in the middle bracket, and from 8 percent to 7.5 percent in the upper bracket.

She said the current health insurance deduction allowed for self-employed Minnesotans would be expanded to include all taxpayers.

The committee adopted an amendment offered by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), committee chair, that would phase-out by 2002 the three-factor system for determining corporate income taxes.

Under present law most corporations are taxed according to a three-factor formula based on sales, property, and payroll. The amendment would increase the sales portion of the formula currently at 75 percent to 80 percent for this year, to 90 percent in 2001, and to 100 percent beginning in 2002.

Gerry Morris, the senior manager of the General Mills tax department, said that because the company employs Minnesota workers and has a facility in the state, the company pays more in Minnesota corporate franchise tax on similar sales than competitors based out of state.

Duane Benson, the executive director of the Minnesota Business Partnership, said allowing the state's taxpayers to keep more of their money ultimately makes the state more competitive in the global marketplace.

Wayne Cox, the executive director of Minnesota Citizens for Tax Justice, spoke against the bill. Cox said under the proposal, 60 percent of the state's taxpayers would receive less tax cut dollars than taxpayers in the top 1 percent in income.

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.

Questions on health care tax

The Ventura administration is answering for its handling of the state's health care access fund.

Department of Finance Commissioner Pam Wheelock appeared before the House Taxes Committee on Feb. 24 to answer questions surrounding the decision not to increase the health care provider tax.

The tax was to rise to cover a structural deficit in the health care access fund, which provides revenue for MinnesotaCare, the state's health plan for low-income residents.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair has been critical of the administration's decision, which he said did not follow the letter of the law.

State law provides for an increase in health-care taxes paid by health care providers when there is a structural deficit in the health care access fund.

Wheelock decided not to do so at the beginning of the current calendar year, when an increase was expected. There is still money in the health care access fund, but the fund is structured such that if revenue doesn't accrue from certain sources at specific time, additional provider-based taxes are mandated.

The 1999 Legislature approved a roughly \$84 million transfer from the general fund into the health care access fund. The goal of that move was to freeze the provider tax, often called the "sick tax."

But Gov. Jesse Ventura line-item vetoed that transfer.

"The governor wanted to take credit for the \$80 million veto, but didn't want to take responsibility for what the statute clearly required," Abrams said.

Wheelock said the governor vetoed the appropriation because he did not think it was appropriate to use general fund money for the health care access fund. And she said the administration was surprised by the Legislature's general fund appropriation.

But Wheelock also expressed understanding that her decision not to increase the tax may have been equally surprising to lawmakers.

"The law directs the commissioner of finance to make the decision. The responsibility was left with me and I made the decision," Wheelock said. "I understand that the decision I made was contrary to what the Legislature was expecting."

She said that the administration has learned that it needs to improve some of its efforts to communicate with the Legislature.

Abrams said that although he has been "extraordinarily frustrated" by communication breakdowns with the administration, input

from the governor and his staff is important in the process.

"I like Jesse Ventura. I respect him. I admire him and I want to work with him," Abrams said. "I want to work with you for the betterment of all Minnesotans."

Simplifying the sales tax

Though they pay them nearly every day, most Minnesotans have probably never taken the time to actually read the state's many sales tax laws.

And even if they did, they probably wouldn't understand them.

In 1997, the Legislature passed a provision, as part of the omnibus tax bill, to reorganize the statutes pertaining to sales taxes so they would be easier to understand.

More than two years in the making, the finished product is contained in a bill (HF3234), sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka). The bill was discussed Feb. 25 in the House Taxes Committee, which Abrams chairs.

The bill reflects the efforts of the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, along with research staff from the House and Senate and the Department of Revenue.

"This hopefully will improve the readability of the statutes," Janet Rahm, from the

revisor's office, told the committee. She said the intent of the bill is not to rewrite or restructure any substantive provisions.

"It uses simpler words and removes redundant language so that people can read the statutes," she said.

Much of the bill is devoted to clarifying definitions of terms used, and moving together the many definitions scattered throughout the statutes pertaining to sales taxes.

The bill also would divide groups of sales tax exempt items together in an effort to allow users to more easily find the provisions that might apply to them.

According to the nonpartisan House Research Department, the many items exempted from sales tax include some odd things.

For example, there currently is a provision that allows some flatware and silverware to be considered clothing but not exempt from sales tax.

Under the proposed revision, that provision would be removed altogether.

Abrams praised the efforts to make the statutes more clear and to keep the process open for input and yet avoid any substantive changes. He said the bill will be considered for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill but also may be considered as a separate bill.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Study of ramp meters

Highway ramp meters would be shut down to allow for an independent study of their effectiveness, under a bill sponsored by Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen.)

The House Transportation Policy Committee approved the bill (HF3753) March 2 and sent it to the House Transportation Finance Committee.

Workman said Minnesotans are frustrated by the long waits at entrance ramps and that a study is needed to show the effectiveness of the meters.

Officials have not yet determined how much the study would cost.

The meter system is used to alleviate bottlenecks on the interstate, said Tim Wirke, director of government relations for the Department of Transportation. The average wait time is 4 to 6 minutes.

Tom Trecker, Minnesota chapter coordinator for the National Motorists Association, told the committee it should examine the system's effectiveness.

"Twin Cities motorists have the most aggressive meter system and longest wait time in the nation," Trecker said. "And the system has never been tested."

Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park)

FAMILY FARMERS



Judy and Ernest Anderson of Benson carry their signs to the "March First" rally in the Capitol rotunda March 1 in support of family farmers.

disagreed. The Transportation Department gathers a large amount of data and conducts research before installing a light system to make sure it works, Johnson said.

Workman said his views on effectiveness might differ from the department's opinion.

"It's not that we don't believe them," Workman said. "It's that we have a different theory about the truth."

Trecker said other states use ramp meters, but only to enter the freeway system. Minnesota, however, has meters on connecting freeways.

"Once the vehicle is on the freeway, it makes no sense to stop between freeways," Trecker said.

Entrance ramps are too short to allow vehicles to accelerate and join traffic at the appropriate speed, Trecker said.

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters) offered a successful amendment that would require the study to be performed by a private consulting firm instead of the department.

An amendment from Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove) changed the time of the proposed study from October 2000 to a time determined by the consulting firm.

"I believe the department may well be right about the value of ramp meters," said Rep. Henry Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth). "But I also see the value of a study."

Slower traffic keep right

Slower traffic on Minnesota interstates would be required to travel only in the right-hand lane, under a bill advancing in the House.

Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm) is sponsoring a bill (HF3091) that would make driving in the left lane against the law unless drivers are passing, avoiding accidents, entering or exiting the interstate, or being directed by law enforcement or construction markers.

"I'm just attempting to make the roadways a bit safer," Tomassoni said in Feb. 29 testimony to the House Transportation Policy Committee.

**HOUSE
COMMITTEE
PROFILE**

Transportation Policy

Chair: Workman (R-Chanhassen)
Vice Chair: Clark, J. (R-Springfield)
Minority Lead: Hausman (DFL-St. Paul)
Members: 22 (12 R, 10 DFL)

Scope: Oversees the Department of Transportation, Driver and Vehicle Services and State Patrol within the Department of Public Safety, and the transportation, transit, and airway portions of the Metropolitan Council. Addresses highways, trucking, railroads, waterways, airports, and transit systems.

Tomassoni believes the bill would reduce "road rage" on Minnesota highways. He said many drivers become angry when they are stuck behind vehicles, traveling side by side, and traveling at the same speed.

The committee approved the measure and sent it to the Transportation Finance Committee.

Tomassoni said many European countries have similar laws.

Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park) spoke against the bill, saying people would only drive faster.

"I think this is a way to encourage speeding," Johnson said. "We're now encouraging higher speed limits."

Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove) also opposed the bill, arguing it would be impossible to regulate in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. However, Rep. Henry Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth) said he believes law enforcement would use common sense and would not enforce the measure during rush hour.

The bill would require that signs be placed every 50 miles along interstate highways to remind drivers to move to the right lane after they have passed a car. Tomassoni said the signs are a key part of the bill.

Current law provides for a petty misde-

meanor for drivers who travel in the left lane below the speed of other vehicles on the road. The bill also would carry the petty misdemeanor penalty.

Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) said the bill is about more than just speed.

"It's how cars back up," she said. "It's a huge safety issue."

Funds for bus maintenance

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved a bill March 1 that would help fund upkeep on the metropolitan area's bus system.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the bill's sponsor, said his proposal would increase the Metropolitan Council's bonding authority in the current biennium from \$36 million to \$52 million for transit expenditures.

During last session, the Met Council asked for \$52 million but the Legislature authorized \$36 million. Abrams said the bill would allow the council to sell bonds for the balance of the funds. The bus system also receives federal matching dollars.

Abrams said the bill would have a slight property tax impact — an average increase of \$1.20 on an \$120,000 home.

Art Leahy, general manager of Metro Transit, said that the additional money is needed for basic transit needs such as repairing and replacing buses and bus facilities.

The committee approved an amendment offered by Abrams that increased the bonding authority amount from \$52 million to \$55.4 million. The additional \$3.4 million would be used specifically on the Eagan and Burnsville Transit Hubs and the Southwest Station.

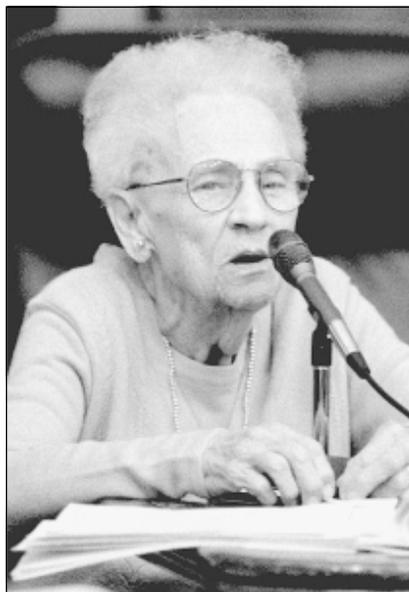
The Met Council is the regional planning organization for the Twin Cities area. It operates the metropolitan bus system, collects and treats wastewater and manages water resources, guides development, plans regional parks, and administers funds for affordable housing.

Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake) asked Abrams if the funds could be used for modes of transit other than buses. Abrams said that the bill specifically prohibits the use of the funds for construction maintenance or operation of light-rail transit.

"This is a Met Council initiative," Abrams said. "It has nothing to do with light-rail transit. These are bus funds."

The bill (HF3530) was sent to the House Taxes Committee.

GRANTS FOR AC



Evelyn Hamre, 90, testifies before the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee on March 1 in support of a bill that would provide air-conditioning grants and appropriate money for publicly owned high-rise buildings for low-income disabled people and seniors.

Farm aid

Lawmakers are considering proposals that would provide aid to farmers

By DAVID MAEDA

Last year's \$70 million agricultural tax rebate was a substantial investment but did not make a significant difference to most farmers, an economics professor from the University of Minnesota told the House Taxes Committee on Feb. 29.

"The assistance was welcome but not critical to that many folks," said Steven Taff, an associate professor in the University of Minnesota's Department of Applied Economics. "It simply was not big enough to keep the wolf from the door."

Though a number of plans to increase agricultural aid and rebates are being tossed around, Taff suggests that the answer is eliminating the need for farmers to depend on government resources in the long term.

Along with officials from the Department of Revenue, Taff studied the effectiveness of last year's agricultural assistance program. The program allowed farmers to receive assistance of \$4 per cropland acre. The maximum payment was \$5,600.

According to the study, the state paid out a total of \$72.1 million to about 49,000 individuals and businesses involved in agriculture. The average payment was \$1,473.

Nearly 25 percent of the checks exceeded \$2,000 each. Close to 90 percent of the payments went to people with annual incomes of \$50,000 or less.

While the majority of Minnesota farms remain by most definitions small, Taff said there is a growing need to increase the size of farms to remain profitable.

He said most family farms in the state now rely on off-farm income to supplement their farm revenues, and they would fail without government assistance.

On average Minnesota farms received \$45,000 in various payments from the state and federal government.

"Government has put farmers in the black," Taff said.

He said the current Minnesota agricultural economy is no better than a year ago and little



Russ Bratsch, who farms 2,600 acres near Renville with his family, reads a statement in support of a bill that would provide tax relief to those who join forces to run one farm operation. His testimony came Feb. 29 before the House Taxes Committee.

has improved in the last 20 years. He also said that traditionally the condition of the state's agricultural economy is measured solely by commodity prices, which is not always the most accurate measurement to use.

Rep. Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda) said that while commodity prices are not the only indicator of a difficult farm economy, they are a good example of what is wrong. Winter said farmers would much prefer fairer prices for their commodities rather than continue to rely on government subsidies.

"We need to figure out something. The domestic value of commodities is too low," Winter said.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the Taxes Committee chair, agreed with those sentiments.

"The farmers I know would much rather get \$4 per bushel rather than \$1.40 per bushel along with a government check," he said.

Abrams said that efforts last year to target the \$70 million assistance to those who needed it most failed because, despite efforts from all involved, there was no fair way to develop an adequate "means" test.

A current bill sponsored by Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus) would be a repeat of last year's plan, but it would limit eligibility to farmers in counties that have been declared by the president as weather-related disaster areas. Those counties include Kittson, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau.

The committee will consider the bill (HF2743) as part of this year's omnibus tax measure.

Ron Anderson, a Hallock farmer, said that last year's program was helpful in paying off bills. He said he used his check to pay fuel bills without having to draw on his line of credit.

The committee is also considering bills for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill that would expand the number of people receiving assistance from last year's program.

HF2786, sponsored by Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls), would allow farms with multiple operators to receive up to \$5,600 per farmer. The \$5,600 cap approved last year was per farm regardless of the number of operators.

Russ Bratsch, who operates a farm in Renville County with his three brothers and father, said his family was penalized because members registered their operation as one farm. He said when it comes to filing taxes or filling out other legal documents, each member of the family is required to do so individually.

Another bill (HF3166), sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), would extend the filing deadline for last year's agricultural tax rebate until June 30, 2000.

"Many of those who contacted us about missing the deadline have circumstances where the need is some the greatest," Ozment said. "Those with a death in the family, illness, or are working several jobs. Not to cloud the issue because there is definitely the need out there." 

Reviewing the Profile

House committee examines several measures to make the Profile of Learning more acceptable to teachers and students

By **MIKE DELARCO**

While the Senate wrestles with a House vote last month to place an indefinite moratorium on the maligned Profile of Learning, several House members from both parties have devised plans to repair the state's show-what-you-know initiative.

Ten bills designed to revamp, and, in some cases, replace the controversial portion of the state's Graduation Standards were presented, discussed, and considered by the House Education Policy Committee Feb. 24 and Feb. 29.

The committee will likely incorporate some of the desired changes into one bill. So far, the most likely vehicle seems to be a measure sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel).

Ness' bill (HF3618) would significantly reduce the number of content standards students in grades K-12 would be required to meet under the Profile.

The idea behind the Profile of Learning was hatched 12 years ago in response to criticism that schools weren't doing enough to prepare students for college and the workplace. The aim in creating the Profile was to shift learning away from textbooks, lectures, and drill and move it toward experiments, teamwork, research, and independent projects.

Under the Profile, students are required to perform various tasks in many areas of study. An emphasis is placed on getting students out of their seats to do activities that force them

to think for themselves and have practical applications for life beyond school.

Shortly after the state's teachers started incorporating requirements of the Profile into lesson plans two years ago, however, complaints began to surface.

While pleased with the hands-on knowledge the Profile provides students, a growing number of teachers felt there was much to be improved before they could completely stand behind the measure.

A survey released a month ago by Education Minnesota found that most teachers don't care for the Profile of Learning. Slightly more than half of the 608 randomly selected teachers surveyed by telephone last fall want to change the state's controversial graduation rule, 39 percent want it abolished, and only 9 percent want to keep it as it is.

The results of the survey show that teacher response has changed very little since the Profile's implementation.

In early February, Minnesota's teachers union and state Department of Children, Families and Learning Commissioner Christine Jax both called for a temporary moratorium — likely two years — on enforcing the requirements of the Profile of Learning.

But some want more. Cheryl Moen, a teacher at La Crescent High School, told committee members Feb. 29 she supports the indefinite moratorium on the Profile until "all the bugs

could be worked out." In her district, Moen said, some students are opting to enroll in the post-secondary enrollment options program, which allows them to take college courses, simply to avoid the hassle the Profile is causing.

Education Minnesota co-presidents Judy Schaubach and Sandra Peterson have cautioned legislators that teacher frustration with the set of standards had reached a boiling point. The Profile, they said, could "collapse under its own weight" if changes are not made this year.

On Feb. 17, House members attached the amendment calling for an indefinite moratorium on the Profile of Learning to a bill related to basic standards testing. The bill was passed by a wide margin. (The Senate is not expected to go along with the House amendment.)

Brett Smith, an instructor in the Mahtomedi School District and Minnesota's 1999 Teacher of the Year, pushed for change at the Feb. 29 hearing, but advised legislators to take things gradually.

"Sometimes if we continually evaluate a process as it's still evolving, such as tasting a soufflé several times before pulling it out of the oven, our conclusion can be premature," Smith said.

Perhaps the most repeated complaint teachers express when discussing the Profile of Learning is that the amount of work required to have students complete all the standards is too taxing on a school-year workload.

Ness' bill aims to establish a timeline that is grade-level appropriate for school districts to implement six separate learning areas and would require that students graduating in the 2005-06 school year and beyond to comply fully with the Profile of Learning requirements in order to graduate.

Many teachers are also concerned about the amount of paperwork now required to track students' progress in completing the standard package.

Richfield School District Superintendent Barbara Devlin pushed for a uniform system for student record keeping in testimony before the committee. According to Jax, state officials are already trying to address that particular concern by providing computer software that can help instructors track progress.

Other plans proposed make exceptions to the Profile for charter schools, impose either a two-year moratorium or indefinite moratorium so certain conditions can be met, and otherwise address workload and paperwork issues. 🐛



Four education professionals air their ideas about what to do with the Profile of Learning. Each testified Feb. 29 before the House Education Policy Committee. They are, from left to right, Barbara Devlin, superintendent Richfield Public Schools, who asked to retain the Profile but make improvements, Cheryl Moen, a teacher from LeCrescent, who suggested a moratorium on the Profile, Herbert Parker, former teacher from Anoka, who also backed a moratorium, and Mahtomedi's Brett Smith, Minnesota Teacher of the Year, who suggested improvements be made in the Profile.

Tab fees and tax shifts

Governor's plans would cut tab fees for some and direct tax revenues for highways and mass transit

By CHRIS VETTER

License tab fees would be cut, motor vehicle sales tax revenue would be redirected, and a new multi-modal transportation fund would be created, under plans supported by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska) is sponsoring two bills that contain the governor's main initiatives.

One bill (HF2891) features Ventura's request to remove motor vehicle sales tax proceeds from the state's general fund, sending 54 percent to the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund.

The revenue transfer would cover the cost of capping license tab fees at \$75 per vehicle — a proposal sought by Ventura.

The remaining 46 percent of vehicle sales tax revenue would be used to create new multi-modal transportation fund that would go for public transit and highway projects statewide.

The House Transportation Finance and Transportation Policy committees met jointly March 1 to discuss the measures.

The finance committee then voted to send a second Molnau bill (HF2005), containing the \$75 license tab cap, to the House Taxes Committee without a recommendation. No action was taken on the first bill.

Last year, the state collected about \$450 million in license tab fees. About 39 percent of Minnesotans pay the \$35 minimum fee, but some people pay more than \$400 for tabs.

Elwyn Tinklenberg, commissioner of transportation, explained that the governor believes it is wrong to charge more for one vehicle tab than another vehicle just because one is newer or more expensive. Tinklenberg compared the proposed tab rate to the flat fees for fishing or hunting licenses, which cost the same regardless of the type of equipment an outdoorsman uses.

Rep. James Clark (R-Springfield) suggested the governor should truly create a flat fee, rather than having tabs fees set between \$35 and \$75.

The revenue goes into the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund, which means the proposed

\$75 cap would create a hole in that fund, which is used for county and municipal state-aid highways.

Under current law, all sales tax revenue from vehicle sales goes into the general fund, where it pays for anything from schools to prisons. Ventura's proposal would use some of the money to off-set his reduction in tab fees.

The governor's plan also calls for citizens to vote on an amendment this fall that would constitutionally dedicate the 54 percent of vehicle sales tax — about \$291 million in 2002 — for the license tab reduction. HF2891 would make that dedication in statute, but the amendment would make it much more difficult to reverse.

The proposal to move vehicle sales tax to the highway fund is not new, said Fred Corrigan, executive vice president for the Minnesota Transportation Alliance. In fact, the Legislature passed a law in 1981 that sent 75 percent of revenue for highways, with the remaining 25 percent used for transit systems, Corrigan said.

The Legislature later repealed the law



Transportation Commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg explains the governor's plan to cut license tab fees and redirect revenue from the sales tax on motor vehicles.

because of budget constraints, Corrigan said. However, if the law had stayed in place, Minnesotans would have generated about \$2.96 billion for highways and \$988 million for transit from 1990 to 2000, according to Minnesota Transportation Alliance estimates.

Tinklenberg told the committees about the wide array of projects that could be constructed from the proposed multi-modal fund.

He argued that the interstate freeways in the Twin Cities should have at least three lanes, no matter what traffic or roads are merging together or separating. He noted that some areas, such as the spot north of St. Paul where Snelling Avenue meets Interstate 694, have only one through lane, causing backups and delays around that intersection.

During the past year, Tinklenberg has traveled to several cities, such as St. Louis and Denver, to examine their transportation systems. He said some states that didn't address transportation funding are struggling to come up with funding now.

"They are all beginning to see what the failure to invest in infrastructure improvements has meant to their states," Tinklenberg said.

Nacho Diaz, Metropolitan Council transportation planning director, said the multi-modal fund could be used to construct park-and-ride sites and bus-only transitways or to purchase more buses and garages. The fund also could be used for rural road improvements, right of way preservation, or commuter rail.

The committee heard other proposals to redirect the motor vehicle sales tax.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) proposed a bill (HF446) that would send 30 percent of the vehicle sales tax to the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund, with the remainder staying in the general fund. Kuisle's bill also calls for a constitutional amendment. The Transportation Finance Committee voted to send Kuisle's bill without recommendation to the Taxes Committee.

Another bill (HF3967) would modify the tab fee reductions differently than the governor's plan. Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forrest Lake) favors providing a 50 percent credit for tab fees between \$35 and \$400. Money from the general fund would then be transferred to the highway fund to make up for the tab fee reduction. The Transportation Finance Committee voted to send the bill without recommendation to the Taxes Committee. 🗳️

An underground disaster

Milford deaths prompted calls for lawmakers to aid miners

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

In the midst of its heyday more than 75 years ago, iron mining in Minnesota suffered perhaps its greatest tragedy when the Milford Mine near Crosby flooded, killing 41 of the 48 men inside.

The February 1924 accident occurred when water and mud from nearby Foley Lake collapsed the earthen walls of the mine. Within minutes, water had completely filled the mine, trapping nearly all of the miners inside.

Immediately after the accident, public officials tried to determine who was to blame and whether anything could have been done to prevent the accident.

They were also concerned that the families left behind would be able to survive on the compensation benefits they received.

Benefits were paid out to the families with unprecedented speed, according to a January 1925 report of the State Industrial Commission.

However, the panel also called for a number of legislative reforms, including a suggestion that dependent children should be paid workers' compensation benefits at least until age 16. At the time, families of the miners killed would receive weekly benefits for children up to a cap of \$7,500 — only about 7 years of support.

The proposed reforms also called for area mine inspectors to meet periodically with the

their responsibilities.

But a call to action doesn't always receive a prompt response from the Legislature. Such was the case with the Milford mine disaster.

"The real cause of the disaster was the fact that imminence and danger from such a rush of mud was not recognized by anyone," the commission's report said.

The mine had recently been inspected, but the mine inspector found no obvious irregularities.

The Milford Mine, owned by the Whitmarsh Mining Company, was located on the Cuyuna Iron Range in the central part of the state. The youngest of the three active ranges at the time, the Cuyuna shipped its first ore in 1911.

After the accident, the Milford Mine was shut down for nearly a year as the mine was drained and the bodies of victims were recovered.

Though business operations were slowed by the accident, payments to families were swift.

According to the commission's report, 24 widows and 63 dependent children were drawing compensation within 30 days of the accident. Benefits ranged from \$12.10 to \$20 per week.

In addition, the paychecks of the 35 men who perished and left widows and children were distributed to the families within 48 hours of the accident.

"The dependents have all been assured of an independent livelihood at least until such time as older children of the families are able to assist in their support," the commission concluded.

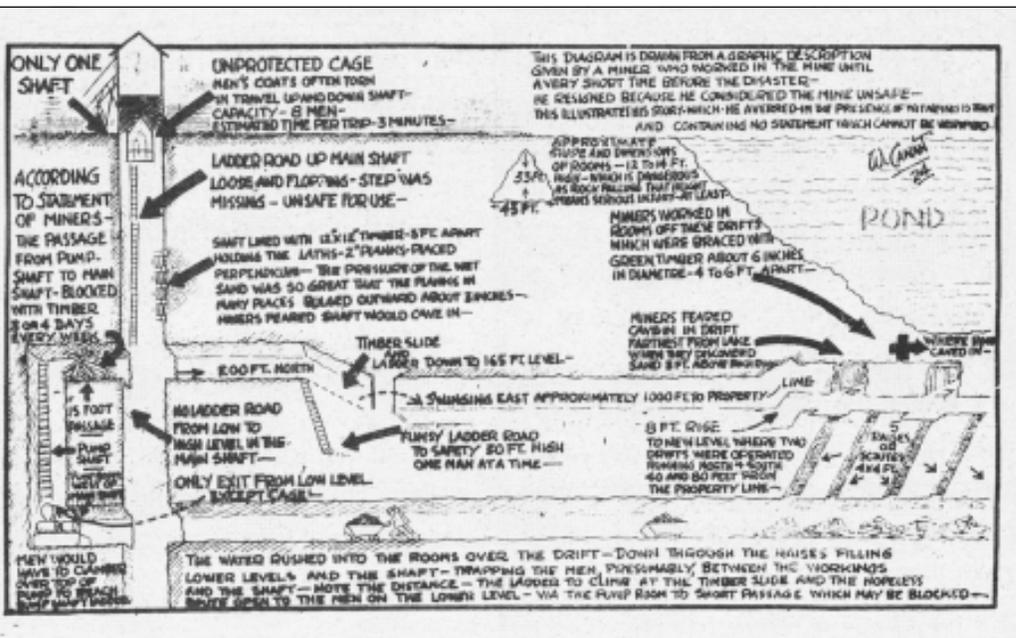
A total of \$300,000 was disbursed to families as a result of the accident, according to the report. In total, nearly \$1.8 million in workers' compensation benefits were paid during 1924.

However, commission members feared that young children, especially newborn babies, would not be provided for down the road.

"When these (newborn) babies reach 8, they'll still be dependents and benefits will cease," the report said.

The Legislature, which has revised workers' compensation laws several times since the 1924 incident, has since made provision for dependents to receive payments until they are

Continued on page 23



This diagram shows how the water from Foley Lake broke through sides of the Milford Mine and quickly filled its layers. In all, 41 men were killed in the mine collapse, the worst mining tragedy up to that time.

In the maelstrom of innuendo, rumor, and public outrage at the time, Governor J.A.O. Preus appointed a commission of mining officials to sort out the details. They determined no one could have anticipated the accident, the mine owners were not at fault, and ben-

State Industrial Commission and with area miners to discuss safety.

And the commission proposed that the Legislature appropriate \$5,000 annually for safety education and that county boards increase pay for mine inspectors to put it more in line with

Minnesota House of Representatives 2000 Members

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-
49A Abeler, Jim (R)	581	1729	33A Lindner, Arlon (R)	417	7806
45A Abrams, Ron (R)	585	9934	47A Luther, Darlene (DFL)	371	3751
19B Anderson, Bruce (R)	411	5063	67A Mahoney, Tim (DFL)	223	4277
3A Anderson, Irv (DFL)	343	4936	55A Mares, Harry (R)	401	5363
6A Bakk, Thomas (Tom) (DFL)	345	2190	65B Mariani, Carlos (DFL)	209	9714
59A Biernat, Len (DFL)	303	4219	57B Marko, Sharon (DFL)	221	3135
30B Bishop, Dave (R)	453	0573	55B McCollum, Betty (DFL)	239	1188
25B Boudreau, Lynda (R)	473	8237	36B McElroy, Dan (R)	437	4212
30A Bradley, Fran (R)	559	9249	54A McGuire, Mary Jo (DFL)	259	4342
53B Broecker, Sherry (R)	533	7153	39B Milbert, Bob (DFL)	243	4192
35B Buesch, Mark (R)	415	1072	35A Molnau, Carol L. (R)	443	8872
46B Carlson, Lyndon R. (DFL)	283	4255	21B Mulder, Richard (R)	515	4336
47B Carruthers, Phil (DFL)	217	3709	58A Mullery, Joe (DFL)	387	4262
10B Cassell, George (R)	421	4317	8A Murphy, Mary (DFL)	357	2676
52A Chaudhary, Satveer (DFL)	311	4331	20A Ness, Robert "Bob" (R)	509	4344
23A Clark, James T. (R)	583	9303	10A Nornes, Bud (R)	471	4946
61A Clark, Karen (DFL)	307	0294	19A Olson, Mark (R)	501	4237
11A Daggett, Roxann (R)	439	4293	16A Opatz, Joe (DFL)	279	6612
31B Davids, Gregory M. (R)	367	9278	60B Orfield, Myron (DFL)	377	9281
65A Dawkins, Andy (DFL)	215	5158	29B Oskopp, Mike (R)	449	9236
14A Dehler, Steve (R)	491	7808	66A Osthoff, Tom (DFL)	273	4224
29A Dempsey, Jerry (R)	549	8635	11B Otremba, Mary Ellen (DFL)	393	3201
27A Dorman, Dan (R)	579	8216	37A Ozment, Dennis (R)	479	4306
24A Dorn, John (DFL)	201	3248	42B Paulsen, Erik (R)	445	7449
64A Entenza, Matt (DFL)	213	8799	38B Pawlenty, Tim (R)	459	4128
42A Erhardt, Ron (R)	591	4363	64B Paymar, Michael (DFL)	211	4199
17A Erickson, Sondra (R)	407	6746	32A Pelowski Jr., Gene (DFL)	295	8637
1B Finseth, Tim (R)	517	9918	13B Peterson, Doug (DFL)	287	4228
44A Foliard, Betty (DFL)	281	3964	39A Pugh, Thomas W. (DFL)	267	6828
4A Fuller, Doug (R)	525	5516	46A Rest, Ann H. (DFL)	277	4176
36A Gerlach, Chris (R)	531	5506	28A Reuter, Doug (IND)	567	5368
63B Gleason, Mark S. (DFL)	313	5375	44B Rhodes, Jim (R)	409	9889
9A Goodno, Kevin (R)	563	5515	32B Rifenberg, Michelle (R)	423	1069
58B Gray, Gregory (DFL)	229	8659	18A Rostberg, Jim (R)	545	5364
62A Greenfield, Lee (DFL)	207	0173	5A Rukavina, Tom (DFL)	375	0170
54B Greiling, Mindy (DFL)	253	5387	17B Schumacher, Leslie J. (DFL)	327	5377
26A Gunther, Bob (R)	379	3240	41A Seagren, Alice (R)	477	7803
52B Haake, Barb (R)	429	0141	57A Seifert, Jim (R)	577	7807
48A Haas, Bill (R)	569	5513	21A Seifert, Marty (R)	593	5374
50A Hackbarth, Tom (R)	575	2439	2B Skoe, Rod (DFL)	321	4265
22B Harder, Elaine (R)	487	5373	62B Skoglund, Wes (DFL)	251	4330
12A Hasskamp, Kris (DFL)	353	4333	34A Smith, Steve (R)	503	9188
66B Hausman, Alice (DFL)	245	3824	3B Solberg, Loren A. (DFL)	309	2365
8B Hilty, Bill (DFL)	241	4308	33B Stanek, Rich (R)	543	5502
37B Holberg, Mary Liz (R)	433	6926	14B Stang, Doug (R)	597	4373
56A Holsten, Mark William (R)	381	3018	24B Storm, Julie (R)	527	7065
4B Howes, Larry (R)	431	2451	28B Sviggum, Steve (R)	463	2273
6B Huntley, Thomas (DFL)	351	2228	7A Swapinski, Dale (DFL)	331	4282
7B Jaros, Mike (DFL)	291	4246	23B Swenson, Howard (R)	539	8634
18B Jennings, Loren Geo (DFL)	237	0518	43B Sykora, Barb (R)	403	4315
48B Johnson, Alice M. (DFL)	349	5510	50B Tingelstad, Kathy (R)	507	5369
15A Juhnke, Al (DFL)	329	6206	5B Tomassoni, David J. (DFL)	233	0172
59B Kahn, Phyllis (DFL)	255	4257	67B Trimble, Steve (DFL)	289	4201
26B Kalis, Henry J. (DFL)	317	4240	25A Tuma, John (R)	369	4229
60A Kelliher, Margaret Anderson (DFL)	231	0171	1A Tunheim, Jim (DFL)	335	9635
20B Kielkucki, Tony (R)	521	1534	34B Van Dellen, Henry Todd (R)	571	5511
16B Knoblach, Jim (R)	451	6316	51B Vandevier, Ray (R)	529	4124
49B Koskinen, Luanne (DFL)	301	4231	63A Wagenius, Jean (DFL)	227	4200
53A Krinkie, Philip (R)	365	2907	61B Wejcman, Linda (DFL)	203	7152
15B Kubly, Gary W. (DFL)	315	4346	12B Wenzel, Stephen G. (DFL)	389	4247
31A Kuisle, William (R)	565	4378	51A Westerberg, Andrew (R)	523	4226
56B Larsen, Peg (R)	551	4244	9B Westfall, Robert L. (Bob) (R)	553	6829
40A Larson, Dan (DFL)	225	7158	13A Westrom, Torrey (R)	557	4929
27B Leighton, Rob (DFL)	261	4193	38A Wilkin, Tim (R)	413	3533
40B Lenczewski, Ann (DFL)	337	4218	22A Winter, Ted (DFL)	247	5505
45B Leppik, Peggy (R)	485	7026	41B Wolf, Ken (R)	359	5185
2A Lieder, Bernie L. (DFL)	323	5091	43A Workman, Tom (R)	537	5066

Note: Room numbers are subject to change.

List as of March 2, 2000

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

Minnesota Senate 2000 Members

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-
66 Anderson, Ellen R. (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	5537	8 Lourey, Becky (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	0293
41 Belanger Jr, William V. (R)	113 SOB	5975	54 Marty, John (DFL)	326 Cap.	5645
13 Berg, Charles A. (IND)	G-51 SOB	5094	39 Metzner, James P. (DFL)	303 Cap.	4370
61 Berglin, Linda (DFL)	309 Cap.	4261	2 Moe, Roger D. (DFL)	208 Cap.	2577
48 Betzold, Don (DFL)	306 Cap.	2556	29 Murphy, Steve (DFL)	301 Cap.	4264
64 Cohen, Richard J. (DFL)	317 Cap.	5931	25 Neuville, Thomas M. (R)	123 SOB	1279
28 Day, Dick (R)	147 SOB	9457	52 Novak, Steven G. (DFL)	322 Cap.	4334
20 Dille, Steve (R)	103 SOB	4131	43 Oliver, Edward C. (R)	121 SOB	4837
14 Fischbach, Michelle L. (R)	15 SOB	2084	34 Olson, Gen (R)	119 SOB	1282
62 Flynn, Carol (DFL)	120 Cap.	4274	19 Ourada, Mark (R)	145 SOB	5981
49 Foley, Leo (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	4154	65 Pappas, Sandra L. (DFL)	120 Cap.	1802
23 Frederickson, Dennis R. (R)	139 SOB	8138	37 Pariseau, Pat (R)	109 SOB	5252
50 Hanson, Paula E. (DFL)	328 Cap.	3219	27 Piper, Pat (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	9248
58 Higgins, Linda I. (DFL)	227 Cap.	9246	59 Pogemiller, Lawrence J. (DFL)	235 Cap.	7809
24 Hottinger, John C. (DFL)	120 Cap.	6153	57 Price, Leonard R. (DFL)	235 Cap.	297-8060
5 Janezich, Jerry R. (DFL)	328 Cap.	8017	63 Ranum, Jane B. (DFL)	306 Cap.	297-8061
40 Johnson, Dave (DFL)	111 Cap.	9261	18 Ring, Twyla (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	5419
15 Johnson, Dean E. (DFL)	124 Cap.	3826	45 Robertson, Martha R. (R)	125 SOB	4314
6 Johnson, Douglas J. (DFL)	205 Cap.	8881	35 Robling, Claire A. (R)	151 SOB	4123
46 Junge, Ember R. (DFL)	205 Cap.	2889	53 Runbeck, Linda (R)	107 SOB	1253
44 Kelley, Steve (DFL)	321 Cap.	297-8065	11 Sams, Dallas C. (DFL)	328 Cap.	297-8063
67 Kelly, Randy C. (DFL)	323 Cap.	5285	12 Samuelson, Don (DFL)	124 Cap.	4875
32 Kierlin, Bob (R)	127 SOB	5649	31 Scheevel, Kenric J. (R)	129 SOB	3903
4 Kinkel, Anthony G. "Tony" (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	4913	47 Scheid, Linda (DFL)	317 Cap.	8869
30 Kiscaden, Sheila M. (R)	135 SOB	4848	7 Solon, Sam G. (DFL)	303 Cap.	4188
16 Kleis, Dave (R)	143 SOB	6455	60 Spear, Allan H. (DFL)	120 Cap.	4191
36 Knutson, David L. (R)	133 SOB	4120	1 Stevens, Dan (R)	105 SOB	8075
51 Krentz, Jane (DFL)	235 Cap.	7061	17 Stumpf, LeRoy A. (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	8660
56 Laidig, Gary W. (R)	141 SOB	4351	42 Terwilliger, Roy (R)	115 SOB	6238
9 Langseth, Keith (DFL)	122 Cap.	3205	22 Vickerman, Jim (DFL)	226 Cap.	5650
10 Larson, Cal (R)	153 SOB	5655	38 Wiener, Deanna L. (DFL)	303 Cap.	297-8073
21 Lesewski, Arlene J. (R)	131 SOB	4125	55 Wiger, Charles W. (DFL)	325 Cap.	6820
3 Lessard, Bob (DFL)	111 Cap.	4136	26 Ziegler, Don (R)	149 SOB	5713
33 Limmer, Warren (R)	25 SOB	2159			

*Capitol or State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155

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1 A • Rep. Jim Tunheim-DFL B • Rep. Tim Finseth-R Sen. LeRoy A. Stumpf-DFL	15 A • Rep. Al Juhnke-DFL B • Rep. Gary W. Kubly-DFL Sen. Dean E. Johnson-DFL	29 A • Rep. Jerry Dempsey-R B • Rep. Mike Osskopp-R Sen. Steve Murphy-DFL	43 A • Rep. Tom Workman-R B • Rep. Barb Sykora-R Sen. Edward C. Oliver-R	57 A • Rep. Jim Seifert-R B • Rep. Sharon Marko-DFL Sen. Leonard R. Price-DFL
2 A • Rep. Bernie L. Lieder-DFL B • Rep. Rod Skoe-DFL Sen. Roger D. Moe-DFL	16 A • Rep. Joe Opatz-DFL B • Rep. Jim Knoblach-R Sen. Dave Kleis-R	30 A • Rep. Fran Bradley-R B • Rep. Dave Bishop-R Sen. Sheila M. Kiscaden-R	44 A • Rep. Betty Foliard-DFL B • Rep. Jim Rhodes-R Sen. Steve Kelley-DFL	58 A • Rep. Joe Mullery-DFL B • Rep. Gregory Gray-DFL Sen. Linda I. Higgins-DFL
3 A • Rep. Irv Anderson-DFL B • Rep. Loren A. Solberg-DFL Sen. Bob Lessard-DFL	17 A • Rep. Sondra Erickson-R B • Rep. Leslie J. Schumacher-DFL Sen. Dan Stevens-R	31 A • Rep. William Kuisle-R B • Rep. Gregory M. Davids-R Sen. Kenric J. Scheevel-R	45 A • Rep. Ron Abrams-R B • Rep. Peggy Leppik-R Sen. Martha R. Robertson-R	59 A • Rep. Len Biernat-DFL B • Rep. Phyllis Kahn-DFL Sen. Lawrence J. Pogemiller-DFL
4 A • Rep. Doug Fuller-R B • Rep. Larry Howes-R Sen. Anthony G. Kinkel-DFL	18 A • Rep. Jim Rostberg-R B • Rep. Loren Geo Jennings-DFL Sen. Twyla Ring-DFL	32 A • Rep. Gene Pelowski Jr.-DFL B • Rep. Michelle Rifenberg-R Sen. Bob Kierlin-R	46 A • Rep. Ann H. Rest-DFL B • Rep. Lyndon R. Carlson-DFL Sen. Ember R. Junge-DFL	60 A • Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher-DFL B • Rep. Myron Orfield-DFL Sen. Allan H. Spear-DFL
5 A • Rep. Tom Rukavina-DFL B • Rep. David J. Tomassoni-DFL Sen. Jerry R. Janezich-DFL	19 A • Rep. Mark Olson-R B • Rep. Bruce Anderson-R Sen. Mark Ourada-R	33 A • Rep. Arlon Lindner-R B • Rep. Rich Standek-R Sen. Warren Limmer-R	47 A • Rep. Darlene Luther-DFL B • Rep. Phil Carruthers-DFL Sen. Linda Scheid-DFL	61 A • Rep. Karen Clark-DFL B • Rep. Linda Wejcman-DFL Sen. Linda Berglin-DFL
6 A • Rep. Thomas (Tom) Bakk-DFL B • Rep. Thomas Huntley-DFL Sen. Douglas J. Johnson-DFL	20 A • Rep. Robert "Bob" Ness-R B • Rep. Tony Kielkucki-R Sen. Steve Dille-R	34 A • Rep. Steve Smith-R B • Rep. Henry Todd Van Dellen-R Sen. Gen Olson-R	48 A • Rep. Bill Haas-R B • Rep. Alice M. Johnson-DFL Sen. Don Betzold-DFL	62 A • Rep. Lee Greenfield-DFL B • Rep. Wes Skoglund-DFL Sen. Carol Flynn-DFL
7 A • Rep. Dale Swapinski-DFL B • Rep. Mike Jaros-DFL Sen. Sam G. Solon-DFL	21 A • Rep. Marty Seifert-R B • Rep. Richard Mulder-R Sen. Arlene J. Lesewski-R	35 A • Rep. Carol L. Molnau-R B • Rep. Mark Buegens-R Sen. Claire A. Robling-R	49 A • Rep. Jim Abeler-R B • Rep. Luanne Koskinen-DFL Sen. Leo Foley-DFL	63 A • Rep. Jean Wagenius-DFL B • Rep. Mark S. Gleason-DFL Sen. Jane B. Ranum-DFL
8 A • Rep. Mary Murphy-DFL B • Rep. Bill Hilty-DFL Sen. Becky Lourey-DFL	22 A • Rep. Ted Winter-DFL B • Rep. Elaine Harder-R Sen. Jim Vickerman-DFL	36 A • Rep. Chris Gerlach-R B • Rep. Dan McElroy-R Sen. David L. Knutson-R	50 A • Rep. Tom Hackbarth-R B • Rep. Kathy Tingelstad-R Sen. Paula E. Hanson-DFL	64 A • Rep. Matt Entenza-DFL B • Rep. Michael Paymar-DFL Sen. Richard J. Cohen-DFL
9 A • Rep. Kevin Goodno-R B • Rep. Robert L. (Bob) Westfall-R Sen. Keith Langseth-DFL	23 A • Rep. James T. Clark-R B • Rep. Howard Swenson-R Sen. Dennis R. Frederickson-R	37 A • Rep. Dennis Ozment-R B • Rep. Mary Liz Holberg-R Sen. Pat Pariseau-R	51 A • Rep. Andrew Westerberg-R B • Rep. Ray Vandever-R Sen. Jane Krentz-DFL	65 A • Rep. Andy Dawkins-DFL B • Rep. Carlos Mariani-DFL Sen. Sandra L. Pappas-DFL
10 A • Rep. Bud Nornes-R B • Rep. George Cassell-R Sen. Cal Larson-R	24 A • Rep. John Dorn-DFL B • Rep. Julie Storm-R Sen. John C. Hottinger-DFL	38 A • Rep. Tim Wilkin-R B • Rep. Tim Pawlenty-R Sen. Deanna L. Wiener-DFL	52 A • Rep. Satveer Chaudhary-DFL B • Rep. Barb Haake-R Sen. Steven G. Novak-DFL	66 A • Rep. Tom Osthoff-DFL B • Rep. Alice Hausman-DFL Sen. Ellen R. Anderson-DFL
11 A • Rep. Roxann Daggett-R B • Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba-DFL Sen. Dallas C. Sams-DFL	25 A • Rep. John Tuma-R B • Rep. Lynda Boudreau-R Sen. Thomas M. Neuville-R	39 A • Rep. Thomas W. Pugh-DFL B • Rep. Bob Milbert-DFL Sen. James P. Metzner-DFL	53 A • Rep. Philip Krinkie-R B • Rep. Sherry Broecker-R Sen. Linda Runbeck-R	67 A • Rep. Tim Mahoney-DFL B • Rep. Steve Trimble-DFL Sen. Randy C. Kelly-DFL
12 A • Rep. Kris Hasskamp-DFL B • Rep. Stephen G. Wenzel-DFL Sen. Don Samuelson-DFL	26 A • Rep. Bob Gunther-R B • Rep. Henry J. Kalis-DFL Sen. Don Ziegler-R	40 A • Rep. Dan Larson-DFL B • Rep. Ann Lenczewski-DFL Sen. Dave Johnson-DFL	54 A • Rep. Mary Jo McGuire-DFL B • Rep. Mindy Greiling-DFL Sen. John Marty-DFL	
13 A • Rep. Torrey Westrom-R B • Rep. Doug Peterson-DFL Sen. Charles A. Berg-IND	27 A • Rep. Dan Dorman-R B • Rep. Rob Leighton-DFL Sen. Pat Piper-DFL	41 A • Rep. Alice Seagren-R B • Rep. Ken Wolf-R Sen. William V. Belanger Jr.-R	55 A • Rep. Harry Mares-R B • Rep. Betty McCollum-DFL Sen. Charles W. Wiger-DFL	
14 A • Rep. Steve Dehler-R B • Rep. Doug Stang-R Sen. Michelle L. Fischbach-R	28 A • Rep. Doug Reuter-IND B • Rep. Steve Sviggum-R Sen. Dick Day-R	42 A • Rep. Ron Erhardt-R B • Rep. Erik Paulsen-R Sen. Roy Terwilliger-R	56 A • Rep. Mark William Holsten-R B • Rep. Peg Larsen-R Sen. Gary W. Laidig-R	

Monday, Feb. 28

**HF3904—Tomassoni (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance**
St. Louis County nursing home bed moratorium exception provided and money appropriated.

**HF3905—Harder (R)
Taxes**
S corporations federal tax treatment conformity provided.

**HF3906—Sykora (R)
Family & Early Childhood
Education Finance**
Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) social service child care pool created, intensive English as a second language (ESL) grants authorized, transition year family uninterupted child care assistance provided, and money appropriated.

**HF3907—Molnau (R)
Taxes**
Department of Transportation Trunk Highway fund sales tax exemption provided.

**HF3908—Erhardt (R)
Taxes**
Anatomical gift checkoff created for income tax returns and property tax refund claim forms, and money appropriated.

**HF3909—Erhardt (R)
Taxes**
Levy limit exemption provided to cities not receiving local government aid.

**HF3910—Erhardt (R)
Taxes**
Wage withholding taxes abolished and estimated tax payments authorized.

**HF3911—Schumacher (DFL)
Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**
County water implementation tax levy and base grant increased, local water planning and exotic plant control grants provided, and money appropriated.

**HF3912—Stang (R)
K-12 Education Finance**
School district capital loan pupil per grade condition eliminated.

**HF3913—McGuire (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood
Education Finance**
Citizenship promotion program continued and money appropriated.

**HF3914—Workman (R)
Local Government &
Metropolitan Affairs**
Shorewood replacement service transit program authorized.

**HF3915—Winter (DFL)
Taxes**
Agricultural processing facility construction materials and equipment sales and use tax exemption provided.

**HF3916—Erhardt (R)
Taxes**
Sales tax rebate provided and money appropriated.

**HF3917—Erhardt (R)
Commerce**
Telephone and telecommunications companies required to notify neighboring landowners prior to equipping tower construction.

**HF3918—Dempsey (R)
Health & Human Services Policy**
Minneapolis and Hastings veterans homes transitional housing programs established to assist homeless and disabled veterans.

**HF3919—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy**
Physician contested case hearings standard of proof modified, physicians provided information on investigation processes, board of medicine discipline procedures studied, and money appropriated.

**HF3920—Davids (R)
Local Government &
Metropolitan Affairs**
Fountain tax increment financing district duration extension authorized.

**HF3921—Koskinen (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy**
Non-governmental pharmaceutical contracting alliance provisions modified, prescription drug price disclosures required, and money appropriated.

**HF3922—Lenczewski (DFL)
Taxes**
Specified contiguous commercial-industrial parcels property tax definition modified.

**HF3923—Haas (R)
Ways & Means**
Performance-based state budget study commission established and recommendations required.

**HF3924—Knoblach (R)
Capital Investment**
Public regional park grants authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

**HF3925—Tomassoni (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance**
Northland learning center start-up grant authorized and money appropriated.

**HF3926—Rhodes (R)
Jobs & Economic
Development Finance**
Minnesota Shubert arts and education center created in Minneapolis, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

**HF3927—Gunther (R)
Jobs & Economic
Development Finance**
Minnesota Technology, Inc. appropriation provided for Minnesota Project Innovation, Inc.

**HF3928—Gleason (DFL)
Local Government &
Metropolitan Affairs**
Richfield airport impact tax zone expenditures reimbursed by the Metropolitan Airports Commission and federal law requirements repealed.

**HF3929—Otremba (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance**
Todd County nursing facility medical assistance rate adjustment provided and money appropriated.

**HF3930—Dawkins (DFL)
Taxes**
Capital region watershed district authorized to exceed levy limits.

**HF3931—Holsten (R)
Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**
Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) police and fire fund survivor benefits provided for a specified spouse.

**HF3932—Koskinen (DFL)
Higher Education Finance**
Board of Technical Colleges established, authority transferred from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), study required, and money appropriated.

**HF3933—Tomassoni (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy**
Nursing home administrator option expanded.

**HF3934—Mariani (DFL)
Jobs & Economic
Development Finance**
Transitional and affordable housing rehabilitated, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

**HF3935—Wenzel (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance**
Independent School District No. 482, Little Falls, full-day kindergarten programs appropriated money.

**HF3936—Larsen, P. (R)
Local Government &
Metropolitan Affairs**
Metropolitan government task force created and recommendations required.

**HF3937—Trimble (DFL)
State Government Finance**
Marriage license fee reduced and distribution modified.

**HF3938—Daggett (R)
Jobs & Economic
Development Finance**
Becker County tourism project grant authorized and money appropriated.

**HF3939—Cassell (R)
Higher Education Finance**
Part-time student grants-in-aid provisions modified.

**HF3940—Mariani (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood
Education Finance**
Early Childhood Family Education state aid increased and money appropriated.

**HF3941—Daggett (R)
Environment &
Natural Resources Policy**
Solid waste management tax revenues use for management activities required.

**HF3942—Jennings (DFL)
Commerce**
Minneapolis hotels on-sale liquor dispensing exemption provided and extended hours for sale provided.

**HF3943—Paymar (DFL)
Transportation Policy**
Pedestrian control signal display periods prescribed, intersection right-of-way clarified, safety awareness campaign grants provided, and money appropriated.

**HF3944—Ness (R)
Agriculture &
Rural Development Finance**
Farm marketing plan software developed and money appropriated.

**HF3945—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy**
Agroforestry loan program established and money appropriated.

**HF3946—Ness (R)
Taxes**
McLeod County Courthouse construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

**HF3947—Kuisle (R)
Agriculture Policy**
Poultry producer mediation and binding arbitration options provided.

**HF3948—Broecker (R)
Family & Early Childhood
Education Finance**
Eritrean Community Center grant provided and money appropriated.

HF3949—Broecker (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Minor employee age certification alternative form provided.

HF3950—Broecker (R)
Crime Prevention
Criminal and juvenile justice database access authorized for criminal defense purposes.

HF3951—Osthoff (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
St. Paul Civic Center Authority added to Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) privatization pension benefits.

HF3952—Ozment (R)
Ways & Means
Community service injury claims against the state payments provided and money appropriated.

HF3953—Carlson (DFL)
Taxes
Higher education expenses income tax subtraction and credit provided.

HF3954—Knoblach (R)
Transportation Policy
Rail service improvement loan interest requirements established.

HF3955—Mullery (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Health maintenance organization medical directors required, liability established, annual utilization review requirements established, review criteria disclosure required, and practice of medicine definition modified.

HF3956—Mullery (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medically necessary care defined for health plans.

HF3957—Hasskamp (DFL)
Taxes
Golf course market value increases limited.

HF3958—Hilty (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Snowmobile trail grooming equipment expenses reimbursed with snowmobile grants-in-aid funds.

HF3959—Murphy (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
MinnesotaCare coverage purchase by small employers for eligible employees authorized and small employer alternative health benefit plan pilot project repealed.

HF3960—Nornes (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Policy
Workers' compensation indemnity provision modified.

HF3961—Chaudhary (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
School district building lease levy expanded to include technology-related improvements.

HF3962—Westrom (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metro Mobility transit system report required.

HF3963—Abeler (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Anoka authorized to issue an on-sale liquor license for the Lyric Arts Theater.

HF3964—Wilkin (R)
Commerce
Comprehensive health association eligibility and coverage modified, and premium rates study required.

HF3965—Seagren (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School district consolidation transition revenue program timeline clarified.

HF3966—Carruthers (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Hospitals, nursing facilities, and intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation (ICF/MRs) automatic annual inflation adjustments provided; and additional rate increase provided.

HF3967—Vandevveer (R)
Transportation Finance
Passenger automobile registration tax credit provided.

Wednesday, March 1

HF3968—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Interstate highway rights-of-way telecommunications access provisions modified.

HF3969—Bakk (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Beaver Bay authorized to impose an additional sales and use tax, and use of revenues specified.

HF3970—Fuller (R)
Higher Education Finance
Bemidji State University American Indian history center construction deadline extended and money appropriated.

HF3971—Fuller (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Bemidji elected official allowable service credit purchase in the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) authorized.

HF3972—Schumacher (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
School district declining aid replacement of marginal cost funding provided, and metropolitan and Greater Minnesota districts equity revenue equalized.

HF3973—Kelliher (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Genetically engineered food labeling required for sale, and civil penalties and remedies provided.

HF3974—Paulsen (R)
Commerce
Duluth authorized to issue an on-sale liquor license to the Lake Superior Center Authority.

HF3975—McCullum (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Annual environmental quality report to the public required.

HF3976—Jaros (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Public transit operating assistance provisions modified.

HF3977—Sviggum (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Post-secondary enrollment students district notification requirement modified.

HF3978—Reuter (Ind.)
Transportation Policy
Marked interstate highways I-35W and I-394 high occupancy lane restrictions prohibited.

HF3979—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, trades personnel authorized to elect an exclusion from Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) plan coverage.

HF3980—Mullery (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
At-risk youth out-of-wedlock pregnancy prevention grants established and money appropriated.

HF3981—Broecker (R)
Crime Prevention
Court-imposed fines, fees, and surcharges studied.

HF3982—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Governmental subdivision levy limit adjustment appeals procedure provided.

HF3983—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Predatory offender registration law retroactive application provided and registration provisions modified.

HF3984—Paymar (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Mentally ill and punitively segregated inmates prison release practices studied, advisory task force created, and report required.

HF3985—Rukavina (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Taconite referendum fund payments to school districts increased, distributions modified, taconite relief area schools provided enhanced pairing cooperation and combination aid, and money appropriated.

HF3986—Pawlenty (R)
Civil Law
State agency and statewide system use of public data on individuals restricted.

HF3987—Pawlenty (R)
Taxes
Individual income tax adoption credit authorized.

HF3988—McGuire (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Presentence investigations authorized to be conducted after a guilty plea or conviction.

HF3989—Vandevveer (R)
Taxes
Individual income tax marriage penalty credit modified.

HF3990—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Individual income tax personal and dependent exemption, and refundable child credit authorized.

HF3991—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Traumatic brain injury waiver study required.

HF3992—Mulder (R)
Taxes
Lincoln County agricultural and homestead credit and adjustments provided, and money appropriated.

HF3993—Molnau (R)
Transportation Finance
Trunk highway system improvements provided, bonds issued, gasoline tax rate adjusted annually, and money appropriated.

HF3994—Van Dellen (R)
Transportation Policy
High-occupancy vehicle lane use by other vehicles required.

HF3995—Abeler (R)
Higher Education Finance
University of Minnesota Department of Psychiatry early riser program appropriated money.

HF3996—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Taking bear with dogs authorized.

HF3997—McGuire (DFL)
Civil Law
Combined jurisdiction program established.

HF3998—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Metropolitan Transit police search warrants authorized, restricted use of part-time peace officers eliminated, and unlawful interference with a transit operator crime modified.

HF3999—Clark, K. (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Ovarian cancer screening health plan coverage required.

HF4000—Pawlenty (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Hennepin County light-rail transit spending voter approval required.

HF4001—Hilty (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Family service collaboratives appropriated money for coordinator and director salaries.

HF4002—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Individual income tax dependent exemption authorized and working family credit increased.

HF4003—Murphy (DFL)
Taxes
Cloquet authorized to impose an additional sales and use tax.

HF4004—Haake (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School district pupil units modified.

HF4005—Gerlach (R)
Taxes
Indoor youth hockey arena construction materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF4006—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Temporary census employee income excluded from public assistance eligibility determinations.

Thursday, March 2

HF4007—Rest (DFL)
Taxes
Failure to pay tax civil penalty modified.

HF4008—Smith (R)
Civil Law
District court appellate jurisdiction eliminated after statutory appeal period.

HF4009—Goodno (R)
Taxes
Local government aid payments to cities increased.

HF4010—Jennings (DFL)
Taxes
Ski area machinery and equipment sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF4011—Rifenberg (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Small school enhanced equity revenue component added to general education revenue.

HF4012—Holberg (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Lakeville All Saints campus improved, Lakeville area arts center established, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF4013—Westfall (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Agroforestry loan program established and administered by the rural finance authority, and money appropriated.

HF4014—Chaudhary (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Grade six pupil units increased and revenue reserved for young adolescent programs.

HF4015—McCollum (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Regional treatment center cemetery grave marker numbers replaced with names of individuals.

HF4016—Larsen, P. (R)
Education Policy
Teacher training no interest loan program established, rulemaking provided, and money appropriated.

HF4017—Koskinen (DFL)
Civil Law
Motor vehicle registration federal data privacy regulation conformity provided.

HF4018—Winter (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Freedom to Farm: Congress memorialized to repeal and rewrite the Freedom to Farm Act.

HF4019—Trimble (DFL)
Commerce
Exclusive liquor store wine tastings authorized and restrictions specified.

HF4020—Molnau (R)
Transportation Finance
Intergovernmental cooperative facilities loan fund established, and transportation revolving loan fund and state trunk highway construction projects appropriated money.

HF4021—Reuter (Ind.)
Commerce
Sunday sales of motor vehicles prohibition not to apply to processing orders via the Internet.

HF4022—Jennings (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Pine City nursing facility property-related per diem payment rate increased.

HF4023—Juhnke (DFL)
Transportation Policy
State highway routing consent requirement extended to include specified towns.

HF4024—Knoblach (R)
Taxes
Local government aid to eligible towns temporarily increased.

HF4025—McElroy (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Board of Boxing sunset provided, federal conformity provided, and money appropriated.

HF4026—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Drainage projects external funding sources authorized.

HF4027—Gunther (R)
Commerce
Cosmetology and barbering regulation merged under one board, and name changed to the board of barbering and cosmetologist examiners.

HF4028—Anderson, B. (R)
Taxes
Buffalo additional sales, use, and excise taxes authorized, and bonds issued for the purposes of health and education center improvements.

HF4029—Howes (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Federal Dam sewer project completed and money appropriated.

Continued from page 18

18, and sometimes longer if the child is a college student or is disabled.

Indemnity and medical payments under Minnesota workers' compensation equaled \$732 million in 1998, according to the state department of labor and industry. Those figures do not include the special compensation fund or total system costs.

As a result of the accident, mining officials began to examine the contemporary mining practices. In the commission report, officials said mining in swampy land posed tremendous danger. They suggested that extra precautions should be taken before mining operations are conducted under any swamp.

Though state laws were enacted to make sure open mines were properly fenced and safeguarded, it does not appear state legisla-

tors addressed the commission's other concerns raised by the Milford disaster. A search of law books for the sessions in the years immediately following the accident do not show any specific mining safety measures.

In 1988, a law requiring that county boards pay for the safety expenses for mine inspectors went on the books.

Safety standards are governed in large part by the federal government now. The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, which created OSHA, requires various inspections for the safety and welfare of both employees and the public.

In addition, a 1977 federal law creating the Mine Safety and Health Administration requires the individual mining companies to conduct safety training for new miners and

provide a refresher course for all other employees each year.

Minnesota industry leaders and mine inspectors also conduct various kinds of public information sessions about mines and mine safety whenever requested.

Today, only the Mesabi Range, which stretches through Itasca, St. Louis, and Lake counties in northeastern Minnesota, has active iron ore mines. Both the Vermilion and Cuyuna ranges were abandoned nearly 30 years ago, and many of the old mines on those ranges are state parks or recreation areas today.

The industry on the Iron Range is seeing some new growth. Last session, the Legislature approved \$20 million in funds for a steel mill project. 

Schedule is subject to change.
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 To have the House committee schedule delivered to your e-mail address, send an e-mail message to join-houseschedule@ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us or direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/scripts/lyris.pl?join=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

MONDAY, March 6

7:30 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: HF3048 (Nornes) New medical assistance case-mix system based on federal minimum data set transition time lines provided; and education, training, and report required.
 HF3188 (Tingelstad) Special transportation services medical assistance reimbursement study required.
 HF3212 (Tingelstad) Home care and personal care provider transportation expense reimbursement studied.
 HF3064 (Jaros) St. Louis County nursing home renovation approval deadline extended and rate setting modified.
 HF3193 (Fuller) Beltrami County Hospital construction moratorium exception provided.
 HF1769 (Abeler) Senior citizen drug program eligibility expanded, name changed to prescription drug program, and prescription drug patient assistance programs information provided to physicians.
 HF537 (Boudreau) Complementary and alternative health care freedom of access act adopted.
 Tentative: HF3450 Health and Human Services part of the deficiency bill.

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: HF3697 (Larsen, P.) Emergency motor vehicle dealers provided licensing requirement exemption.
 HF2995 (Fuller) DWI; driving while impaired crimes and provisions recodified and simplified.
 HF3200 (Stanek) Driver's license photograph access allowed to businesses for fraud prevention purposes.
 HF3091 (Tomassoni) Motor vehicles driven in the right-hand lane requirement clarified, exceptions provided, and money appropriated.

10 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: HF2945 (Sykora) Safe place for newborns; immunity and anonymity provided for leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms, and procedures established.
 HF3103 (Sykora) Excluded adult foster care provider right to seek licensure established, tribal licensing agencies provided access to criminal history data, and county agency tort liability licensing exception clarified.
 HF3613 (Holberg) Claims against the state limited relating to losses involving the operation of a recreational vehicle on a trunk highway right-of-way.
 HF3300 (Boudreau) Community action, Head Start, and food shelf data classification provided; child care program provisions modified; and learning readiness program plan submission requirement modified.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: HF3046 (Holsten) Resident and nonresident hunting and fishing license fees modified.
Note: There will be no meeting on Wednesday, March 8.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: University of Minnesota Medical School presentation.
 HF3092 (Opatz) Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) issued revenue bonds aggregate principal amount increased, and bond requirements clarified.
 Additional bills to be added.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF3120 (Abeler) Charter schools and nonresident districts not to receive referendum equalization aid.
 HF3763 (Abeler) Area learning center establishment criteria modified.
 HF3162 (Buesgens) Charter school sponsors expanded to include charitable organizations,

and parents included in charter school board majority.
 HF3800 (Seagren) Charter school provisions modified and money appropriated.
 HF3098 (Leppik) School district training and experience revenue phaseout restricted.
 HF3585 (Biernat) K-12 education finance appropriations provided.
 HF2155 (Vandever) Elementary school supplemental literacy program grants provided and money appropriated.
 HF2737 (Solberg) Municipalities and veterans' organizations authorized to donate to all public school programs and facilities.
 HF2311 (Winter) Independent School District No. 417, Tracy, levy authority provided.
 HF2312 (Winter) Independent School District No. 417, Tracy, operating debt reduction grant provided, and money appropriated.
 HF3965 (Seagren) School district consolidation transition revenue program timeline clarified.
 HF3359 (Ness) Uniform minimum length of school year established.
 HF2753 (Skoe) Three additional days of student instruction mandate funding provided and money appropriated.
 HF3961 (Chaudhary) School district building lease levy expanded to include technology leasing and technology-related improvements.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HF3782 (Westerberg) Private noncommercial aircraft storage hangars on leased airport land property tax exemption provided and classification specified.
 HF3453 (Daggett) Economic development property tax exemption time period extended.
 HF3922 (Lenczewski) Specified contiguous commercial-industrial parcels property tax definition modified.
 Additional bills may be added.
Note: There will be no meeting on Wednesday, March 8.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: HF2760 (Abeler) Adults with disabilities pilot programs reinstated and money appropriated.
 HF3104 (Sykora) Churches and religious organizations authorized to operate child day care programs, and adherence to group and family day care rules required.
 HF2959 (Sykora) Experienced child care aides authorized to work without direct supervision for part of the day.
 HF3730 (McGuire) Child care staff retention initiative created and money appropriated.
 HF3913 (McGuire) Citizenship promotion program continued and money appropriated.
 HF3906 (Sykora) Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) social service child care pool created, intensive English as a Second Language (ESL) grants authorized, transition year family uninterrupted child care assistance provided, and

money appropriated.
Discussion of forecast and targets.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen
Agenda: To be announced.

Regulated Industries Subcommittee/ COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf
Agenda: To be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

5 p.m. Departure

Joint JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE/ FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

Depart from State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Dan McElroy, Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Tour to Minneapolis homeless shelters.

TUESDAY, March 7

7:30 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley
Agenda: HF3226 (Nornes) Nursing home survey process procedure developed.
HF3477 (Mulder) Speech language pathology services medical assistance reimbursement clarified.
HF3626 (Mulder) Psychologist supervisory and disciplinary requirements modified.
HF3342 (Mariani) Foster care agency and foster parent requirements for children who rely on medical equipment to sustain life or monitor a medical condition provided.

8 a.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner
Agenda: HF3584 (Lindner); SF3354 (Novak) Manufactured homes limited dealer license requirements clarified.
HF3285 (Lindner); SF2812 (Higgins) Wage payment provisions modified, and employers prohibited from charging employees or applicants for background checks and specified training.
HF3146 (Skoe); SF2994 (Moe) Tribally owned housing and housing development projects subject to shelter charges.
Bills may be added.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker
Agenda: HF3029 (Dempsey) Per diem cost of housing juveniles to be shared by counties and the Department of Corrections.
HF3422 (Dempsey) Delinquent juveniles and juveniles convicted of crimes confined at same

facility, and per diem cost of confinement set at Minnesota Correctional Facility - Red Wing.
HF3346 (Stanek) Criminal and juvenile justice information policy group membership modified, technology infrastructure improvements authorized, and money appropriated.
HF2503 (Carruthers) Misdemeanor and petty misdemeanor offenses provided increased maximum fines.
HF1571 (Harder) Covenant marriages provided.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkle
Agenda: HF3000 (Seifert, M.) Administrative rules sunset provided, governmental operations committees authorized to formally object to rules, proposed rule reviews modified, and rules task force created.
HF2745 (Stanek) DWI; repeat DWI offenders provided felony penalties, and incarceration and intensive probation supervision sentencing required.
Other bills will be added.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek
Agenda: HF2830 (Clark, K.) Criminal penalties enhanced for pimps and patrons of juvenile prostitution, programs established to train officers relating to prostitution and to provide shelter and counseling to youth at risk, and money appropriated.
HF3319 (Jennings) Driver education programs combined with public safety responsibilities, automobile liability judgment satisfaction regulated, ignition interlock pilot program repealed and driver's license renewal provisions modified.
Other bills to be announced.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares
Agenda: To be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment
Agenda: SF2857; HF3134 (Ozment) Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission authority to enter specified state lands limited.
SF4; HF1070 (Howes) Resident lifetime game and fish licenses provided, trust fund established, fees imposed, and report required.
SF3283; HF3555 (Westerberg) Snowmobile metal traction device sticker requirement civil enforcement provided.
Note: Agenda items not completed will be heard on Thursday, March 9 at 10 a.m. in 10 State Office Building.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HF3043 (Abrams) Tax information sample data study provided and specified tax preparers authorized to file electronically.
HF3087 (Abrams) Nonprofit motor vehicle purchases and leases sales and use tax, and motor vehicle sales tax exemption provided.

HF3593 (Dorman) Solid waste management tax rates reduced and automatic adjustment provided.
HF3620 (Rest) Property tax refund amounts adjusted.
HF3702 (Harder) Federal alcohol fuel credit subtraction from individual income and corporate franchise taxes authorized.
HF3709 (Rukavina) Independent School District No. 2154, Eveleth-Gilbert, joint recreation board tax levy authorized.

Note from the speaker's office

In order to accommodate those representatives who wish to attend their precinct caucuses, there will be no House committee meetings from 12 noon on Tuesday, March 7 to 12 noon on Wednesday, March 8. Also, there will be no House committee meetings on Saturday, March 11.

12:30 p.m.

Anoka County Delegation

546 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Kathy Tingelstad,
Rep. Satveer Chaudhary
Agenda: To be announced.

WEDNESDAY, March 8

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth
Agenda: HF1142 (Rostberg) Animal cruelty provisions modified, and criminal penalties imposed.
HF3482 (Juhnke) Department of Agriculture principal offices required to be located outside the metropolitan area.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Committee omnibus bill.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen
Agenda: To be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

Immediately Following Session

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Room to be announced
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

4 p.m.

CIVIL LAW

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: HF47 (Bishop) Domestic abuse victim civil cause of action provided.
HF1267 (Pawlenty) Economic loss arising from the sale of goods provisions established related to the Uniform Commercial Code.
HF3997 (McGuire) Second Judicial District combined jurisdiction program established.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: HF3286 (Knoblach) Respite care for family adult foster care providers legislative proposals developed.

HF2967 (Seifert, J) Health care facilities specified employees wage increase provided and money appropriated.

HF2837 (Boudreau) Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program use required to verify immigration status of applicants for child care assistance and human services assistance.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF3674 (Sviggum) Student discipline reasonable force by teachers and other district employees authorized.

HF2629 (Tingelstad) K-12 educational facilities indoor air quality standards provided.

HF3451 (Mulder) Special education program contracts between private facilities and education entities provided.

HF2653 (Smith) Public school student conduct policy components modified.

HF2817 (Sykora) Number of children diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) who are taking amphetamine prescription drugs determined, and money appropriated.

HF3542 (Kuisle) School district property tax equity provided and money appropriated.

HF3745 (Mulder) Independent School District No. 404, Lake Benton, fund balance penalty reimbursement grant authorized and money appropriated.

HF3716 (Otremba) Independent School District No. 2170, Staples-Motley, fund transfer authorized.

HF2709 (Koskinen) Reduced class size and full-day kindergarten programs provided increased funding, and money appropriated.

HF3815 (Mahoney) School district crime-related costs levy increased.

HF1804 (Folliard) Licensed K-12 teacher staff development training opportunities and additional salary provided.

HF3925 (Tomassoni) Northland Learning Center start-up grant authorized and money appropriated.

HF3831 (Schumacher) School district small school revenue created, formula provided, and money appropriated.

6 p.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: To be announced, if needed.

THURSDAY, March 9

7:30 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF2519 (Bradley) MinnesotaCare notice period reduced for persons ineligible due to income limits and private health insurance coverage information requirement expanded.

HF3537 (Bradley) Downsized or closed nursing facilities special rate adjustment process provided, and budget neutrality required.

HF2713 (Rest) Funeral acts and services regulated, and pre-need arrangement requirements established.

Others to be announced.

8 a.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Arlon Lindner

Agenda: To be announced.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Sherry Broecker
Agenda: To be announced.

8:30 a.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF2500 (Krinkie) Light-rail transit project contract requirement language modified and usual state procurement laws explicitly required.

HFXXXX (Krinkie) State Government Finance bill.

Other bills will be added.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: HF3380 (Pawlenty) Dakota County integrated criminal justice information system pilot project created and money appropriated.

HF3553 (Holberg) Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services battered women's shelter per diem guidelines established.

Review of the Gang Strike Force 2000 Report to the Legislature.

Other bills to be announced.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: To be announced.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: SF3443; HF3692 (Kuisle) Feedlot permit provisions modified, manure applicator education and training requirements provided, and administrative penalty order requirements expanded.

SF751; HF849 (Haake) Minor and intermediate

use airports defined for metro expansion and upgrade purposes, and reliever airport sound abatement council established.

SF1279; HF730 (Rukavina) State land acquisitions limited in counties having 50 percent or more public land ownership.

Note: If necessary, the committee will recess and reconvene after session in the Basement Hearing Room.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF3757 (Abrams) Patent, trademark, and copyright drawings and documents sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3896 (Abrams) Base blocks used in metalcasting sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2608 (Westerberg) Telecommuting expenses income and franchise tax credit provided for employers.

HF3459 (Kelliher) Minneapolis downtown library construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF3946 (Ness) McLeod County courthouse construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF3915 (Winter) Agricultural processing facility construction materials and equipment sales and use tax exemption provided.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: HF3844 (Ness) Consolidated agriculture finance bill.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: To be announced.

COMMERCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF1333 (Daggett) Wood sale contracts regulated.

HF2973 (Davids) Financial institution loan charges and payments regulated, and technical changes provided.

HF2974 (Davids) National Association of Insurance Commissioners model legislation conforming state statute changes provided.

HF3610 (Goodno) Health care patient protections provided and medical clinical trials insurance coverage required.

SFXXXX (Paulsen) Omnibus local liquor bill.

HF3041 (Leppik) Paint ball guns sale, rental, discharge, and possession regulated; and criminal penalties imposed; and remedies provided.

Other bills to be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in Session.

7:30 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: HF3129 (Goodno) Medical assistance income standard increased.
HF3247 (Goodno) Nursing facilities authorized to place licensed beds on layaway status and medical assistance reimbursement adjusted.
HF3128 (Goodno) Noncompliant Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) recipient sanctions and program eligibility requirements modified.
HF3150 (McElroy) Dakota County Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) diversionary assistance pilot project established and money appropriated.

8 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: HF2745 (Stanek) DWI; repeat DWI offenders provided felony penalties, and incarceration and intensive probation supervision sentencing required.

HF3559 (Molnau) Transit system grants authorized for the public transit subsidy program, metropolitan area transit operations, rolling stock and intelligent transportation system technology, and transit hubs; and money appropriated.
HF3548 (Molnau) Commuter rail funding restricted.
HF3791 (Vandever) Trunk highway fund expenditures for light rail transit purposes prohibited.
HF3794 (Molnau) Hiawatha Avenue light rail federal funding for transit capital projects application limited.

10 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek
Agenda: HF2610 (Boudreau) Criminal vehicular operation definition expanded.
HF3950 (Broecker) Criminal and juvenile justice database access authorized for criminal defense purposes.
Other bills to be announced.
Note: The Crime Prevention committee will continue meeting in the Basement Hearing Room until the agenda is completed.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: To be announced.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: HF3357 (Folliard) School guidance and counseling incentive grant program established and money appropriated.
HF3637 (Bishop) Deferred state building maintenance financed with state budget surplus.
HF3478 (Bakk) Cook County higher education project appropriated money.
Additional bills to be added.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF3201 (Seagren) Special education funding deficiency additional revenue authorized, and money appropriated.
HF3893 (Seagren) Special education base revenue modified and money appropriated.
HF3061 (Mares) Intermediate school districts authorized to sell and issue bonds under specified conditions.
HF3313 (Kielkucki) School district equity revenue definition modified and money appropriated.
HF3912 (Stang) School district capital loan pupil per grade condition eliminated.
HF3828 (Solberg) General education revenue isolation index modified.
HF3935 (Wenzel) Independent School District No. 482, Little Falls, full-day kindergarten programs appropriated money.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: To be announced.



Eritrean-Americans from the Twin Cities area rallied on the Capitol steps Feb. 29 to call attention to the need to stop the Eritrean-Ethiopian border conflict.

When the 1999-2000 Humphrey International Fellows representing 15 countries spent a day at the Capitol, a revealing fact for some of them was how easy it is to gain access to state government.

As they toured the Capitol, one of the fellows, Fernando Batistuzzo from Brazil remarked, "Some of us cannot believe how open the state buildings are and how easy it is to talk to lawmakers."

The visiting Brazilian scholar, Batistuzzo, and his international colleagues from places such as Russia, Myanmar, Gaza, Eritrea, Peru, and Russia were reminded that Minnesota continues to be a true reflection of democracy. It is a model government executed by the U.S. Constitution back in 1787.

It is a government "by the people and for the people," including the people's right to assemble.

Reflections

On any given day when the Minnesota Legislature is in session, large numbers of groups and individuals fill the halls, members' offices, and conference rooms of the State Office Building and the Capitol.

The Capitol serves as state government's focal point and universal meeting place for the people of Minnesota; therefore it's natural for many people to come to the Capitol to demonstrate or to be heard.

Likely, a reason for the major increase in numbers of people who visit is an awareness or education about their right to personally participate in the legislative process. In the first two months of this year alone, 10,400 people have taken tours through the Historical Society's Capitol Tour Program, no doubt thanks to courses of study for students and the likelihood they'll see a high-profile governor.

More and more people are participating in state government, while others are making their cause known through their right to assemble.

Since early January, groups like the 75 members of the Minnesota Firemen's Association, 100 representatives of the Min-

nesota Farm Bureau, 700 members of AFSCME, 17 students from Valley Middle School in Apple Valley, and over 20 other special groups came to lobby.

Others came to voice their concerns through demonstrations and protests. During February, 500 members of the Minnesota State College Students' Association marched to the Capitol steps to protest tuition cuts, and support funds for building repairs. Also, some 1,300 people marched in support for the family farm.

Last year, eight protesters chained themselves to marble columns in the rotunda and to each other in opposition of the re-routing of Highway 55.

Some demonstrations can be a cause for concern to Capitol Security, but most are peaceful. Such was the rally by 500 Eritreans for Worldwide Peace and one by 75 individuals that rallied as the Coalition for Battered Women and the Coalition Against Sexual Assault.

Whether unruly or amicable, more and more Minnesotans are involved in lawmaking or having their voices heard through their right to assemble. Their presence is welcome.

— LECLAIR G. LAMBERT

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Crime in decline

Number of crimes reported in Minnesota, 1998	191,197
Crime rate (per 100,000 people)	4,046.5
Percent decline from 1997	8.3
Number of violent crimes reported, 1998	14,656
Violent crime rate (per 100,000)	310.2
Percent decline from 1997	8.2
Murders	121
Murder rate (per 100,000)	2.6
Crime rate per 100,000 people in Iowa, 1998	3,500
Percent of decline from previous year	8.3
Crime rate per 100,000 people in North Dakota, 1998	2,681
Percent of decline from previous year	1.1
Crime rate per 100,000 people in South Dakota	2,624
Percent of decline from previous year	19.1
Crime rate per 100,000 people in Wisconsin	3,543
Percent of decline from previous year	3.7
Crimes in Minnesota's metropolitan areas, 1998	150,528
Crimes in cities outside metro areas, 1998	23,333
Crimes in rural areas, 1998	17,336
Crimes in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, 1998	132,433
Violent crimes	11,285
Murders	99
Crimes in Rochester metropolitan area, 1998	3,311
Violent crimes	308
Murders	1
Crimes in St. Cloud metropolitan area, 1998	4,662
Violent crimes	247
Murders	0
Violent crimes known to police on University of Minnesota-	
Twin Cities campus, 1998	12
Property crimes	951
Violent crimes known to police on University of Minnesota-Duluth campus, 1998	0
Property crimes	117

Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports, 1998.

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SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

MARCH 10, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 6



In this issue:

JUVENILES IN ADULT COURT,

UNICAMERAL DEBATE & COVENANT MARRIAGE

HF4030-HF4088

SESSION Weekly

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On the cover: Members of the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance and Family and Early Childhood Education Finance committees tour the Simpson Shelter in South Minneapolis on March 6, where mats await the arrival of homeless people for the night.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Should juvenile offenders face adult punishment?

The future is uncertain for a bill that would require juveniles accused of certain violent crimes to be charged as adults

By CHRIS VETTER

There is trouble for a plan that would require 16- and 17-year-olds to automatically be treated as adults if they used a gun while committing certain criminal offenses.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park), stalled March 9 in the House Judiciary Finance Committee, just days after having won approval in the House Crime Prevention Committee.

Members of the Judiciary Finance Committee expressed concern about the bill's potential fiscal impact, which is estimated to be \$987,000 in fiscal year 2002 and \$1.5 million in fiscal year 2003.

"This is one of the bills that sound really good at first," said Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville).

Holberg and other members of the Judiciary Finance Committee voted to table the bill, but the measure is expected to resurface this session.

The driving force behind the bill (HF2939) is concern among some legislators about a trend toward violence among teens, specifically using firearms while committing crimes.

Under Rhodes' proposal, the teens would be treated as adults in state court if a firearm was used in a violent crime. The crimes would include offenses such as murder, manslaughter, and kidnapping. They would also include drive-by shootings, aggravated robbery, arson, and harassment or stalking.

"The message is simple and straightforward," said Bob Johnson, Anoka County attorney, in March 3 testimony before the crime prevention panel. "It says if you are 16 or older, you will be tried as an adult."

The bill is seen as a reaction to the proliferation of crimes committed by teens, Rhodes said. Currently, a person must be 18 years old to automatically be treated as an adult in court.

"We're sending a message that we won't tolerate this type of behavior," Rhodes said. "Using a firearm at that age is not appropriate."

Rhodes, who in the past has backed many school safety initiatives, said he was asked by attorneys throughout the state to carry this bill.

Johnson said county attorneys began discussing the idea last year.

"What we've been seeing, juveniles are becoming increasingly sophisticated, increasingly violent," Johnson said. "The things we're seeing now we couldn't have imagined seeing 20 or 30 years ago."

In a recent case, a juvenile — 16 years, 10 months old — fired a series of shots into a car

with several passengers, Johnson said. Amazingly, no one was injured in the shooting.

A judge placed the offender in Extended Juvenile Jurisdiction, rather than sending the case to an adult court. But Johnson said this offender should be in an adult prison rather than a juvenile facility because of the dangerous nature of the crime.

Extended Juvenile Jurisdiction is a state program for teens who have committed serious crimes. They are placed in a center for juveniles rather than being sent to prison. The program stresses teaching and rehabilitation. Teens can be placed in the program until they are 21 years old.

Dakota County Attorney James Backstrom spoke against the bill, saying it is vastly different from a proposal that county attorneys drafted during the interim. Backstrom said he would prefer that any decision to prosecute a 16-year-old juvenile as an adult be left to the prosecuting attorney.

Backstrom noted that county attorneys, too, are directly elected and they have a responsibility to the public to decide what is best for the juvenile and the community.

While Backstrom prefers the option of sending the case to adult court, the bill would automatically send the teen-ager to adult court, regardless of circumstances in the case or the juvenile's prior history.

As it is currently written, the bill would allow no flexibility to prosecute teens accused of these crimes in juvenile court.

Susan Gaertner, Ramsey County attorney,

Juveniles and firearms

Juveniles incarcerated by the Department of Corrections, 1986	135
Number under 18 certified as adults	3
Juveniles in Corrections system, 2000	131
Number under 18 certified as adults	27
Juveniles in Corrections system, 1996 (peak population)	248
Number under 18 certified as adults	31
Current juvenile population at Red Wing	128
Number of juveniles currently in Red Wing facility for firearms offenses	23
Number of juveniles in Red Wing who have committed more than one firearms offense	5

Source: Minnesota Department of Corrections



Still fighting for Floyd

Gov. Olson's friendly wager started a tradition that continues today

said the bill is poor policy because it would not allow judges and attorneys to make decisions they feel might be in the best interest of the children and families involved.

The bill does not have the support of the Minnesota County Attorney Association, Gaertner said.

"We believe the flexibility should remain to keep them in juvenile jurisdiction," Gaertner said. "It doesn't take into account certain circumstances."

The attorneys who oppose the bill gave examples about a variety of possible actions by teens that would send them to adult court.

Take, for instance, a teen who has a gun in a public place while contemplating suicide, who winds up having a standoff with police. Even if the juvenile has no prior record, the child would be treated as an adult under this bill.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) questioned if attorneys would lose some of their plea-bargaining power when these cases are automatically sent to adult court.

Prosecuting attorneys would not have to send juveniles to adult court if they did not want to, argued Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls). Skoglund said county attorneys could still determine what charges are filed, and lesser charges could put the offenders in juvenile court. And prosecutors would still have the freedom to make sentencing recommendations to the judge.

While county attorneys could intentionally "undercharge" these juveniles before the court, Gaertner said, that would set a bad precedent.

"We have worked hard to not undercharge cases, and I don't want to do that because of this bill," she said.

Gaertner noted that all the crimes in the bill feature a minimum sentence of at least three years. Judges can depart from minimum sentences, Gaertner said, but they are often criticized for such decisions.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) said legislators should not lose sight of the seriousness of these crimes.

"You may call them kids," Stanek said. "But if they're carrying a gun, they'll probably use it at some point."

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) suggested the Crime Prevention Committee change the bill to make the use of a gun an automatic adult crime on the second offense, but the proposal was rejected. 🐷

Gov. Floyd B. Olson is remembered for many things. Foremost among them, he was the first member of the Farmer-Labor Party elected governor and he was an energetic leader who invigorated Depression-era Minnesota.

A statue of Olson's likeness stands on the Capitol grounds, but it's far less famous than another statue tied forever to Olson.

Every fall victorious college football players hoist on their shoulders a statue that commemorates one of Olson's acts — a 1935 wager involving a pig and the football rivalry between the University of Minnesota and the University of Iowa.

That's right, sports fans, Floyd of Rosedale, the bronze trophy awarded to the winner of the Minnesota-Iowa football game each fall, is named after the 22nd governor of Minnesota. Sort of.

Olson hailed from Minneapolis, not Rosedale or Roseville or anything of the sort. So how did that pig get his name?

It all started in the fall of 1935. Fans in both Minnesota and Iowa were bracing themselves for the annual gridiron contest, and preparations were proving to be a little more tempestuous than normal.

The year before, a halfback for Iowa named Ozzie Simmons had been roughed up in the contest. Fans were preparing for potential payback in the 1935 game, which took place in Iowa City.

Many thought Iowa Gov. Clyde L. Herring condoned unruly behavior when he was quoted before the 1935 contest as saying, "If the officials stand for any rough tactics like Minnesota used last year, I'm sure the crowd won't."

Minnesota Attorney General H.H. Peterson wired Herring that his remarks were unsportsmanlike and contrary to his

duties as governor. As tensions rose, officials expected police protection would be necessary for the game.

In light of this swirling controversy,

Olson said publicly that he thought Herring had been misquoted. Then, he offered to bet Herring a Minnesota hog against one from Iowa on the outcome of the game.

The bet worked to diffuse the situation. Herring accepted the offer in good humor, the game

went off without a hitch, and subsequent contests became friendly rivalries.

And annual battles continue to be fought over a pig.

Minnesota won the 1935 game 13-6. Herring delivered a pig to Olson at the State Capitol in St. Paul. The pig came from Rosedale Farms near Fort Dodge, Iowa, and the prize was named Floyd after Olson. Thus the animal became "Floyd of Rosedale."

So what became of the living, breathing Floyd of Rosedale? According to the archives at the University of Minnesota, he was sold shortly after the contest for \$50 to J.B. Gjerdrum, a breeder who lived in Mabel, Minn., which is, appropriately enough, on the state's border with Iowa.

Gjerdrum had the pig about a year before the animal met its death.

Meanwhile, a bronze likeness of Floyd the pig was made for contests in 1936 and after. And each year, the two teams still battle it out for possession of Floyd of Rosedale.

The statue, which is 15-and-a-half inches high and 21 inches long, resides today in a trophy case at the University of Minnesota. The U of M beat Iowa last fall 25-21.

(M. KIBIGER)



Iowa Gov. Clyde Herring and Minnesota Gov. Floyd Olson pose with the original Floyd of Rosedale, Olson's prize for winning a wager on the Minnesota-Iowa football game in 1935.

★ **CHILDREN**

Violent video game bill stalls

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) wants to do something about video games that teach children to be violent.

Many games today teach children how to shoot and how to kill, she said in March 2 testimony before the House Commerce Committee.

McGuire is sponsoring a bill (HF3180) that would make it a misdemeanor for people to sell or rent restricted video games to children under age 17. A restricted game would be a game that has an adults only (AO) or mature (M) rating according to the Entertainment Software Rating Board.

“We regulate movies, cigarettes, and drinking,” McGuire said. “There are certain types of behavior that we think is bad for youths, and we regulate it.”

McGuire’s bill appears to have stalled for this year. The committee did not vote on the measure and is not expected to take it up again this year. McGuire said she hopes to have further discussions on the matter next year.

The Senate version of the bill failed in committee the same day.

The House committee heard from Lt. Col.



Lt. Col. David Grossman, a military psychologist and author critical of media violence, speaks before the House Commerce Committee on March 2 in favor of a bill that would prohibit the sale of violent video games to children under 17. The bill also would prohibit displaying those games in public places.

David Grossman, who wrote a book on video game violence titled *Stop Teaching Our Kids to Kill: A Call to Action Against TV, Movie and Video Game Violence*.

Grossman wrote in his book that video games not only teach kids violence, they teach them marksmanship. He contends that Michael Carneal, a boy who fired shots on his classmates in Paducah, Ky., in 1997, learned to shoot from playing video games.

The bill would forbid store owners from showing, displaying, or exhibiting restricted games. McGuire said her bill focuses on stores and not games available on the Internet because those games would be difficult to regulate.

Staff troubles in day care

Day care providers say they are struggling to retain staff and to pay decent wages. In response, several legislators are pushing bills to help these providers attract and keep employees.

The House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee considered several day care bills March 6. No action was taken on the bills.

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior) is sponsoring one such bill (HF2959), which would allow aides with at least two years of child care experience to supervise children for a portion of the day. Currently, aides with no formal training cannot monitor children without being directly supervised by a teacher.

Under the bill, aides with 4,160 hours of experience with children would be allowed to directly supervise 25 percent of a child’s day at the center.

Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka) spoke in favor of the bill, saying aides with this level of

experience would likely be the kind of people parents are already trusting to be babysitters for their kids.

The committee added an amendment to the bill that would require the child care centers to submit an annual report to the state on how many aides qualify under the bill.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) spoke against the bill, saying it does not address the main problem, which is low wages.

McGuire said the committee would not think of supporting a bill that would lower standards for elementary teachers.

Sykora responded by saying she wants to expand the pool of child care services and her intention is not to reduce quality of care.

McGuire is sponsoring a bill (HF3730) that would create a supplemental payment to child care providers who meet certain criteria.

“We have some very dedicated people in this field who don’t stay in the business because of wages,” McGuire said.

The bill would require a person to have one year of experience at a child care center and earn an hourly wage less than the equivalent of elementary teachers in the district. McGuire said providers who meet the guidelines would receive an annual supplement from the state between \$750 and \$3,500.

McGuire’s bill does not say what the total cost to the state would be.

**HOUSE
COMMITTEE
PROFILE**

**Family & Early
Childhood
Education Finance**

Chair: Sykora
(R-Excelsior)

Vice Chair: Nornes
(R-Fergus Falls)

Minority Lead: McGuire
(DFL-Falcon Heights)

Members: 12
(7 R, 5 DFL)

Scope: Committee accounts are divided into the broad topic headings of Children and Family Support; Community and Systems Change; Prevention and Intervention; and Self Sufficiency. Two major committee initiatives are child care and adult basic education.

★ **CRIME**

Farm chemical used in meth

In an effort to curb the production of methamphetamine, the House Crime Prevention Committee approved a bill March 3 that would make improper transportation or tampering with anhydrous ammonia a felony.

Methamphetamine, also known as “crystal meth” or “crank,” is a powerful synthetic drug that is known to give long-lasting highs to users. The drug is made with several common household and over-the-counter products. Anhydrous ammonia, a common fertilizer used on Minnesota farms, is used in the meth-making process.

Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison) is sponsoring a bill (HF3984) that aims to keep the chemical out of the hands of illegal drug manufacturers. The Crime Prevention Committee approved the bill and sent it to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

The chemical is valuable to farmers because of its nitrogen content. Thieves typically use small, makeshift containers to collect, store and transport the ammonia once stolen from farmers' tanks or other agricultural facilities, according to a report by the state Department of Agriculture. Anhydrous ammonia can be used both as a gas and a liquid.

Peterson said the bill is written so that it would still be legal for farmers to obtain and store the chemical.

Under the bill, illegal tampering or transporting the chemical would result in a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$50,000 fine.

Although the chemical is non-flammable, it can be extremely dangerous. Contact with the chemical can dry the skin and contact with the eye could cause blindness, according to the Agriculture Department.

Because anhydrous ammonia is corrosive, it can weaken and destroy propane tanks that were not made to store the chemical. However, thieves typically use improper storage tanks, which can lead to dangerous situations.

Creating a new information system

The House Judiciary Finance Committee considered a measure March 7 to create a system that would integrate criminal justice information statewide.

The bill (HF3346), sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), would first create a policy group to determine a framework for bringing together all the criminal justice information from the hundreds of law enforcement and social service agencies in the state.

According to the bill, once the policy group has determined what the criminal justice information system should do, what information it should include, who should maintain it and who should have access to it, the panel would submit a report to the commissioner of public safety.

Then, the commissioner would decide what technology to purchase in order to successfully integrate all the criminal justice information.

The bill prescribes appropriations for grants and direct spending in order to implement the program. Stanek said he deliberately left specific dollar amounts out of the bill so that the policy group could determine how much will be needed to implement their recommendations.

Of the money that the state ultimately spends on the project, the bill would distribute funds to the Supreme Court to upgrade court information systems, to the Department of Public Safety for certain fingerprint technologies, to Ramsey County and the Sentencing Guidelines Commis-

sion to establish a pilot project, and to government agencies through grants that require a local match.

The grants would allow counties and cities to integrate their probation and pre-trial release information. Some of the funds may also be used to implement the plans for the overall integration system, under the measure.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) introduced an amendment that would appropriate \$15 million to implement the system. The amendment failed, because members of the committee are concerned that there isn't enough money available under Gov. Jesse Ventura's spending limits for this session.

The committee will consider including the measure in its omnibus spending bill.

Directing juveniles to facility

The House Judiciary Finance Committee voted March 7 to combine two bills dealing with the costs of confining juvenile offenders at the Red Wing correctional facility.

Rep. Jerry Dempsey (R-Hastings) is the sponsor of the bills (HF3422 and HF3029). Officials said both are intended to help increase the population at the Red Wing facility and, as a result, effectively reduce the per diem costs to operate it.

The bills were combined by an amendment to HF3029.

The Red Wing facility currently houses the most serious juvenile offenders in the state. According to the bill, a juvenile must be a "chronic and serious offender" with both educational and treatment needs. In addition, the county where the juvenile committed his or her offense must have already exhausted the options available to them before sending the offender to Red Wing.

However, many counties are opting to send juvenile offenders to private or out-of-state facilities because they are required to cover most of the bill and the other facilities are less expensive.

Corrections officials say the costs of housing juveniles at Red Wing is so high because they are operating at a low capacity.

HF3029 would create a 50-50 split between the state and the counties for paying the costs of incarceration at Red Wing. In addition, there would be some money available to counties through grants from the Department of Corrections to offset the costs of residential treatment.

The bill also would instruct judges that they must send offenders to Red Wing if they meet the criteria specified. The only departure from this would be if Red Wing will not sufficiently meet the needs of the juvenile or if an out-of-state facility is closer to the juvenile's home.

The last provision is specifically for cities along the borders with other states.

The committee will consider the measure for inclusion in its omnibus spending bill.

Raising fines for misdemeanors

It's been more than 10 years since the Legislature raised fines for misdemeanor offenses. Meanwhile, costs in the criminal justice have increased more than 100 percent.

But a proposal sponsored by Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) would help balance those matters.

The bill (HF2503) would raise the maximum fines for petty misdemeanors from \$200 to \$300 and for misdemeanors from \$700 to \$800. The House Judiciary Finance Committee heard the bill March 7 and will consider it for inclusion in its omnibus bill.

Carruthers testified that the bill would merely be asking defendants to pay part of the costs for the large criminal justice system. He said that law enforcement and corrections costs have increased between 100 and 200 percent in the past 15 years.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji) asked whether judges are currently imposing the maximum fines. Carruthers said they do when dealing with repeat offenders or particularly egregious crimes. Either way, he said, the ability to levy higher fines needs to be there.

More time to report abuse

Domestic abuse victims would have more time to consider filing civil charges against a perpetrator, under a measure bound for the House floor.

The House Civil Law Committee approved a bill (HF47/SF11*) on March 8 that would extend the statute of limitations in domestic abuse cases from two years to six years.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), the bill sponsor, said the statute of limitations would



Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) has returned to the State Office Building. Last week, he was assigned to Room 567 in the building, after a short stay in a Capitol office.

Reuter was moved to a room in the Capitol after he left the Republican caucus and declared himself an independent shortly after the close of the 1999 session.

All other House members have offices in the State Office Building, and Reuter objected to being moved across the street.

begin at the point of the last incident.

“So many times domestic abuse is covered up,” Bishop said. “It doesn’t surface for a long time.”

Bishop successfully moved to replace the House version of the bill with the Senate language, which has already passed the other chamber. The bills are not significantly different, he said.

Protecting teens from pimps

The number of teen-agers involved in prostitution is growing, and that has legislators concerned.

Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) is sponsoring a bill that would expand a law that includes penalties for people who lure teens into prostitution.

Clark presented her bill (HF2830) to the House Crime Prevention Committee on March 7. The committee approved the measure and sent it to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

Attorney General Mike Hatch said the bill is necessary because of recent cases in Minnesota, including one family that reportedly transported up to 150 Minnesota teens to other states to become prostitutes.

The current law makes it a felony to engage a person under age 16 in prostitution. The maximum penalty is 20 years in prison. The bill would raise the age portion, making it a 20-year felony to make a prostitute of anyone under age 18.

Al Hofstede, former mayor of Minneapolis, chaired a task force that looked at prostitution issues. He said there is a direct correlation between homelessness in teens and the rise of teen prostitution.

“The longer they are on the street, the more likely they will become involved in criminal activity,” Hofstede told the committee.

Hofstede said there are about 1,000 Minnesota teens who are prostitutes. The average age a teen enters prostitution is 14. Boys, as well as girls, are approached to become prostitutes.



Suzanne Peterson of Pride Family and Children Services urges support of a bill that would expand a law that penalizes those who lure minors into prostitution. Peterson testified during a March 7 hearing of the House Crime Prevention Committee.

HOUSE COMMITTEE PROFILE

Crime Prevention

Chair: Stanek (R-Maple Grove)
Vice Chair: Anderson, B. (R-Buffalo Township)
Minority Lead: Skoglund (DFL-Mpls)
Members: 17 (10 R, 7 DFL)

Scope: Reviews policies related to the administration of Minnesota’s criminal justice system, including sentencing practices, corrections policies, law enforcement issues, prosecution and public defender services, probation services, and the operation of the courts.

“They are forced into prostitution because it is the only way they can survive,” Hofstede said. “Juvenile prostitution is a highly mobile underground crime. The targets are virtually anyone’s child.”

Bill Snyder, deputy with the Ramsey County Sheriff’s Department, said he has seen a rise in teen prostitution, especially among the Southeast Asian community. The girls involved in the Asian prostitution range from 11 to 17 years old, Snyder said.

“Half of them don’t even know what is happening to them,” he said. “They call it ‘getting naked for money’ or ‘survival sex.’”

Snyder added, “Gang members are involved because there are very little consequences and the profits are high.”

★ EDUCATION

Discipline in schools

House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) is sponsoring a bill designed to allow teachers and certain other school employees to use reasonable force to discipline a student.

The bill (HF3674) would combine four

separate but related corporal punishment procedures and the legal defenses teachers and district agents have against prosecution for using force to discipline students.

It states, in affirmative language, that teachers and agents of school districts would be able to use force in a “reasonable” manner to correct or restrain a student or to prevent bodily harm or death to another.

Furthermore, school districts would be required under Sviggum’s bill to indicate in school discipline policy the circumstances under which teachers, school employees, and school bus drivers could use force for discipline purposes.

The House K-12 Education Finance Committee heard the bill March 8. It will be considered for inclusion in the committee’s omnibus spending measure.

“You have to have discipline in a classroom or school setting to ensure any type of order,” Sviggum said.

Speaking in support of the bill, Bob Meeks, director of governmental relations for the Minnesota School Boards Association, said the proposal would cut down on the number of teachers contacting the board with concerns about student legal action following the use of reasonable force to handle a disciplinary situation.

★ EMPLOYMENT

Workers’ compensation changes

The House Jobs and Economic Development Policy Committee approved a bill March 9 that would change several provisions in the state’s workers’ compensation laws.

Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls), the sponsor of the measure (HF3960), said it reflects of the recommendations of the Workers’ Compensation Advisory Council, which is composed of representatives from business and labor.

Beth Hartgarten, an attorney from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, said the council’s proposal last session did not make it through the Legislature. She said this year’s bill incorporates many of the provisions from last year’s bill.

Among the bill’s provisions is an increase in the maximum weekly compensation an injured worker can receive for wage loss benefits. Currently that amount is capped at \$615 per week. The bill would increase the amount to \$750. The bill also would increase the minimum amount per week from \$104 to \$130.

The bill would require an employer to provide employees a new informational sheet about the workers’ compensation system.

Bernard Brommer, the president of the AFL-CIO in Minnesota and a member of the council, spoke in support of the measure.

"It represents progress for injured workers and for employers. It was arrived at in good faith, although it's far from perfect," Brommer said. "It's an agreement that represents a foundation we can build upon."

David Olson, president of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and a member of the council, also spoke in support of the measure. Olson said that members of the council have agreed that the bill should be considered as a whole and that the sponsors of the legislation have agreed to pull the bill if any amendments to the agreement are made.

The bill now goes to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Limits on mosquito spraying

Most Minnesotans would agree that mosquitoes are annoying, but some lawmakers are supporting limits on the efforts to control the pesky insects, especially in wildlife management areas or state parks.

Under current law, a landowner can refuse to allow the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District to spray his or her land with insecticides, but that same courtesy is not always given regarding publicly owned land.

The Mosquito Control District would need the approval of the commissioner of natural resources before spraying state lands, under a bill approved March 7 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

The bill (HF3134) also would extend that right to township boards and city councils regarding land owned by those entities.

Much of the debate on the bill focused on the Mosquito Control District's spraying at Fort Snelling State Park in July 1999. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) had objected to the spraying, partly because it would disrupt the food chain of wildlife in the area.

One of the DNR's responsibilities is to enhance wildlife habitat, and Kathleen Wallace, director for the DNR's metro region, said the chemicals that kill mosquitoes also kill midges, insects that are the main food source for ducklings.

Mosquito Control District employees sprayed at Fort Snelling after the DNR had said not to, Wallace said. Also, research done by the DNR disputes the assertions that Fort Snelling was the breeding ground for mosquitoes that led to complaints in the surrounding suburbs.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), chair

of the committee and sponsor of the bill, said the DNR should have jurisdiction over the decision to spray chemicals in wildlife management areas, because the DNR has the expertise in the chemicals' effects on vegetation, water quality, wildlife habitat, and related issues.

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

Spending for the environment

Several state agencies and departments would receive additional money for the current biennium under a deficiency spending bill considered March 6 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

The committee considered the environment-related portions of the overall bill (HF3450), sponsored by Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester). Other finance committees will consider other parts of the bill, which will then be forwarded to the House Ways and Means

Committee.

The bill would spend \$4 million for the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), \$410,000 on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), and \$400,000 for the Board of Water and Soil Resources.

The money for the DNR would pay for costs related to a U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld the hunting and fishing rights of the Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians and others.

The court found that an 1837 land-sale treaty allows those groups to hunt and fish without state regulation. Under the decision, the state must pay the plaintiffs' legal fees and court costs.

The \$410,000 to the MPCA would cover costs of the Wastewater Treatment Fund grant program for small communities that do not have sewer systems. Agency staff evaluate the environmental aspects of the wastewater infrastructure systems that are to be built through the grant program.

The \$400,000 to water and soil board would pay for professional and technical services re-



Back in class

Maryland brings back retired teachers to help solve shortage

With a record 53 million students populating the nation's K-12 classrooms, the problem of finding enough qualified teachers is facing school districts throughout the nation.

While many states including Minnesota are looking for solutions, Maryland has moved ahead with a pair of new programs.

To help address the state's acute teacher shortage, the Maryland General Assembly passed a law in 1999 permitting local school systems to rehire retired teachers, who can then earn a full salary while still collecting their pensions.

Maryland limits the retirees to teaching only in school systems identified as having low test scores and shortages of teachers in specific areas, such as math and science.

According to the *Washington Post*, rising student enrollments combined with a large number of teachers reaching retirement age over the next few years will require Maryland to hire 9,000 to 11,000 teachers in 2001.

Traditionally, Maryland has been forced to seek a large supply of its new teachers from colleges in other states. In 1997 and 1998, Maryland schools needed a total of 6,033 new teachers, but the state's teacher education programs produced only 2,683 teachers. And only 1,826 of those graduates became teachers in Maryland schools.

Maryland also has established the Sharon Christa McAulliffe Memorial Teacher Education Awards, named after the Maryland teacher who was killed in the 1986 space shuttle Challenger explosion.

The program provides up to \$10,000 annually toward tuition, fees, room, and board for teaching students who agree to teach one year in Maryland schools for each year they earn an award.

(D. MAEDA)

lated to the replacement of wetlands. Some of the work is done by state employees and some is done by consultants. Costs are related to reporting, monitoring, and maintaining a database that keeps an inventory of wetlands in the state.

A cut in garbage taxes

A bill that would modify the state's Solid Waste Management Tax was approved March 3 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

The tax is levied on solid waste services that are purchased by households, businesses, and government agencies. The tax applies to disposal of materials, so it is designed to give incentives for recycling.

A 1997 law established the tax with three basic rates — 17 percent for commercial garbage service, 9.75 percent for residential garbage service, and 60 cents per cubic yard for medical, industrial, and demolition debris.

The bill (HF2949), sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), would reduce those to 15 percent, 8.5 percent, and 57 cents per cubic yard.

Ultimately, those taxes are passed on to customers through hauling rates.

The bill is in response to a one-time "excess revenue adjustment" provision in the 1997 law. The tax was intended to generate about \$44.5 million per year, which pays for various pollution cleanup programs, block grants to counties through the governor's Select Committee on Recycling and Environment (SCORE), and related administrative costs.

Cathy Moeger, of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's policy and planning division, said the current rates have created an excess fund balance and the bill would reduce the rates to comply with the original intent of the law.

The bill was sent to the House Taxes Committee and could be included in the committee's omnibus tax bill.

★ ETHICS

Complaint filed in Rostberg case

Two House leaders filed a formal ethics complaint with House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) March 6 in reference to the recent arrest of Rep. Jim Rostberg (R-Isanti).

The letter, submitted by Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) and Assistant Minority Leader Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), requests that the House Ethics Committee conduct an investigation of Rostberg's conduct.

Rostberg was arrested March 2 at the State Capitol. He was charged March 3 with three

counts of felony criminal sexual conduct, involving a girl who was under 16 at the time of the alleged offenses, according to the criminal complaint.

The alleged illegal contact took place over the course of five years. The victim is a girl who is now 14.

According to the Permanent Rules of the House, a complaint may be brought regarding a member's conduct "that violates a rule or administrative policy of the House, that violates accepted norms of House behavior, that betrays the public trust, or that tends to bring the House into dishonor or disrepute."

Such a complaint must present specific factual evidence. It must be submitted in writing and signed by two or more members of the House.

Within seven days of receiving the complaint, the speaker of the House must refer the complaint to the Ethics Committee for processing.

The Ethics Committee consists of four members — two from each party — and two alternates. All proceedings of the ethics committee are open to the public, unless a majority vote of the committee moves discussion into executive session, in order to protect medical or health records of the member or to otherwise protect a victim's identity.

Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson) is the chair of the Ethics Committee.

Committee members recommend disciplinary actions to the full House, and the action must be supported by clear and convincing evidence. According to the Minnesota Constitution, the House may expel a

member with a two-thirds majority vote.

Rostberg's is not the only pending complaint currently in the House. Four DFL house members, including Entenza, asked Feb. 28 for an Ethics Committee investigation of Rep. Arlon Lindner (R-Corcoran).

During a debate about the opening prayer on the House floor Feb. 23, Lindner described Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) as having "irreligious" views.

The Lindner complaint is at the stage where it is awaiting preliminary hearing.

Ethics law clarification

As far as state ethics laws are concerned, Gov. Jesse Ventura and other constitutional officers would be treated just like other state employees under a bill approved March 3 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), sponsor of the bill (HF3623), said it would clarify the traditional interpretation of those laws.

Former governors have considered themselves to be subject to state ethics laws, Entenza said. In particular, he referred to a section that specifies guidelines for the use of state property or resources and lists several examples of conflict of interest.

"Our state ethics law should be fair, and it should apply to everyone," Entenza said.

The bill would not affect past allegations that Ventura has inappropriately used state resources to boost his personal income, Entenza said. Also, it would not prevent the governor from writing books or doing any-

BOTTLED UP



Ruth Odegard of Coon Rapids wears earrings made from bottles used for drugs prescribed to treat her high blood pressure. Odegard took part in a March 7 rally in the Capitol rotunda to call attention to the high costs of prescription drugs.

thing else that would create personal income — unless it presents a conflict under state law.

Entenza said the bill would make it clear that in the future when the governor could potentially be involved in a conflict of interest, he should try to resolve it by checking with the Department of Employee Relations.

“My goal is not to be bashing the governor, or calling him names, and certainly not wrestling with him,” Entenza said.

Entenza added that the reason for the bill is that Ventura has publicly stated that the laws should not apply to him and a related court case was thrown out on technical grounds.

But just like any other bill, it must pass both the House and the Senate, and then be signed or vetoed by the governor before it becomes law. And based on Ventura’s previous public opinions regarding the ethics laws, some say he is likely to veto such a measure.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

★ FAMILY

Marriage license discount

The House Ways and Means Committee considered a bill March 8 that would reduce marriage license fees for couples who obtain premarital education.

The bill (HF2229/SF884*), sponsored by Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson), would reduce marriage license fees from \$70 to \$20 for couples who complete 12 hours of premarital education that includes discussion of the seriousness of marriage, the teaching of conflict management skills, and the desirability of seeking marital counseling in times of marital difficulties.

The bill also would increase the fee for dissolving a marriage from \$122 to \$172.

Harder’s bill still awaits a vote in the Ways and Means Committee.

William Doherty, a professor in the University of Minnesota’s Family Social Sciences Department, said that the bill would raise the quality of premarital counseling, which in turn would help reduce divorce rates in the state.

Doherty said he estimates 50 percent of the couples would take advantage of the discount and receive the 12 hours of education. He said that 15 percent of those couples would decide not to get married.

Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) said he was concerned about the state imposing standards for what qualifies under the bill as approved premarital education. He said the bill’s establishment of criteria such as the requirement for the use of premarital inventory was similar to establishing criteria for the troubled Profile of Learning education initiative.

“This is prescribing something from the



William Doherty of the University of Minnesota’s Family Social Sciences Department urges support of a bill that would offer a reduced marriage license fee for couples who obtain premarital counseling. Doherty spoke March 8 before the House Ways and Means Committee.

state that many communities are already doing,” Solberg said.

Harder asked the committee to consider an amendment that would have incorporated another measure she is carrying enacting a covenant marriage option in the state.

That bill (HF1571) was referred to the committee by the House Judiciary Finance Committee without recommendation. It includes the premarital counseling provisions but not the license and divorce fee changes.

That fact and also the \$36,000 the amendment would cost, prompted Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), the committee chair, to move to lay the bill on the table until it is determined how the two measures should proceed.

★ GOVERNMENT

Review of state agency rules

All administrative rules would have to be reviewed by the Legislature, under a bill approved March 7 by the House State Government Finance Committee.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), sponsor of the bill (HF3000), said the Legislature has been derelict in its duties to oversee the administrative rules promulgated by state agencies. The bill, he said, would increase the Legislature’s scrutiny of those rules.

Seifert’s bill would establish a task force of legislators and governor’s appointees to study current rulemaking policies and recommend related policy changes to the governor.

Also, the bill would establish a schedule that

would cause administrative rules to expire unless a law is enacted to authorize specific rules to continue.

The bill also would give House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over state governmental operations the same authority as the Legislative Coordinating Commission in various aspects of rulemaking.

Under current law, the commission can formally object to an administrative rule and intervene in litigation arising from an agency’s action relating to rules. A formal objection to a rule by the commission forces the agency to establish the validity of the rule in question before an administrative law judge. The bill would give that authority to the related House and Senate committees.

Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson) said he supports the concept but the volume of rules that the Legislature would have to review could prove to be overwhelming.

“I wish you would find some way to do this without creating such chaos,” he said.

The bill now moves to the House Ways and Means Committee.

No sale of state data

Minnesota government agencies would be barred from selling information about state residents, under a bill approved by a House panel.

“This bill prohibits individuals from coming to the government and buying information in bulk, then turning around and using it for commercial purposes,” said Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), the bill sponsor, in March 3 testimony to the House Civil Law Committee. “This bill does not make (private) anything currently public.”

The committee approved the bill (HF3986) and sent it to the House State Government Finance Committee.

Pawlenty said Minnesotans are asking for this legislation, and he explained how people receive mailings with information they believe is private and personal. Pawlenty said if the state wants businesses to stop invading people’s privacy, the government should lead the way.

“We have an opportunity with this bill to lead by example,” Pawlenty said. “Let’s get our house in order.”

Don Gemberling, information and policy analysis with the Department of Administration, gave an example of a woman who had failed to pay her property taxes. The woman soon received a letter from a credit card company offering her help to pay her taxes. The woman was angry that this information was available to the company, Gemberling said.

In another instance, sporting goods stores

buy lists of people who purchase hunting or fishing licenses. The sporting good stores then contact those people to sell their merchandise.

The committee removed language in the bill that would have barred the selling of public information for political or election purposes. Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) said he feared that the way the bill read only a handful of people would be able to access voter information.

“Only the police (would) get to look at voter registration lists,” Skoglund said. “That is a scary, scary thought.”

Currently, voter registration information is public and available free for political and election purposes.

Kent Allin, assistant commissioner with the Department of Revenue, said the Minnesota Bookstore, which sells some state information, depends on those sales to make a profit. Allin said it would be bad public policy to make information available for one use but not another.

“This information would be open to everyone but the Minnesota business owners, which is strange to me,” Allin said.

The loss of revenue to the state would be about \$8 million, Allin said.

Data practices bill advances

After weeks of hammering out details, the House Civil Law Committee approved a data practices bill March 8 and sent it to the House floor.

The bill (HF3615) incorporates several other bills the committee has heard in the past five weeks.

Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville) is sponsoring the bill, which opens some data to the U.S. Immigration Naturalization Service (INS) or the police, while making other information, such as health status or financial numbers, private.

“It’s all the noncontroversial stuff,” Holberg said. “I don’t see it having any major changes.”

The Immigration and Naturalization Service sought the right to receive non-public data, such as wage information, from the Department of Economic Security to investigate employers and employees. The bill would allow the agents to obtain the information from the department without the consent of the employee or company.

Another portion of the bill would allow law enforcement to share juvenile records for police purposes.

The bill includes provisions of a separate proposal (HF2672) sponsored by Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine). The measure would allow school districts to share information in good faith about students. The districts would

be immune from liability if they acted in good faith, under the bill.

The bill would clarify that financial information, such as credit reports, business plans, statements, customer lists, and income projects, are private.

A review team would be allowed to collect and analyze private information on domestic violence, according to the bill. Members of the team would be forbidden to discuss the information with people outside of the group setting.

The domestic review portion comes from a bill (HF2919) initially introduced by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove). Stanek said the task force could learn more about how and why domestic homicides occurred. The bill would exclude information about ongoing cases.

Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) offered a successful amendment that would make Bureau of Criminal Apprehension records on all convicts open permanently. Currently, the BCA makes conviction records private information 15 years after a conviction.

Murderers or pedophiles could slip through the cracks with the current law, said Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls).

Boudreau (R-Faribault), was sent to the House floor.

The bill would require that a woman receive specified information at least 24 hours before the procedure and be told of the availability of printed material on the subject.

Consent would not be required in medical emergencies. The bill would establish civil penalties against a woman, or the parents of a minor, when an abortion is performed without meeting the consent requirements.

Boudreau said the measure is a women’s health issue and that it is important to provide information to women before they make a decision that will “affect them physically and emotionally for the rest of their lives.”

Pati Maier, assistant director of Division of Family Health in the state Department of Health, said that the cost of the bill would be \$167,000 for fiscal year 2001 and \$152,000 each following year.

The bill would require the department to distribute information and materials and to develop licensing arrangements with the state of South Dakota, which has a pamphlet that would meet information standards established in the bill.

Members questioned the department’s inclusion of \$30,680 in its estimate for printing information in Spanish. Maier said that there is a requirement that printed material be made available in a language that is the primary language of two percent or more of the state’s population, which state demographers say Spanish nearly is.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), committee chair, offered an unsuccessful amendment to strike the \$30,860 provision out of the bill.

★ HEALTH

Abortion bill heads to floor

The House Ways and Means Committee approved a bill March 8 that would require a woman to meet “informed consent” requirements before having an abortion.

The bill (HF178), sponsored by Rep. Lynda

DIABETES RESEARCH



Sheila Schlangen wipes a tear from her eye March 3 while she listens to her son, Alex, as he reads a statement to the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee in support of a bill that would provide funds to the University of Minnesota for research on diabetes.

Training for care providers

Sharon Morrissey and husband Don Baierl of St. Paul know all too well the pain a person experiences after losing a child.

In May 1996, Morrissey gave birth to twin daughters, Lillie and Adrian. Both girls came into the world with a medical condition referred to as Cornelia de Lange Syndrome, a blood-oxygen disease that requires intensive monitoring.

The children required respite or temporary care during the day while the parents were away at work. About a year after the birth, Lillie died. She had been left with two care providers filling in for a weekend while the children's regular care providers vacationed.

Testifying before the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee on March 7, Morrissey blamed the death on the substitute providers limited knowledge of equipment used to monitor Lillie's heart rate and blood-oxygen saturation level.

"What has happened to our Lillie should never, ever happen to any other child or adult," Morrissey said.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) agrees. He is sponsoring a bill (HF3342) that would require foster and respite care providers to have training or experience with a child's medical equipment before being allowed to care for the child.

The bill also would require that agencies placing children in homes, even if it's only on a temporary basis, ensure that the care provider has the necessary training before being entrusted with the child's care.

Committee members expressed support for the bill and were quick to approve it.

"It's terrible that a situation like this would have to occur before we look at legislation to address the problem," said Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka). "I hope we can all work as one to

get this bill on its way so, hopefully, a situation like this won't happen again."

The bill would require that the Department of Human Services create a training form for foster care providers. Otherwise, Mariani said, there would be little fiscal impact to the department.

The bill was referred to the House floor.

Improving long-term care

A bill that aims to increase the level of care that nursing facilities can provide patients was approved March 7 by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee.

Sponsored by Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls), the bill (HF3226) would allow nursing facilities to employ resident attendants to assist residents with eating and drinking. Under the bill, resident attendants could not be counted in a nursing facility's minimum staffing requirement.

Concerned about the quality of care at certain nursing facilities, children and spouses of patients testified before the committee out of fear that loved ones are, at times, unable to properly feed or replenish themselves. Aid to patients struggling to eat or drink, they said, is often unavailable due to staffing shortages plaguing many facilities.

"I certainly sympathize with the nursing home industry's dilemma of short resources and long demands, but rather than lowering standards of care, I favor increasing the support to the level necessary to treat our long-care residents right," said registered nurse Myra Starkenburg, daughter of a patient who spent four years in a nursing home before dying in 1998.

Nornes' bill also would require the commis-

sioner of the Department of Health to examine state and federal regulations governing nursing facility care and to implement alternative procedures for the nursing home survey process.

Burnsville resident Virginia Oberpriller also spoke in support of the bill.

"You and I may be there (in a nursing facility) one day, and I would think we would want a better quality of life than what is currently provided at



Janice Laulainen, whose father lives in a nursing home, testifies March 7 before the House Health and Human Services Committee in favor of a bill that would allow nursing facilities to employ resident attendants to assist residents with eating and drinking.

some of these facilities," Oberpriller said.

The commissioner of health would also be required under the bill to develop a proposal to decrease regulations that impede direct care of nursing facility residents.

The committee referred the bill to the House floor.

Indigent care compensation

A person who goes to a hospital emergency room has the right by federal law to be treated. While the law is essential for those who need treatment but are unable to pay, it causes financial burdens for hospitals.

A bill (HF3469) proposed by Rep. Henry Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth) would continue compensation for hospitals that provide unusually high levels of uncompensated care.

Last year the Legislature provided a one-time appropriation of \$10 million in 2000 to help pay the costs for providing medical care to individuals who are indigent and who do not reside in the county. Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis and Regions Hospital in St. Paul provided most of that care.

Van Dellen's bill would make the aid program permanent with an annual appropriation of \$10 million per year.

Dr. Michael Belzer, medical director for Hennepin County Medical Center, said the hospital's financial stability is threatened by undercompensated and uncompensated care.

In 1999, Belzer said, the medical center provided about \$34 million in uncompensated care, an amount that has increased more than 53 percent since 1997.



Sharon Morrissey and her husband Don Baierl speak in favor of a bill that would require foster and respite care providers to have training or experience with a child's medical equipment before caring for the child. Morrissey and Baierl explained that their infant daughter Lillie died in May 1997 because her care provider did not know how to use the special equipment the child needed.

In 1998, the medical center served more than 17,000 patients from the state's other 86 counties. Many of those patients, Belzer said, were referred there because of the hospital's trauma expertise.

Jill Larson, from Regions Hospital, said that Regions provided approximately \$16 million in charity care in 1999. That level of care, she said, cannot be sustained without additional financial assistance.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) expressed concern over whether the issue was a health and human services or tax issue.

Van Dellen said that the appropriation was included as part of last year's omnibus tax law, and because the program has an impact on property taxes, he said it is a tax measure.

The committee also discussed a potential amendment that would expand the program to include community clinics for indigent care and removed the \$10 million cap for the program.

No action was taken on either the amendment or the bill, but both will be considered for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Input on college buildings

Representatives of higher education institutions would have greater participation in selecting the designs for new buildings, under a bill approved March 3 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

Currently, contracts for designing state buildings are awarded through the state Designer Selection Board.

The five board members are appointed by the commissioner of the Department of Administration. Three organizations nominate people to serve on the board — the Consulting Engineers Council of Minnesota (with input from other professional engineering societies in the state), the Minnesota Society of Architects, and the Minnesota Board of the Arts.

Also, the agency that is going to use the new building has a non-voting member on the board.

But the bill (HF3195) would require the board to include two additional voting members when considering designs for higher education buildings — one would be from the University of Minnesota and the other would be from the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), sponsor of the bill, originally advocated exempting the university and MnSCU from the

designer selection process, so that each would have its own process regarding buildings on their campuses.

But opponents of that proposal said those buildings use state funds and they should be subject to the same selection process as other state buildings.

The bill was modified so that the university and MnSCU would each have a voting member on the board when it considers proposed building projects for any higher education institution in the state.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

★ HOUSING

Affordable housing funds

The House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee heard a proposal that would transfer \$54.5 million from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency to create more affordable housing.

The committee took no action on the bill but will consider it later for inclusion in an omnibus funding measure.

"The access to affordable housing is a very important component of moving a welfare recipient towards self-sufficiency," said Tonya Orr, legislative liaison from the Housing Finance Agency.

The bill (HF3589), which is a governor's initiative sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), the committee chair, would transfer the funds from the Department of Human Services to the Housing Finance Agency. A total of \$15 million would be used as a loan to Habitat for Humanity, which provides home ownership opportunities for low-income families.

Orr said the funds would be allocated to the various Habitat chapters located around the state according to the number of Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) households in a chapter's service area. She said Habitat could build about 260 homes with the money.

The bill also would provide \$39.5 million for the affordable rental investment fund program, which is the agency's main program for the production of rental housing.

Orr said that the units produced would carry average rents of \$400 a month or less and would be required to remain affordable for 30 years. The units would go to families who currently receive MFIP aid or who have recently lost their eligibility for that aid due to increased employment income.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) said he was concerned about the length of time families could stay in the units.

He said the funds may be better used to train

people to get better paying jobs.

"These apartments are so good a deal it's almost worth losing a job to get one," Trimble said.

Orr said the agency is continuing to work on guidelines for the program that would establish criteria for continued eligibility.

Housing built by at-risk youth

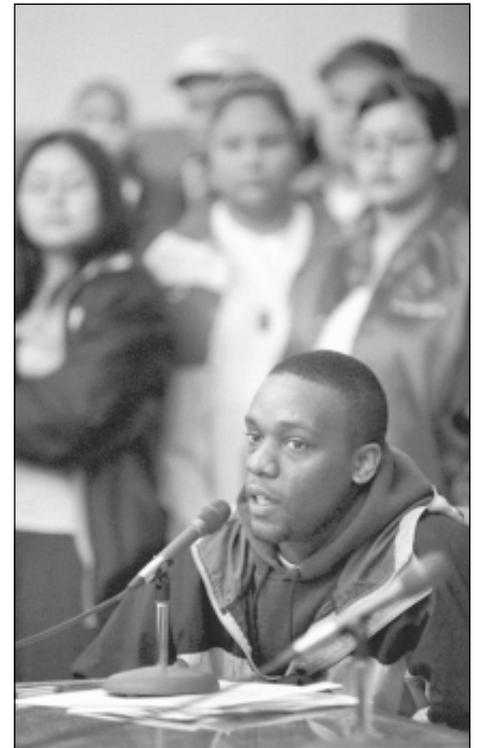
The House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee considered a bill March 2 that would use workers from an at-risk youth program to build and rehabilitate affordable housing.

The committee took no action on the measure (HF2568), sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), but will consider it for inclusion in an omnibus finance bill.

The workers would come from the state's YouthBuild Program, which provides specialized training in construction and the building trade fields for youth at risk of not completing high school.

Clark said that the state has appropriated \$1.5 million over the current biennium to fund the program. However, federal matching funds are no longer available.

The bill would require the Department of Economic Security to develop and administer a demonstration project using the YouthBuild program to build or rehabilitate



Farji Schaheer, a graduate of Summit Academy who now instructs rookies in the YouthBuild Program, asks the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee for continued support March 3.

affordable housing in Minnesota. And the bill would require that the demonstration project target deteriorated housing and blighted areas in urban, suburban, and rural communities.

Latoya Banks, a student from the YouthBuild Summit Academy, said the program has given students who have fallen through the cracks another opportunity.

Joyce Eissinger, from the Carver Scott Education Co-op, also testified about the benefits of the program.

"I can't think of a program that has had more of an impact," she said. "More and more students are getting into high school and losing their way. They have to feel they being connected to an adult, and they're not getting that in high school."

Marlon Fletcher, a student from YouthBuild, agreed with Eissinger that the program helps students find adult role models. Fletcher said he came here from Texas without his family and the program has given him an alternative to living on the streets.

"It's been my family," he said.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Enforcing work requirements

State welfare recipients could be forced to forfeit their entire welfare checks if they fail to comply with work rules tied to Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) eligibility.

Before benefits would be cut off, however, parents would have to violate program requirements for a sixth time. Parents also would have an opportunity to meet with a judge and county caseworkers before a decision to fully take away aid could be made.

The sanctions are in a bill (HF3128) that was discussed March 8 by the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee. The proposal, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus spending measure.

Goodno reminded the committee that the first wave of parents participating in the program will soon be halfway to their five-year limit for welfare benefits. He said the state should get serious about helping people who are wrongfully sanctioned and crack down on those who disregard MFIP rules. The program is the state's welfare reform initiative.

Not all agree, however, that stiffer sanctions will clear up problems that seem to plaguing the current sanction system.

"Sanctions are not helping people go to work, they are keeping people from working,"

said Chili George, a disabled welfare recipient who testified against the bill before the Health and Human Services Policy Committee last month.

Brian Rusche, a lobbyist for the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, said tightening sanctions is "like calling a guillotine a health-care device."

Others expressed concern that full sanctions are not fair for parents of children with disabilities, would leave children hungry, and would lead to parents being evicted from their homes.

Goodno's bill, however, would allow parents of disabled children to qualify for an exemption from work rules and require a greater examination of families being sanctioned.

The bill also proposes spending a \$160 million surplus in federal funds earmarked for an overhaul of the state's welfare system for programs to prevent teen prostitution and to aid hard-to-employ parents.

The measure also suggests tightening work rules for welfare recipients by shortening the amount of time parents can spend educating themselves.

Verification of citizenship

Minnesota may soon be among the many states that take part in a federal program to verify the citizenship status of people seeking public assistance.

In the late 1980s, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service developed an automated Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program to verify the immigration status of applicants for assistance.

Minnesota is one of five states that received a waiver from participating in the program.

Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) is sponsoring a bill that would require the commissioner of the Department of Human Services to use the SAVE program to verify the immigration status of applicants for various forms of public assistance.

The bill (HF2837) calls for the state to begin using the program by Jan. 1, 2001.

The bill also would require that the commissioner report to the chairs of the legislative committees that deal with human services policy issues about the usage and costs of the SAVE program during its first two years of implementation.

The House Health and Human Services Finance Committee heard the bill March 8. It will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus spending measure.

States are required under the 1996 federal welfare reform law to verify the citizenship or immigration status of all people who apply for

an assistance program that delivers federal public funds.

The verification requirement is intended to ensure that federally funded benefits are provided only to citizens and qualified noncitizens.

Under Boudreau's bill, all cases of undocumented people identified through application verification procedures would be reported to immigration agents.

Newborn drop-off program

A program that would allow mothers to leave unharmed newborns at hospitals without criminal consequences now heads to the House Crime Prevention Committee.

The bill (HF2945), sponsored by Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), was approved March 8 by the House Civil Law Committee.

There already is a system in place at Twin Cities hospitals where mothers can drop off babies, but the law still makes it a gross misdemeanor to abandon the child. This bill would remove the criminal penalties, Sykora said.

The mother or another person with the mother's consent could leave a baby, no more than 72 hours old, at any hospital statewide. The bill would forbid the local welfare agency from attempting to contact or investigate the mother.

The bill would require the hospital to inform the welfare agency within 24 hours of the child's arrival, but the call could not be made until the person leaving the newborn has vacated the hospital.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) attempted to attach the Senate version to the bill, which already passed unanimously through that chamber. Dawkins said the Senate bill is more simple.

The committee rejected Dawkins' amendment, with some arguing that the House bill has more family-friendly language.

Homeless housing project

Rep. Jim Seifert (R-Woodbury) is sponsoring a bill that would fund a housing and managed care pilot project for homeless people in two separate counties in and outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The bill (HF2553) would appropriate \$3 million of federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds for the project and would also make a general fund appropriation for project services that cannot be paid for with TANF funds.

"We are expecting great things if this project is funded," Seifert said.

The House Health and Human Services

Finance Committee discussed the bill March 8. It will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus spending measure.

The planning phase of the pilot project previously received authorization, but no funds have been allocated for implementation.

Seifert's bill calls for an annual report to evaluate the project with respect to certain goals. The report would address whether project participants lead more productive and stable lives and whether system-wide costs and the inappropriate use of emergency or crisis-oriented services have been reduced.

The bill also clearly specifies who is eligible to participate in the pilot project. For instance, families or pregnant women who are receiving or meet income guidelines for the Minnesota Family Investment Program would qualify, as would employed families whose household income falls below 150 percent of federal poverty guidelines.

Liability for unsafe day care

The House Civil Law Committee on March 8 scrapped a plan to give counties immunity from prosecution for licensing a child care operation when there is reason to believe it could be unsafe.

The provision was included in a bill that would permanently prohibit some convicted felons from working in day care centers.

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior) is sponsoring the bill (HF3103), which would permanently eliminate people with a felony child endangerment or a felony prostitution conviction from positions that allow direct contact with children. Currently, those felons are barred for 15 years after their conviction.

Felony convictions for murder, assault, spousal abuse, criminal sexual conduct, any child pornography offense, and incest are permanently barred from working in a day care under current law.

While the committee had few objections to those proposed changes, there were several questions about a section of the bill designed to give counties immunity from lawsuits for licensing day care facilities when there is a reason to believe the workers there are unqualified or unsafe. That section was deleted from the bill.

Currently, if the county had some knowledge of a possible problem at the site, the county could be held liable.

Rick and Mallery Loftus told the committee about how their son, Calvin, was shaken to death at a day care center in 1995. Calvin was five months old. The woman, who was caring for the boy, was convicted of murder and is currently incarcerated in the Shakopee women's prison.

HELPING HOMELESS KIDS



Members of the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance and Family and Early Childhood Education Finance committees stop by an Early Childhood Family Education class at the People Serving People Shelter for homeless families in Minneapolis. The committees toured several shelters in the Twin Cities area on March 6.

The Loftuses have an ongoing lawsuit with Hennepin County. The family contends the county had a reason to believe the child care center was unsafe, but gave the woman a license anyway.

"You will be eliminating the last line of defense for defenseless children," said Mallery Loftus, as tears rolled down her face.

She displayed a large photo of their deceased child during the hearing.

The Loftuses said it is too late for their child, but they want to prevent an incident like theirs from ever happening again.

"I want you to think about the vulnerability of a child who is placed in a home with one other person," said Cindy Bartell, attorney for the Loftuses. "There is no oversight."

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) said there should be a high standard for licensure and it should be followed.

Sykora initially opposed deleting the section, saying there are too few day care centers already and a backlog of families on waiting lists. The failure to provide immunity to counties could slow the issuance of licenses and impede qualified operators from being in the business, she said.

METRO AFFAIRS



Airport noise mitigation

When Bill and Audree Duffee moved into their Richfield house near the airport in 1965, around 50 planes a day would fly over their home. Now close to 1,500 flights fly every 24 hours.

Bill Duffee said that the noise from the increased traffic and larger-sized airplanes is forcing the couple to consider selling the only house they have ever owned — the house where they raised their children.

The Duffees spoke in favor of a measure sponsored by Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington) that would provide some noise relief for the cities surrounding the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

"We're not fighting the airport but they are encroaching on our quality of life," Audree Duffee told the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee on March 8. "Our neighbors, many who are senior citizens, are scared. They don't know where to go."

The committee referred the bill to the House Taxes Committee without recommendation.

Larson said that in 1989 the Metropolitan Airports Commission and the Metropolitan Council began conducting dual studies to determine the airport's capacity needs. In 1996, the Legislature stopped that process and made the decision to expand the airport at its current location rather than relocate it.

Last year, the governor developed an Airport Community Stabilization Funding Task Force to help identify and recommend funding sources to implement noise mitigation measures from the expansion. Larson said the bill incorporates many of the task force's suggestions.

The bill (HF3258) would provide several funding mechanisms. It would dedicate sales tax collections at the airport that exceed

\$12 million and would appropriate \$20 million over the next 10 years from the general fund.

The bill also would authorize the establishment of tax-increment financing districts and allow the Metropolitan Council to provide general obligation credit enhancement for city bonds issued to finance noise mitigation activities.

Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville) said she opposes the bill because it fails to recognize the significant economic benefits the airport has on the surrounding communities. Holberg said she is also concerned about dedicating all the sales tax revenue collected above the \$12 million threshold.

Minneapolis metal shredder

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) is sponsoring a bill that would require the city of Minneapolis to issue all the necessary permits for the construction of a metal shredder on the Mississippi River.

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved the measure March 3. The bill (HF3708) now goes to the House floor.

The bill would require the city to issue the permits needed, if the project has been issued a special permit to conduct specific business and an environmental assessment has been completed and it registers no negative impact.

Jennings said the issue has come before the Legislature several times before. The metal shredder — known by its brand name, Kondirator — shreds, compacts, and separates scrap metal.

In 1990, the city issued a permit to the American Iron and Supply Company but later pulled the permit to further study the environmental impacts. The Legislature passed a law in 1994 requiring the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to conduct further environmental studies of the Kondirator.

John Isaacs, the president of American Iron and Supply, said that the company has continued to meet all the requirements put in front of it.

Similar metal recyclers exist in other areas in the state, he said, including one in Anoka County next to a municipal golf course, within view of a Ferris wheel on the county fairgrounds.

“The city has never said they don’t want us,” Isaacs said. “They just say jump through the next hoop and the next. We have jumped through every hoop, jumped over every bar, but they continue to put obstacles in our path.”

Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) said that in similar cases where a city issues a permit and then decides later to pull it, the Legislature has always allowed disputes to be decided by the courts.

“This is moving in and very powerfully taking away a fundamental power of a city,” Orfield said. “Understand the principle you’re opening up. It’s a principle of local control.”

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska) disagreed and said that this particular dispute is unique. She said that the company has been at the same industrial site for 50 years and the city has abused its powers by treating American Iron and Supply differently than other companies.

★ RECREATION

New penalty for studs

A bill that would add a civil penalty for using metal traction devices, or studs, on snowmobiles was approved March 7 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine), sponsor of the bill (HF3555), said the civil penalty was inadvertently left out of a law that was passed last year, which required people to purchase a sticker for their snowmobiles if they intend to use studs.

That law contains criminal penalties for people who drive a snowmobile with studs on paved state trails. Westerberg’s bill would establish civil penalties for people who have snowmobile studs but have not purchased the sticker.

For the first offense, the penalty would not exceed \$50. The penalty for a second offense would not exceed \$300, and for third and subsequent offenses the penalty would not exceed \$600.

The bill now moves to the House floor.

★ TAXES

Sales tax break for nonprofits

The House Taxes Committee considered a bill March 7 that would exempt nonprofit organizations from paying sales tax when they lease or purchase a motor vehicle.

Under the measure (HF3087), sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the nonprofit would qualify for a sales tax exemption when purchasing a vehicle only if it is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, or educational purposes. Nonprofit organizations that limit their membership to seniors or the physically disabled would also qualify for the exemption.

John Pratt, the executive director of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, said the bill would help organizations stretch their donations further and allow more money to be used for the organizations’ intended purposes.

John Barker, the chief executive officer of Merrick Companies in St. Paul, agreed with Platt that the money saved under the proposal could better be used for the charitable ventures.

Merrick Companies is a nonprofit organization that provides employment and vocational training to adults with developmental disabilities.

Barker said the organization has about 45 vehicles that it uses to drive nearly 400 people to and from work. He said the organization tries to turn over about 20 percent of those vehicles every year.

Last year, it bought 10 vehicles for approximately \$246,000 — paying over \$16,000 in sales tax.

Abrams said the Department of Revenue has estimated the cost of the bill to be between \$3 million and \$5 million a year.

No action was taken on the bill, but it will be considered for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Vending sales tax exemption

When you buy a banana out of a vending machine, part of the price you pay includes sales tax. If you walk across the street and buy a banana from a convenience store, you do not pay sales tax.

The House Taxes Committee heard a bill March 2 that would address that discrepancy.

The bill (HF2586), sponsored by Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina), would exempt certain vending machine food items from sales tax.

No action was taken on the measure, but it will be considered further for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Erhardt said that currently all food and drink items purchased through vending machines are subject to sales tax. The bill would exempt milk, beverages containing 15 percent or more fruit juice, fresh and canned fruit, vegetables, granola and fruit-filled breakfast bars, yogurt, pudding, cheese, and cottage cheese.

Under current law, most food items purchased from grocery or convenience stores other than candy, soft drinks, and prepared

<p>HOUSE COMMITTEE PROFILE</p> <hr/> <p>Taxes</p> <p>Chair: Abrams (R-Minnetonka) Vice Chair: Daggett (R-Frazee) Minority Lead: Rest (DFL-New Hope) Members: 25 (14 R, 11 DFL)</p> <p>Scope: Considers policy matters affecting Minnesota taxpayers and reviews bills affecting state income taxes, sales and use taxes, excise taxes, and property taxes.</p>

food, are sales tax exempt. There are some fine distinctions however between taxable and nontaxable food. For example, honey roasted nuts are tax exempt but honey covered nuts are not.

According to a Department of Revenue estimate, the cost to the state in exempting the items proposed in the bill would be about \$1.1 million a year.

Dennis Bjonfald, the owner of Vendstar Company in St. Paul, said the bill is about equity and leveling the playing field for vending machine operators.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) raised a concern over whether the savings incurred by vending machine owners would actually be passed on to consumers.

Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan) proposed an amendment that would exempt water purchased from vending machines from sales tax. Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul), whose business distributes bottled water, said that under current law only water sold in individual containers of one-half gallon or more is exempt.

Milbert said the bill would not effect his own company, which only deals in larger bottles of water. But he said he agreed with Wilkin's amendment because people are buying bottled water more and more as a necessity because of health concerns.

Erhardt persuaded Wilkin to withhold his amendment until the fiscal impact of the measure is determined.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Stepping up seat belt enforcement

Meghan Cooper, 15, was sitting in the back seat of a car last June when the vehicle collided with another car. Cooper, who was not wearing a seat belt, was thrown from the car. She died two days later from head injuries.

Meghan's mother, Kathy Cooper, told the House Transportation Policy Committee March 9 about her daughter's death. Cooper is seeking a change in the law that would allow law enforcement officers to stop a car if the passengers in the front seat are not wearing seat belts. The bill also would raise the age requirement for seat belt use in the back seat.

Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls) is sponsoring a bill containing such changes. Currently, officers can issue drivers for failure to wear a seat belt only if the car was stopped for a different violation.

The committee approved the bill (HF857) and sent it to the House Crime Prevention Committee.

Greenfield cited Department of Public



Kathy Cooper, Kenyon, testifies March 9 before the House Transportation Policy Committee in support of a bill that would require all back-seat passengers under age 18 to buckle up. Current law requires only children up to age 11 to be buckled up when in the back seat. Cooper's 15-year-old daughter, Meghan, wasn't wearing a seat belt in the back seat when she was killed in a car crash in last year.

Safety statistics that show 2,477 died on Minnesota roads in the past five years. About 1,200 of those were not buckled up.

"There will be a 15 percent increase in use of seat belts," Greenfield said. "That is what has happened in other states. That would save 48 lives a year."

Currently, 17 states have a primary offense law, Greenfield said. That means drivers can be stopped for not buckling up.

Dave Long, a paramedic in Minneapolis, told lawmakers a person can die from a crash when a vehicle is traveling just 30 mph. Airbags are designed to save people who wear seat belts and should not be considered an alternate to seat belts, he added.

"I've never unbuckled a dead person from a car," said Long, who has been a paramedic for 15 years.

Greenfield said some legislators might be concerned that the bill would allow police to harass individuals. He refuted that claim, pointing out police can currently stop a car for noisy mufflers, a cracked windshield, or signs in the window.

Besides the primary offense for people in the front seat, the bill would require all passengers up to age 18 to wear a seat belt in the back seat. Currently, only children 3 to 11 years old are required to wear a seat belt in the back seat. Younger children must be strapped in a children's car seat.

Voter approval for light rail

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee approved a bill March 3 that would require Hennepin County voters to approve the county's \$70 million portion of funding for light-rail transit.

By a 15-3 vote, the measure was sent to the House floor.

The bill (HF4000), sponsored by Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), would require the county to include a question on its November general election ballot asking voters to approve levying or spending any public funds for the Hiawatha Corridor light-rail transit project.

If the voters did not approve the county's annual \$4.7 million levy, all unspent state appropriations would be canceled as well.

Pawlenty said that although it was "somewhat unusual" to mandate a county referendum, the controversy surrounding the light-rail project warrants such action.

"The governor's battle cry is, 'Let the people decide.' This particular issue is so clouded, so controversial that this is the only way to clear the air," Pawlenty said.

Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) said that in order to keep politics out of transportation project decisions the Legislature has historically trusted the decision-making of transportation experts.

He said that there is no significant distinction between the questions surrounding the light-rail project and major road projects.

"This is nothing more than a highly political effort to kill the rail system with no principal basis," Orfield said.

Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) said that the difference between county road projects and the light-rail transit project is that road projects don't require the ongoing subsidy that will be required to operate the light-rail system.

Peter McLaughlin, chairman of the Hennepin County board, submitted written testimony stating that the county remains committed to the light-rail project. He said that the board approved its funding portion of the project on a 6-1 bipartisan vote.

Demand for input on rail

The Department of Transportation would need the Legislature's permission to spend money on commuter rail projects, under a bill sponsored by Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska.)

Molnau told the House Transportation Finance Committee on March 6 that her bill (HF3548) would leave decision-making to legislators. The committee may consider the bill later for inclusion in a larger transportation measure.

The state is exploring the possibility of using three train lines for commuter or passenger lines. One line would link St. Cloud to Minneapolis, and another line would link Hastings to St. Paul. A third would link Lakeville and Minneapolis.

The Transportation Finance Committee, which Molnau chairs, did not approve any funding for commuter rail lines in its bonding proposal to the House Capital Investment Committee.

Al Vogel, director of freights and waterways

for the department, told the committee that the department needs the authority to create a standard approach to the cities affected along the line.

This function would include spending money for planning, design, and engineering of the line, which would be forbidden by the bill unless the department got direct legislative authorization.

The committee rejected a proposed amendment that would have allowed the Transportation Department to spend money on

planning and designs but would not have allowed spending for any project purchases or construction.

Molnau said she favors having the local communities make the decisions because they would be the ones affected by a commuter rail line.

"I don't see a problem if a local group finances this and does it on their own," Molnau said. "It doesn't say you can't do it, it says (money) must be appropriated through the Legislature."

House divided on one-house plan

Unicameral proposal stalls despite efforts to revive it on House floor

By JON FURE

Gov. Jesse Ventura's proposal to let voters decide if the Legislature should switch to a one-chamber, or unicameral, system failed to advance out of the House State Government Finance Committee March 9.

An attempt to revive the bill on the House floor later that day also failed.

The committee voted 5-5 on a motion to send the bill to the House Ways and Means Committee, which means the bill remains in the State Government Finance Committee.

The bill (HF159), sponsored by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), was sent to the committee mainly to consider the direct costs associated with the legislation and the projected financial impact if the switch were made.

Under the bill, the legislative body would consist of 135 districts. Currently there are 67 Senate districts, each of which is divided to make 134 House districts. The proposed terms would be four years, and they would be staggered — half of the members' terms would expire every two years.

Those changes would take place in 2003, if the voters were to approve the constitutional amendment.

The projected fiscal effects of the bill were calculated using current information and many assumptions.

For example, the House currently has about 270 employees, a two-to-one ratio of staff to elected members.

Assuming that ratio would stay the

same in a unicameral legislature, and adjusting for reduced costs in joint legislative commissions and other areas, the switch to a unicameral legislature is projected to save about \$5.9 million in fiscal year 2003.

But several lawmakers refuted those assumptions.

Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) said Nebraska has five staff per senator in its unicameral Legislature. And he said the workload for each lawmaker would increase under a unicameral system in Minnesota, which would cause lawmakers to become full-time or to hire more staff.

Sviggum responded to those concerns by saying that the politicians often generate the work, which he said is apparent in that more than 4,000 bills have been introduced this session.

And he argued that the unicameral system would make it easier for people to participate in the lawmaking process, which would especially benefit those who travel from outside the metropolitan area.

While the committee vote effectively stalled the bill's progress, Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) later that day brought the issue to the House floor.

Kielkucki argued that every House member should have the right to vote on

the matter, and that they should vote to move the bill to the Ways and Means Committee despite the earlier tie vote in the State Government Finance Committee.

Of the 11 members on the state government finance panel, Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township) was absent during the committee vote.

But several House members pointed out that the bill is not dead, because it can still be reconsidered by the State Government Finance Committee, and there are many other ways to keep the bill alive until the end of the session.

"Why this issue today?" asked Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), who chairs the House Commerce Committee. "There's plenty of time to go back to the State Government Finance committee. It's not about the issue, it's about the process."

Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview), who chairs the state government finance panel, said he was among the five who voted to move the bill forward, but he was opposed to Kielkucki's motion because it would overrule the committee's earlier vote.

Kielkucki responded that he was within his rights to make the motion, but he withdrew it due to the objections that it would circumvent the committee process.

Unless the bill is reconsidered, attached as an amendment to another bill, or otherwise revived, the unicameral constitutional amendment question will not appear on the 2000 election ballot. 

Incentives to teach

Lawmakers mull several proposals to fend off projected teacher shortages and draw qualified people into Minnesota classrooms

By MIKE DeLARCO

One of the more serious issues facing both urban and rural school districts in coming years is teacher shortages at elementary, middle school, and high school levels.

Over the next decade, a large number of teacher vacancies are expected to arise due to retirements, student enrollment growth, and policies requiring class-size reduction.

Some experts forecast as many as 2 million openings for teachers nationwide.

Troubled by the forecasted shortages, many legislators are offering proposals this session to make teaching an attractive option for graduates and to assure that districts have enough staff to provide students a quality education.

A University of Minnesota study conducted between February and July 1999 found that school districts that responded to a questionnaire identified a total of 3,259 vacancies to be filled for the 1999-2000 school year. Of these vacancies, 1,258 were elementary positions, 1,459 were secondary positions, and 542 were special education positions.

Some experts attribute the shortages to reduced respect for teachers, low pay, and little room for career advancement as deterrents to choosing teaching as a profession.

“Because of the strong economy the nation is currently enjoying, workforce opportunities for college graduates abound,” said Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington), chair of the House K-12 Education Finance Committee. “If we don’t try to entice them to teach, our schools are not going to have the level of quality in the classroom they now enjoy.”

Seagren is sponsoring a bill that would establish a loan forgiveness program to assist school districts in recruiting and retaining excellent teachers in science, math, industrial tech, and special education.

Seagren’s bill (HF3698) would also establish a program for rural areas and create a loan forgiveness account in the state treasury that would consist of money appropriated by the Legislature, repayments, and penalties.

Rep. Michelle Rifenberg (R-La Crescent) also wants to aid districts, especially rural ones, in recruiting and retaining quality teachers. She is sponsoring a bill (HF3206) that would establish loan forgiveness programs for newly licensed teachers who teach in a school district within an economic development region that serves 100 or fewer pupils per grade.

Rifenberg’s bill would appropriate \$1 million in fiscal year 2001 for loan forgiveness payments to a maximum of 500 eligible rural teachers.

Both situations have made it difficult for many districts to locate money to bring in qualified teachers to plug the gaps.

Furthermore, more than 60 percent of school districts with more than 5,000 students reported budget cuts this year, according to the Office of the Legislative Auditor’s report on school district finances.

Cuts often lead to a decline in classroom personnel, said Christine Jax, commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

“It’s perplexing to have the legislative auditor say that there is no financial crisis . . . then find out (districts) are making cuts and having to lay off teachers,” Jax said.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview) focuses on placing qualified teachers who have gained experience outside of Minnesota in state classrooms as soon as possible.

The bill (HF3840) would allow people who have completed a teacher preparation program in another state to take a Board of Teaching exam to receive a one-year alternative Minnesota teaching license.

Similar language to Krinkie’s bill can be found in a bill (HF3231) advocated by the governor’s office and sponsored by Seagren that provides for general education, special

“It’s important to have incentives to help small, rural schools find teachers in critical subject areas.”

— Rep. Michelle Rifenberg

“It’s important to have incentives to help small, rural schools find teachers in critical subject areas,” Rifenberg said.

Both bills were heard March 3 by the House K-12 Education Finance Committee and will be considered for inclusion in the committee’s omnibus spending measure.

Other factors contribute to the teacher shortage, as well. As an example, a special state allowance for districts that have a high number of veteran teachers, who command higher salaries, is being phased out.

To complicate matters, an unexpectedly high number of teachers have chosen to retire over the past two years, taking with them a big chunk of allowance funding.

programs, facilities and technology, and education policy.

The measure would allow a teacher who’s been fully licensed to teach in another state but does not meet all Minnesota requirements for a similar teaching license to be granted a temporary Minnesota teaching license for up to three years. That license would be valid to teach subjects and grade levels for which the teacher was licensed in the other state.

HF3840 and HF3231 will also be considered for possible inclusion in a K-12 education finance omnibus bill. 

Making marriage last

Couples could choose an option demanding more preparation going in and making it more difficult to get out

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

Experts say that 90 percent of people here and elsewhere in America aspire to lifelong marriage. However, in the same breath they'll tell you that between 45 and 50 percent of Minnesotans who get married this year will eventually divorce.

Marriage counselors report that most of their clients wish they had taken more time to work things out with their spouse when the marriage began to break apart.

In fact, said William Doherty, director of marriage and family counseling at the University of Minnesota, 66 percent of people who divorce say they wish they had tried to work things out.

Doherty and other leaders, including Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson), think something needs to be done to strengthen and add stability to the institution of marriage. They say that couples need to be more deliberate about marriage and make sure they are prepared for the commitment.

difficult to escape in situations of abuse or coercion. They also said the bill is unnecessary because current law allows people to pursue similar legal actions to strengthen the bonds of marriage.

The committee adopted an amendment that clarifies the requirements for pre-marital counseling and conditions under which separations and divorces would be allowed under a covenant marriage.

According to the bill, the couple entering into a covenant marriage does so from day one — the couple must go together to apply for the marriage license, which is where they will designate specifically if the marriage will be a covenant marriage or a standard one.

with that, the instructor would have to sign a statement verifying that the parties took the required education classes.

The pre-marital education program would have to include the following: a pre-marital inventory, discussions of the serious nature of marriage and that marriage is a commitment for life, instruction on communication skills and conflict management, and discussions of the obligation to seek marital counseling should difficulties in the relationship arise.

If counseling during the marriage did not work, the couple could pursue divorce after living separately without reconciliation for two years. Also, nothing would prohibit the parties from obtaining a legal separation.

In addition, under the covenant marriage bill, parties could be granted a divorce without having to wait two years if either spouse has committed adultery, abuse, or abandonment or has been convicted of a felony.

Doherty testified that in situations where these conditions do not exist, it's important to give people time to think about the marriage and whatever problems exist.

"This gives people a cooling off period," he said.

The bill also would specifically prescribe that a covenant marriage is a union entered into by one man and one woman, precluding any same-sex unions.

Currently married couples could pay an extra fee to change their standard marriage status to a covenant marriage if they so desire. Married couples would only have to undergo six hours of "pre-marital" education.

Among the critics of the bill was Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul), who said couples are already free to obtain a pre-nuptial agreement or otherwise safeguard themselves legally. Furthermore, he said, the bill would force people to stay in situations they ought to escape.

"We are not binding them to this, they are choosing to bind themselves to this," Doherty said. "The state is just asking them to make good on their promise."

Kathleen Murphy from the National Organization for Women said that because marriage is technically a legal agreement, attorneys can draw up a number of other agreements to deal with the covenant marriage issues.

"A marital commitment between two people cannot be protected by the state," Murphy said. 

"It is a step in the direction of a cultural shift that I think the culture is ready for and that most Minnesotans will accept. Most people aspire to a permanent, lifelong union. This is a responsible thing for people to agree on in advance."

— William Doherty, University of Minnesota

Harder is sponsoring a measure that would encourage couples to opt into a "covenant marriage" in lieu of a standard marriage. The House Judiciary Finance Committee sent the bill (HF1571) without a recommendation to the House Ways and Means Committee on March 7.

"It is a step in the direction of a cultural shift that I think the culture is ready for and that most Minnesotans will accept," Doherty told members of the committee. "Most people aspire to a permanent, lifelong union. This is a responsible thing for people to agree on in advance."

However, critics of the bill said it would create ambiguities and would make marriage too

Harder emphasized that couples could choose a covenant marriage. It is not something that would be mandatory.

The filing fees, under the current version of the bill, would be the same for a standard or covenant marriage.

Then, before the couple could be married, they would have to undergo at least 12 hours of pre-marital education from one of the following: a licensed or ordained minister, a person authorized to solemnize marriage under law, or a licensed marriage and family therapist.

The husband and wife would have to individually sign an official declaration that they intend to enter a covenant marriage. Along

Angling for a fee hike

The need to protect and enhance resources is driving an effort to increase prices for fishing and hunting licenses

BY JON FURE

Hunting and fishing license fees would see across-the-board increases, under a bill approved March 6 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

Revenue from licenses, and from fines that are generated by enforcement of state laws, goes into the state's game and fish fund. That fund also contains money from the federal government, which is allotted according to the size of the state and the number of people who buy hunting and fishing licenses.

Fiscal analysts project that the game and fish fund will face a deficit in fiscal year 2003 because revenues are not increasing at the same rate as expenses.

The bill (HF3046), sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), chair of the committee, is one proposal that would help resolve that problem.

Holsten said he and other committee members are concerned about the state's ability to take care of its natural resources on a long-term basis.

"We want to do what we can to make sure that the base needs in environment, parks, trails, and habitat are maintained at a level that we expect and demand," Holsten said.

Without the proposed fee increases, revenue to the game and fish fund is projected to remain constant, while costs of the related projects are increasing.

Those projects include improving water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams; stocking fish and enhancing aquatic vegetation; and increasing public water access.

Along with the license fee increases, Holsten's proposal would include additional revenue from the state's general fund. Holsten said that only makes sense because those projects provide a general benefit to all state residents, not just to those who hunt and fish.

The game and fish fund pays for some of the Department of Natural Resources' administrative costs. The bill would effectively replace part of the game and fish fund's allocation to the administrative costs with the general fund appropriation. That would allow more money from the game and fish fund to

pay for projects that improve the state's natural resources.

Under Holsten's proposal, \$2 of revenue from the fee increase would be matched by \$1 from the general fund. The fee increases are projected to raise about \$3.1 million in revenue for the 2002-03 biennium, and the general fund match would be slightly more than \$1.5 million.

The bill also would include a \$500,000 general fund appropriation to pay for walleye stocking.

crease said it would be hard to justify in light of the state's budget surplus.

That prompted Gov. Jesse Ventura to veto nearly \$1.6 million from the DNR's budget. In his veto message, he wrote, "My support for general fund increases in these activities was contingent upon passage of legislation increasing the (license) fees."

While the state's economic growth has caused the general fund revenue to increase in recent years, that has not affected the game and fish fund because of its reliance on revenue from licenses.

Hunting and fishing license fees were increased in 1991, and fishing license fees were again increased in 1997.

In 1998, game and fish fund revenues were about \$56 million.

The bill now moves to the House Ways and Means Committee.

Holsten has proposed two other bills that would help divert more money to maintaining the state's natural resources.

One bill (HF1092) would allocate a portion of revenue from lottery ticket sales to the game and fish fund. That bill was heard Feb. 18 by the House Taxes Committee and could be included in this year's omnibus tax bill.

Another bill (HF3426) would put a consti-

Proposed fee increases (current fees in parentheses)	
<p>Resident hunting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small game, \$12 (\$10) • Small game, age 65+, \$6 (\$5) • Deer, \$25 (\$22) • Youth deer, \$5.50 (\$5) • Moose, \$310 (\$275) • Bear, \$38 (\$33) • Turkey, \$18 (\$16) • Elk, \$250 (\$220) <p>Nonresident hunting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small game, \$73 (\$56) • Deer, \$125 (\$110) • Bear, \$195 (\$165) • Turkey, \$73 (\$56) 	<p>Resident fishing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling, \$16 (\$15) • Angling, age 65+, \$6.50 (\$5.50) • Angling, married couple, \$25 (\$20.50) • Spearing, \$16 (\$15) • Angling for one day \$8.50, (\$8) <p>Nonresident fishing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angling, \$34 (\$31) • Angling, 7 days, \$24 (\$21.50) • Angling, 72 hours, \$20 (\$18) • Angling, married couple, \$46 (\$41.50) • Angling, 14 days, \$35 (\$32) • Angling for 24 hours \$8.50, (\$8)

Currently, Minnesota's license fees are among the lowest of the four surrounding states, and they still would be under the proposal.

The same proposal had been part of the environment finance panel's 1999 omnibus bill, but the House voted to remove the license fee increases. When the proposal was debated on the House floor, opponents of the fee in-

tutional amendment before voters in the 2000 election. The amendment would divert a small portion of sales tax revenue to pay for various environmental improvements, including fish and wildlife resource enhancement and improvement.

That bill has not yet been heard in the House.

Tax was a hard sell

Lawmakers battled for more than 30 years before making Minnesota one of the last states to institute the sales tax

By DAVID MAEDA

Minnesota faces frequent criticism for the taxes it imposes on its residents.

And when each visit to a merchant's counter requires a person to plow down six-and-a-half pennies for every dollar's worth of goods, it's not hard to imagine why the criticism exists.

But consider this: Minnesota was one of the last states to institute a sales tax, and the sales tax did not become law until the late 1960s.

Political conflict over economic and tax issues stood in the way of a statewide sales tax for more than 30 years — from the early days of the Great Depression until the day it became law.

The first states to consider implementing a sales tax did so during the Great Depression because they were struggling to provide basic services.

As pressure grew from counties, cities, and towns to transfer property tax revenue to the local level, states looked for alternative funding sources. In 1932, Mississippi became the first state to approve a sales tax, settling on a 2 percent tax rate.

The following year nine states followed suit, including California, Illinois, and Michigan. By the end of World War II, 23 states had some form of sales tax in place. Minnesota lawmakers discussed, debated, and rejected the new form of revenue repeatedly throughout that time, as it seemed public sentiment was strongly against the new form of taxation.

To help alleviate property tax rates, the 1935 Legislature passed a measure creating a state sales tax but Gov. Floyd Olson vetoed the bill. Olson, like other critics of sales taxes, argued the tax was regressive, meaning that all people regardless of their income paid the same percentage. Therefore those with lower incomes paid proportionately more than those with higher incomes.

From 1935 to 1945, each legislative session provided some reduction in the state's property tax rates along with discussion of a possible state sales tax. It was continually evident as government services continued to expand that alternative sources of revenue were strongly needed. Then came the booming wartime and post-war



Gov. Harold LeVander vetoed a 1967 bill calling for a 3 percent sales tax, but the Legislature, led by members of his own party, voted to override the veto.

economy, which temporarily alleviated the need to search for new sources of revenue. But by the mid-1950s debate again focused on reforms to the state's tax system.

In 1959, Gov. Orville Freeman, a DFLer, clashed with Republican lawmakers over the direction Minnesota government should take in reforming its tax structure. To address growing deficits, Freeman proposed increasing income taxes and establishing the state's first automatic withholding of taxes.

The latter proposal was made to reduce the number of people guilty of tax evasion, and it promised the state additional revenue up front. The federal government had begun automatic withholding of federal income taxes in 1943 and had actually established the method of automatic withholding with the creation of the Social Security system in 1937.

Many of the Republican legislators opposed both of Freeman's proposals, instead favoring

a creation of a sales tax. The session (and subsequent special session) lasted a record six months with no resolution to the tax debate.

In 1967, Minnesota was enjoying a relatively strong economy, including a \$130 million surplus. The major tax issue of that year's session again focused on finding a method to reduce property tax rates, which by that time provided 48 percent of all state and local revenue.

Several lawmakers said Minnesota's high property taxes were driving businesses out of the state. As talk focused on the creation of a sales tax, Gov. Harold LeVander said he would veto any bill that contained a sales tax provision and did not also contain a clause for a referendum on the issue.

But members of LeVander's own Republican party, which had a majority in both the House and Senate, disregarded the governor's warning and passed a measure creating a 3 percent sales tax without a referendum provision.

The 1967 Property Tax Reform and Relief Act reduced local real estate taxes by 35 percent. The bill dedicated one-fourth of the revenue generated by the sales tax to local units of government and school districts. It exempted food prepared at home, clothing, gasoline, prescription drugs and health aids, as well as most services, hotel and motel rooms, and utilities such as gas, electricity, water, and local telephone calls from the new sales tax.

True to his word, the governor vetoed the bill. The House then voted to override the governor's veto. But the Senate, despite a majority vote, didn't have the necessary two-thirds majority required for a veto override.

LeVander called a special session during which both the House and Senate re-passed the tax bill containing the 3 percent state sales tax. LeVander again vetoed the bill. But this time both the House and Senate voted to override the veto.

It was the first time in state history that a governor's own party voted twice to overturn his veto. Thus, Minnesota became the 44th state to have a sales tax. Only five states currently do not have a state sales tax. They are Alaska, Delaware, Montana, New Hampshire, and Oregon.

In 1971, the Minnesota sales tax rate was increased from 3 to 4 percent. In 1981, it was raised to 5 percent, and two years later it increased to 6 percent.

In 1991, the Legislature, facing a serious budget deficit, agreed to raise the rate to its current 6.5 percent. 🐻

Monday, March 6**HF4030—Erhardt (R)****Taxes**

General education tax exemption provided for agricultural and homestead property, property tax class rates reduced, new homestead credit program established, state aid reductions and levy provided, and money appropriated.

HF4031—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, trades personnel authorized to elect an exclusion from Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) plan coverage.

HF4032—Mares (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Refurbished computer program for schools extended.

HF4033—Nornes (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 544, Fergus Falls, fund transfer authorized.

HF4034—Westerberg (R)**Taxes**

Blaine City Hall and police department construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF4035—Wenzel (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Mid-State education district grant authorized for model program development, and money appropriated.

HF4036—Paulsen (R)**Taxes**

Individual income tax social security income subtraction provided.

HF4037—Gerlach (R)**Commerce**

Municipal liquor store wine tastings authorized.

HF4038—Hausman (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

St. Croix River Bridge required to be a toll bridge and trunk highway bonds issued.

HF4039—Huntley (DFL)**Transportation Finance**

University of Minnesota, Duluth, transit demonstration and bus pass program established, and money appropriated.

HF4040—Larson, D. (DFL)**Taxes**

Gumballs sales tax exemption provided.

HF4041—Gerlach (R)**Education Policy**

Board of Teaching community expert teaching eligibility pre-approval authorized.

HF4042—Dawkins (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

St. Paul Housing and Redevelopment Authority tax increment financing housing district created.

HF4043—Leppik (R)**Capital Investment**

Higher education bonding bill and money appropriated.

HF4044—Otremba (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Physically disabled person definition expanded to include pregnant women and mothers of children under one year for parking purposes.

HF4045—Larsen, P. (R)**Taxes**

Private noncommercial aircraft storage hangars on leased airport land property tax exemption provided.

HF4046—Chaudhary (DFL)**Taxes**

Private noncommercial aircraft storage hangars on leased airport land property tax exemption provided.

HF4047—Boudreau (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Suicide prevention plan appropriated money.

HF4048—Carlson (DFL)**Education Policy**

Profile of Learning moratorium established pending conditions, educational standards and assessments reviewed, technology needs addressed, student course grades scoring criteria provided, and curriculum and instructional practices improved.

HF4049—Seifert, J. (R)**Commerce**

Cable and modem communications modified, clarified, and recodified.

HF4050—Tunheim (DFL)**Taxes**

Partial fuel tax refund authorized for commercial recreational fishing launch owners.

HF4051—Tomassoni (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Blaine National Sports Center renamed Rudy Perpich memorial national sports center.

HF4052—Peterson (DFL)**Commerce**

Third-party claimants not affected by retroactive automobile insurance policy cancellations and condition specified.

HF4053—Tunheim (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Marginal cost pupil units definition modified.

HF4054—Luther (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Healthy women campaign established to provide family planning community resource information and referrals, toll-free number and Web site provided, and money appropriated.

HF4055—Kelliher (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Fishing in designated swimming areas prohibited.

HF4056—Dorn (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

General education revenue specified allocation provisions repealed.

HF4057—Pugh (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

West St. Paul amortization of signs authorized.

HF4058—Jennings (DFL)**Agriculture Policy**

Minnesota State Fair; state agricultural society membership, security, and liquor sale provisions modified; and fair foundation authorized.

Wednesday, March 8**HF4059—Fuller (R)****Higher Education Finance**

Bemidji State University and Northwest Technical College improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF4060—McCollum (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

POW/MIA; President and Congress memorialized to take necessary action to obtain the release of American prisoners in North Korea, China, Russian, and Vietnam.

HF4061—Solberg (DFL)**Taxes**

Itasca and Cass counties casino tax revenues distribution modified.

HF4062—Paulsen (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Tobacco settlement revenues credited to the health care access fund, provider premium tax modified, and contingent elimination of MinnesotaCare provider taxes created.

HF4063—Larsen, P. (R)**Judiciary Finance**

Board of Public Defense deficiency funded and money appropriated.

HF4064—Leppik (R)**Higher Education Finance**

E-mentoring pilot project established and money appropriated.

HF4065—Rostberg (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Cambridge Community College connection to city sewer and water costs reimbursed, and money appropriated.

HF4066—Abeler (R)**Education Policy**

Trespasses on school property provisions modified related to parents and guardians.

HF4067—Krinkie (R)**State Government Finance**

Governor's authority to control state bonds and certificates of indebtedness eliminated.

HF4068—Otremba (DFL)**Education Policy**

Area learning centers Profile of Learning alternative authorized.

HF4069—Pugh (DFL)**Civil Law**

Equality of rights for men and women provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF4070—Pugh (DFL)**Taxes**

Smoking cessation devices sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF4071—Molnau (R)**Transportation Finance**

Hiawatha corridor light-rail transit bonding authority removed, exclusive bus transitway provided, and money appropriated.

HF4072—Molnau (R)**Transportation Finance**

Hiawatha corridor light rail-transit authority portion changed to exclusive bus transitway design and construction, remainder canceled, and previous appropriation reduced.

HF4073—Abrams (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Legislative budget office established and money appropriated.

HF4074—Schumacher (DFL)**Civil Law**

Civil commitment relative notification provided, minor voluntary treatment consent provisions modified, and early intervention treatment and commitment provisions modified.

HF4075—Gray (DFL)**Family & Early Childhood****Education Finance**

Adolescent child care program for students created.

HF4076—Haake (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Internet state agency grant information required and uniform application developed.

HF4077—Howes (R)**Taxes**

Forest land taxation studied, report required, and money appropriated.

HF4078—Knoblach (R)**Capital Investment**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) improvements provided, and Minnesota West Community and Technical College land lease authorized.

HF4079—Solberg (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Northwest Technical College and Bemidji State University improvements provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

Thursday, March 9**HF4080—Holsten (R)****Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Environmental & natural resources appropriations bill.

HF4081—Leighton (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Minnesota State Colleges & Universities (MNSCU) health care insurance cost increases covered and money appropriated.

HF4082—Rest (DFL)**Taxes**

Taxpayer assistance services studied and report required.

HF4083—Kahn (DFL)**Taxes**

Low alcohol dairy mixed cocktails separate excise tax provided.

HF4084—Kuisle (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

County criminal justice aid increased.

HF4085—Krinkie (R)**Transportation Finance**

Light-rail transit and enhanced bus services comparison required prior to funding.

HF4086—Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

Elderly homeowners additional property tax refund provided.

HF4087—McElroy (R)**Taxes**

Twin Cities metropolitan area transit property tax levy eliminated and money appropriated.

HF4088—Kelliher (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Minneapolis Community Development Agency housing tax increment financing district created and original net tax capacity established.

Reflections

U.S. presidential candidates have conducted some intensive national political campaigning during the past year. So much this past week, one would think today that campaigning is now completed and we know who will be the next president.

But the political process is not that simple, especially in a race for public office at the highest level. Rather, it is a complex system that begins, not so much in New Hampshire and Iowa, but in urban and rural areas like the neighborhoods and communities where Minnesotans live.

Here is the first opportunity for statewide citizens to get involved in the political process.

This week, on "Super Tuesday" March 7, 16 states across the country held 11 primaries and five caucuses to elect delegates who will nominate a presidential candidate or endorse individuals seeking state offices. Minnesota is one of the five states that held a precinct caucus on this date.

The precinct caucus gives the average citizen an opportunity to meet with others to elect political party delegates to serve at county and district conventions. These grass roots participants also present issues

they think will be significant in constructing a statewide party platform.

If all of Minnesota's eligible voters went to a caucus where a candidate is nominated for president or endorsed to run for state or federal office, an average of 849 people would show up for each precinct caucus across the state. But only about 3 percent of the state's eligible voters get involved this early in the process.

Based on these figures, an average of 26 citizens would go to a caucus at one of 4,068 election precincts across the state. But, in reality, caucus participant totals range from two to 300 individuals.

Each political party will hold a separate caucus in a given precinct and site to elect delegates who will ultimately make final decisions and endorsements at the party's state convention.

Within state guidelines, political parties set their own rules for conducting business. By March 12 in the state, four political parties conducted precinct caucuses — the Constitution, Democratic-Farmer-Labor,

Independence, and Republican parties. All elected delegates to serve at a state convention to nominate their leaders.

But caucuses conduct business in a very different manner. Some caucuses are entrenched with single-issue participants who are quite successful in getting their voices heard over the requests of others. They come prepared with organized plans for electing a majority of delegates.

Others may go through an odd process called a "walking sub-caucus."

In order to have many delegates support their causes, walking sub-caucus participants are given time to join together to form a united bloc of voters. Here they show strength in numbers to be assured that the delegates elected will support their beliefs.

Where else but in America's backyard can "human rights for all" individuals, anti-gay marriage groups, "fill in the wetlands" folks, and "save the environment" rank and file come together to elect delegates to ensure that their voices will be heard?

—LECLAIR G. LAMBERT

Schedule is subject to change.
 For information updates, call House Calls at (651) 296-9283.
 All meetings are open to the public.
 Sign language interpreter services: (651) 224-6548 v/tty.
 To have the House committee schedule delivered to your e-mail address, send an e-mail message to join-houseschedule@ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us or direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/scripts/lyris.pl?join=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

MONDAY, March 13

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: HF3818 (Otremba) County-based purchasing medical assistance per capita payment modified.
 HF3384 (Van Dellen) University of Minnesota Board of Regents type 1 diabetes research grant provided and money appropriated.
 Other bills to be announced.
Note: The health and human services omnibus bill will be made available to the public after 4 p.m. Location to be announced.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: Omnibus jobs finance bill mark-up.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie
Agenda: Omnibus state government finance bill.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: HF3886 (Krinkie) Light rail transit funding canceled and bonding reduced.
 HF4071 (Molnau) Hiawatha corridor light rail transit bonding authority removed, exclusive bus transitway provided, and money appropriated.
 HF3723 (Molnau) Major transportation projects account established in the trunk highway fund, bonds issued, and money appropriated.
 HF4020 (Molnau) Intergovernmental cooperative facilities loan fund established, and transportation revolving loan fund and state trunk highway construction projects appropriated money.

10 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: HF2552 (Anderson, I.) County stream maintenance program grants provided and money appropriated.
 HF3240 (Finseth) Agricultural land set aside and payment program established, and money appropriated.
 HFXXXX (Holsten) Omnibus environment finance bill.
Note: The committee will reconvene in 10 State Office Building immediately after session.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF3800 (Seagren) Omnibus K-12 finance bill.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HF4030 (Erhardt) General education tax exemption provided for agricultural and homestead property, property tax class rates reduced, new homestead credit program established, state aid reductions and levy provided, and money appropriated.
 HF4009 (Goodno) Local government aid payments to cities increased.
 HF4077 (Howes) Forest land taxation studied, report required, and money appropriated.
 HF3930 (Dawkins) Capital region watershed district authorized to exceed levy limits.
 HF3992 (Mulder) Lincoln County agricultural and homestead credit and adjustments provided, and money appropriated.
 Additional bills may be added.
Note: If necessary, the committee will reconvene after session in 5 State Office Building.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

500N State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Committee omnibus bill.
Note: The committee will reconvene after session as needed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Peg Larsen
Agenda: HF3685 (Westfall) Aggregate resources management provided and money appropriated.
 HF2483 (Erickson) Pollution Control Agency termination of the Mille Lacs water resources agreement required.

3 p.m.

The House meets in session.

15 minutes after session

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF3800 (Seagren) Omnibus K-12 finance bill.

TUESDAY, March 14

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: HF2699DE (Goodno) Omnibus health and human services bill.
Note: The meeting will reconvene at 3 p.m. in 10 State Office Building.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie
Agenda: Omnibus state government finance bill.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: HF2891 (Molnau) Omnibus transportation finance bill.

9 a.m.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

200 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren
Agenda: HF3800 (Seagren) Omnibus K-12 finance bill.

10 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment
Agenda: HF3426 (Holsten) Sales tax receipts portion dedicated to natural resources purposes and constitutional amendment proposed.
 Other bills to be announced.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
 Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HF3057 (McElroy) Business subsidy provisions clarified.
 HF3772 (McElroy) Individual income tax education credit modified.
 HF3905 (Harder) S corporations federal tax treatment conformity provided.
 HF3907 (Molnau) Department of Transportation trunk highway fund sales tax exemption provided.
 HF3987 (Pawlenty) Individual income tax adoption credit authorized.
Note: The committee will recess and reconvene at 3 p.m. in 5 State Office Building.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness
Agenda: To be announced.

3 p.m.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HF446 (Kuisle) Passenger automobile registration tax depreciation rate decreased, motor vehicle sales tax revenue allocated, portion deposited in the highway user tax distribution fund, and constitutional amendment proposed.
HF3810 (Kuisle) Eligible interstate carrier vehicles and engines sales and use tax exemption provided.
HF3967 (Vandever) Passenger automobile registration tax credit provided.
HF3272 (Swapinski) Local excise tax on motor vehicles limited.

WEDNESDAY, March 15

8 a.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno
Agenda: Discussion of case-mix audits. Discussion of HF2713 (Rest) Funeral acts and services regulated, and pre-need arrangement requirements established.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau
Agenda: HF2891 (Molnau) Omnibus transportation finance bill.

10 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten
Agenda: To be announced.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HF3116 (Abrams) Tax increment financing district reporting requirements modified.
HF3675 (Abrams) Tax increment financing district property tax abatement agreements authorized and abatement duration extended.
HF3619 (Rest) Tax increment financing district pooling authorized for qualified low-income housing developments.

HF3458 (Haas) Brooklyn Park Economic Development Authority's tax increment financing district No. 18 parcel inclusion regulated.

HF3920 (Davids) Fountain tax increment financing district duration extension authorized.
HF3743 (Dawkins) Tax increment financing redevelopment district definition expanded.

Additional bills will be added.
Note: The order of consideration for these bills is subject to change. Please check the meeting schedule for a possible time change to 9 a.m.-12 noon.

The full Tax Committee will meet 15 minutes after session. The Property Tax Committee will meet immediately following adjournment of the Tax Committee to consider HFXXXX (Abrams) Property tax bill.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora
Agenda: Update on Early Care & Education Finance Commission and related issues: David Nasby, General Mills Foundation; Allen Quist, former legislator; and Don Fraser, former mayor of Minneapolis.
Report by Humphrey Institute on University of Minnesota research and initiatives dealing with early childhood.
Child care; report by Department of Children, Families and Learning on employer pre-tax accounts.

3 p.m.

The House meets in session.

After session

TAXES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HF3800 (Seagren) K-12 bill.

Immediately following Taxes

Property Tax Division/TAXES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt
Agenda: HFXXXX (Abrams) Property tax bill.

THURSDAY, March 16

10 a.m.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: HF3307 (Rest) Job training program income tax credit and participant income limit modified, authorized credit amounts increased, and permanent credit provided.
HF4007 (Rest) Failure to pay income or franchise taxes civil penalty modified.
HF4010 (Jennings) Ski area machinery and equipment sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF3208 (Dawkins) Residential real estate held in trust homestead treatment clarified, appeal periods consistency provided, and specified uniform probate code provisions modified. Others may be added.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Ness
Agenda: To be announced.

3 p.m.

The House meets in session.

FRIDAY, March 17

8 a.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy
Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: To be announced.

What's on the Web

Session Daily is the new online companion to *Session Weekly* magazine, which is published by the nonpartisan House Public Information Office.

As the name suggests, the Web page offers news from the House on a daily basis, so you can stay on top of major events at the Capitol. Brief but informative updates about daily committee and floor action are posted before 8 a.m. Monday through Friday.

Session Daily includes the latest House committee schedule and offers links to useful resources, such as bill introductions and pages with information about lawmakers and committees. You can also view an archive of previous Session Daily postings.

Be sure to bookmark Session Daily and check back regularly.

To find the page, just go to the main House of Representatives site (www.house.leg.state.mn.us) then click on the link labeled "Session Daily."



Name Pronunciation Guide

2000 Minnesota House of Representatives

Abeler, Jim	ABE-ler	Holsten, Mark William		Paulsen, Erik	
Abrams, Ron		Howes, Larry		Pawlenty, Tim	paw-LENTY
Anderson, Bruce		Huntley, Thomas		Paymar, Michael	
Anderson, Irv		Jaros, Mike	YAHR-ohs	Pelowski Jr., Gene	
Bakk, Thomas (Tom)	BOCK	Jennings, Loren Geo		Peterson, Doug	
Biernat, Len	BE-AIR-nat	Johnson, Alice M.		Pugh, Thomas W.	PEW
Bishop, Dave		Juhnke, Al	JUNK-ee	Rest, Ann H.	
Boudreau, Lynda	boo-DROH	Kahn, Phyllis		Reuter, Doug	ROOT-er
Bradley, Fran		Kalis, Henry J.	KAH-liss	Rhodes, Jim	
Broecker, Sherry	BROKE-er	Kelliher, Margaret Anderson	KELL-a-her	Rifenberg, Michelle	RIFF-en-berg
Buesgens, Mark	BISK-ens	Kielkucki, Tony	keel-COO-ski	Rostberg, Jim	
Carlson, Lyndon R.		Knoblach, Jim	NOB-lock	Rukavina, Tom	roo-ka-VEEN-a
Carruthers, Phil	ka-RUH-thers	Koskinen, Luanne		Schumacher, Leslie J.	SHOE-mocker
Cassell, George	CASTLE	Krinkie, Philip		Seagren, Alice	
Chaudhary, Satveer	CHAW-dree, SUT-veer	Kubly, Gary W.	KOO-blee	Seifert, Jim	SY-fert
Clark, James T.		Kuisle, William	KWEEZ-lee	Seifert, Marty	SY-fert
Clark, Karen		Larsen, Peg		Skoe, Rod	SKOY
Daggett, Roxann	DAG-et	Larson, Dan		Skoglund, Wes	SKOHG-lund
Dauids, Gregory M.		Leighton, Rob	LAY-ton	Smith, Steve	
Dawkins, Andy		Lenczewski, Ann	len-CHESS-key	Solberg, Loren A.	
Dehler, Steve	DAY-ler	Leppik, Peggy		Stanek, Rich	
Dempsey, Jerry		Lieder, Bernie L.	LEED-er	Stang, Doug	
Dorman, Dan		Lindner, Arlon		Storm, Julie	
Dorn, John		Luther, Darlene		Sviggum, Steve	SWIG-um
Entenza, Matt		Mahoney, Tim		Swapinski, Dale	swah-PIN-ski
Erhardt, Ron	AIR-hart	Mares, Harry	MAIRS	Swenson, Howard	
Erickson, Sondra		Mariani, Carlos	mar-ee-ON-ee	Sykora, Barb	sick-OR-ah
Finseth, Tim		Marko, Sharon		Tingelstad, Kathy	
Folliard, Betty	FOLLY-ard	McCollum, Betty	mah-CALL-um	Tomassoni, David J.	tom-a-SONY
Fuller, Doug		McElroy, Dan	MACK-el-roy	Trimble, Steve	
Gerlach, Chris	GER-lock	McGuire, Mary Jo		Tuma, John	TOO-ma
Gleason, Mark S.		Milbert, Bob		Tunheim, Jim	TON-hyme
Goodno, Kevin		Molnau, Carol L.	MOLE-now	Van Dellen, Henry Todd	
Gray, Gregory		Mulder, Richard		Vandeveer, Ray	
Greenfield, Lee		Mullery, Joe		Wagenius, Jean	wa-GHEEN-yus
Greiling, Mindy	GRY-ling	Murphy, Mary		Wejcman, Linda	WAITS-man
Gunther, Bob		Ness, Robert "Bob"		Wenzel, Stephen G.	WEN-zel
Haake, Barb	HOCKEY	Nornes, Bud	NOR-ness	Westerberg, Andy	
Haas, Bill	HAHZ	Olson, Mark		Westfall, Robert L. (Bob)	
Hackbarth, Tom		Opatz, Joe	OH-patz	Westrom, Torrey	
Harder, Elaine		Orfield, Myron		Wilkin, Tim	
Hasskamp, Kris		Osskopp, Mike	AHZ-cop	Winter, Ted	
Hausman, Alice		Osthoff, Tom	AHST-hoff	Wolf, Ken	
Hilty, Bill		Otremba, Mary Ellen	oh-TREM-ba	Workman, Tom	
Holberg, Mary Liz		Ozment, Dennis	AHZ-ment		

As of December 30, 1999

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155-1298

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MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Growth in charitable gambling

Gross fiscal year 1999 receipts from charitable gambling (pulltabs, bingo raffles) in Minnesota, in billions	\$1.45
Prizes paid, in billions	\$1.18
Payroll and operating costs, in millions	\$127.4
State taxes paid, in millions	\$62.6
Funds contributed to charities, in millions	\$78.5
Growth in charitable gambling over previous fiscal year, as percent	3
Fiscal year 1999 receipts from pulltabs, in billions	\$1.35
From bingo, in millions	\$76.2
From paddlewheels, in millions	\$15.6
From raffles, in millions	\$3.8
From tipboards, in millions	\$3.3
Net receipts from charitable gambling of Multiple Sclerosis Society, in millions	\$6.4
Rank among state's charitable gambling operators	1
Net receipts from bingo of Little Canada Charity Plus, Inc.	\$511,000
Rank among state's bingo operators	1
Organizations licensed for charitable gambling operations	1,521
Veterans groups	407
Churches	30
Snowmobile clubs	30
Fraternal groups (Lions Club, Moose Lodge, Elks Club, etc.)	316
Gross receipts from charitable gambling in Hennepin County (highest in state), in millions	\$203.7
Cook County (lowest in state)	\$34,000
Year bingo was legalized for nonprofit organizations in Minnesota	1945
Year pulltabs were legalized	1981
Gross receipts of Minnesota State Lottery in fiscal year 1999, in millions	\$392
Prizes paid, in millions	\$235.3

Sources: *Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1999*, Minnesota Gambling Control Board; *Charitable Gambling in Minnesota*, House Research Department, 1998; Minnesota State Lottery (www.lottery.state.mn.us).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SESSION

Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

MARCH 17, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 7



In this issue:

FUNDING FOR THE OUTDOORS,

PROFILE CHANGES & TRANSIT SPENDING

SESSION Weekly

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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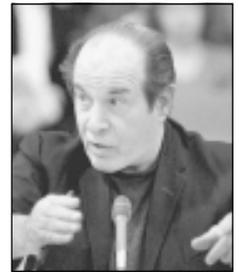
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On the cover: The House Civil Law Committee meets in the newly remodeled and modernized Basement Hearing Room in the State Office Building. Three other hearing rooms will be remodeled during the next interim.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Creating a new stream

Plan would devote a share of sales-tax revenue to environmental projects

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

Former Minnesota Vikings coach Bud Grant, who is also well-known as a hunter and fisherman, said recently that he's tired of watching the state allow natural resources to deteriorate because of a lack of funding.

"Many people are envious that I live in the state of Minnesota and am able to take part in what we have," Grant said. "And they're mystified that we have so many problems. I'm tired of hearing so many problems with our (Department of Natural Resources)."

Grant was one of about a dozen people who testified before the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee March 14 in favor of a bill that seeks a new stream of permanent revenue for the environment.

The bill (HF3426), sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), would place a constitutional amendment on the November ballot asking voters whether three-sixteenths of one percent of the state's 6.5 percent sales tax should be dedicated to various natural resources purposes.

The bill specifically states that the funds could not be used as a substitute for any traditional sources of funding.

The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Rules Committee.

The measure comes in the midst of criticism by members of the House environment committees that the governor did not recommend adequate funding for environmental projects. Furthermore, some argue that there is not enough money to address all the infrastructure needs in state parks.

Many environment and natural resources programs are funded solely by hunting and fishing license fees and could face a shortfall in coming years.

For example, improving water quality, stocking fish and enhancing aquatic vegetation, and increasing public water access are all paid for out of the game and fish fund. Though some federal dollars (25 percent) support the fund, the rest comes from various fishing and hunting license fees.

The Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee approved a separate bill

to increase license fees March 6. However, officials say the Legislature needs to develop a more long-term funding plan to handle needs as they evolve.

Grant agreed. He said the Legislature shouldn't wait for the governor to make natural resources a priority and that the people of Minnesota would stand behind that decision.

"With our lack of leadership at the top, we have an opportunity to take control of this for the people of Minnesota," Grant said. "We can't expect a lot of help (from the governor), but we can from you."

Holsten's constitutional amendment proposal would raise about \$112 million annually, according to current estimates. If the amendment passes, that money would be divided as follows:

- 45 percent of proceeds (about \$50 million) would go to the game and fish fund for activities that improve, enhance, or protect game and fish resources;
- 25 percent (\$28 million) would be dedi-

cated to the natural resources fund for state parks and trails;

- 25 percent of the revenue would be deposited in the natural resources fund for metropolitan parks and trail grants;
- 3 percent (\$3.36 million) would go to the natural resources fund for local trail grants; and
- 2 percent (\$2.24 million) would be deposited in the natural resources fund for the Minnesota Zoo, the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, and the Duluth Zoo.

Judy Erickson, government relations director for the Parks and Trails Council, said there were 8.6 million visitors to state parks in 1999. Though it's a well-used system that does generate revenue for the Department of Natural Resources, a number of facilities are set to close statewide because there's not enough money to keep them going.

Holsten's proposal would go a long way to improve resource management and park development, Erickson said.

Nancy Jobe, from the Minnesota Outdoor Heritage Alliance, and her daughter Alyssa Kerber, 12, both of Eden Prairie, testified that the bill is a good way to address the long-term funding concerns for natural resources.

Kerber said the Legislature needs to take care of the problem now to protect natural resources for future generations to enjoy.

"I think this bill is absolutely essential to protect them," said Kerber. "Otherwise, I'm going to have to come back here in 30 years and fix it and I wouldn't enjoy that."

Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul) said he was concerned that the number of environmental bills would diminish support for the

constitutional amendment proposal. He asked many of the supporters if they would choose the sales-tax proposal over major initiatives



Bud Grant testifies March 14 in front of the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee in support of a bill that would place a constitutional amendment on the November ballot to dedicate a portion of sales tax receipts to natural resources purposes.

such as the so-called "Legacy 2000" environmental bill or a bill calling for increases in fishing and hunting license fees.

He also said Holsten's sales-tax proposal isn't the right solution to the funding crunch.

"We should be taking the surplus dollars and doing the right thing by the environment," Osthoff said.

Earlier this session, the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee recommended spending \$195 million in environment-related capital projects, in a measure known as "Legacy 2000." Ventura had suggested spending \$125 million.

Among criticisms of Ventura's bonding plan was the fact that it didn't take advantage of federal funds available if matched with state funds. For instance, the state will lose funds for the Conservation Resource Enhancement Program, to restore land and habitat along the Minnesota River, if it doesn't match them by September 2002.

The environment bonding recommendations await action by the House Capital Investment Committee.

Several members of the environment policy committee said they wanted to keep Holsten's measure alive, despite their concerns.

Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul) said she was concerned about the wording of the actual question to be placed on the ballot. She also said she's concerned that creating the dedicated revenue could cause future Legislatures to decrease traditional funding for natural resources because those programs are getting funds this way.

She used the Environmental Trust Fund as an example.

The fund, established in 1988, receives 40 percent of the state's lottery proceeds for environmental projects.

Since the fund was established, general fund spending for the environment has remained steady or increased slightly.

Nevertheless, both Jobe and Grant said Minnesotans would support the amendment.

"If we can get this constitutional amendment on the ballot, I guarantee it'll pass," Grant said.

If the amendment makes it onto the November ballot, it would require a majority of all the people voting in the election. Those who leave the question blank on the ballot would be counted as "no" votes. 

Correction

A story in the March 10 issue of *Session Weekly* incorrectly stated that an abortion consent measure would establish civil penalties against a woman when an abortion is performed without meeting the consent requirements. The bill (HF178) actually would provide that a woman or the parents of a minor could pursue a civil suit against a doctor who performed an abortion without meeting the consent requirements. We regret the error.



No 'plan or purpose'

1909 report decried the troubles of the Legislature

At the root of the debate over whether a unicameral system is better than a bicameral system for Minnesota is the notion that reform is needed in the legislative process.

Proponents of a unicameral model say the current system is too difficult for the average citizen to understand. They also argue that the process allows conference committees too much power.

But those who support the current system say the complexity is necessary because bills should be scrutinized from many different points of view, and it should not be easy to pass new laws.

Such debates over reforming the legis-

islature unless the author were willing to secure votes through log-rolling," Haines wrote. "He would have to support the pet measure of each of a majority of colleagues before he could obtain their support for his bill."

To alleviate the dependence on log-rolling, Haines proposed that the state consider adopting an initiative and referendum system allowing voters to initiate and pass legislation.

"With the power of veto vested in the people, individuals or interests would rarely take the trouble to bribe or coerce a Legislature into the enactment of an iniquitous law," he said.

"It impressed me powerfully to witness how a Legislature could manifest so little of statesmanship, so woeful a lack of patriotic plan and purpose."

—Lynn Haines

lative process are hardly new.

Back in 1909 a man named Lynn Haines produced a scathing report on the activities of that year's House and Senate. Haines, who was described in the foreword to the report as "a distinguished American scholar," later became the editor of "Searchlight on Congress," a publication of the National Voters' League.

In the report, Haines alleged that the major decisions made by the 1909 Legislature were consistently made in the best interests of the major corporations and not the people of the state.

"It impressed me powerfully to witness how a Legislature could manifest so little of statesmanship, so woeful a lack of patriotic plan and purpose," Haines wrote.

He said one of the "pernicious evils in Minnesota lawmaking" was the influence of what was known as "log-rolling." The term applied to the process of trading votes in order to get a measure passed.

"If a bill were introduced to bring Heaven to Minnesota and keep it here, the measure could hardly pass our state Leg-

islature unless the author were willing to secure votes through log-rolling," Haines wrote. "He would have to support the pet measure of each of a majority of colleagues before he could obtain their support for his bill."

While the merits of initiative and referendum are still being debated by today's Legislature, there have been substantial rule changes in the process since 1909. One of the more significant is the requirement that a public record be kept of each committee hearing.

Back in 1909 there was no such requirement, and Haines wrote of the difficulty in ascertaining not only what went on in hearings but how members actually voted on the bills before the committee. Today, minutes are kept and each hearing is audio-taped. Both are available to the public.

Despite Haines' severe criticism of the 1909 Legislature, he didn't see the entire membership as being corrupt.

"Let it be understood that the last Legislature contained some of the ablest and most conscientious citizens of the state," he wrote.

(D. MAEDA)

★ **AGRICULTURE**

Omnibus spending bill

The House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee approved an omnibus bill that would provide both supplemental and new funding for farm programs and research.

The bill (HF3844), sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), would provide supplemental funding for the state's ethanol producer payment program, the Farm Advocates program, state meat inspection, and farm business planning activities.

An increase in maximum state participation in beginning farmer, restructured loan, seller-sponsored loan, and agricultural improvement loan programs would also occur under Ness' bill, which emerged from the committee March 14.

Furthermore, changes to rules regarding eligibility in the restructured loan and livestock expansion loan programs are addressed in the bill.

New funding would be provided for an agro-forestry loan program and run-off pollution research. The agro-forestry loan program would help finance the production of short-rotation wood crops in Minnesota.

The omnibus bill would increase general fund spending on agriculture by \$4.9 million in fiscal year 2001. That includes an appropriation of \$135,000 to the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture for a grant to develop farm business software to complement existing farm management tools.

Eligibility caps for some Rural Finance Authority programs would be increased under the bill, and an increase in Agriculture Chemical Response and Reimbursement Account funding would be provided for farm sites where clean-up activities are particularly expensive.

The bill also includes a resolution asking the state of Iowa to accelerate its program of swine pseudorabies control and eradication.

The House Ways and Means Committee later approved the bill and rolled it into a larger funding measure, which now heads to the House floor.

★ **BONDING**

Bonding bill unveiled

The House Capital Investment Committee is considering a bonding bill that would spend roughly the same amount as Gov. Jesse Ventura's capital budget plan. But the two proposals have several differences in terms of spending priorities.

The committee discussed the bill (HF4078) March 16, and it was scheduled for a vote that evening (after this edition of *Session Weekly* went to press).

Overall, the bill would spend nearly \$526 million, which includes \$32 million in cancellations from old projects. Of that total, Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud) said the bill would use slightly less than \$400 million in general obligation bonding, \$68.6 million in user-financed bonds, and \$20.6 million from the Trunk Highway Fund.

Ventura's plan calls for \$499 million in capital projects, which includes \$37 million in cancellations. The governor would use \$400 million in general obligation bonding, \$1 million directly from the general fund, \$34 million in user-financed bonds, and \$27 million from the Trunk Highway Fund.

One of the governor's top priorities is to spend \$58 million for a new building for the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. But the bill would spend only \$28 million to build a laboratory facility.

Knoblach, committee chair and sponsor of

the bill, said the governor's recommendation would nearly triple the size of the BCA facility, on top of a recent project for a satellite office in Bemidji. The lab facility is the greatest need, Knoblach said, and the House plan would accommodate that need.

The two proposals also differ in projects for higher education. Both plans allocate \$30 million for maintenance projects throughout the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.

Knoblach's plan specifies that that money would pay for several projects that were vetoed by Ventura last year, including a boiler system for Winona State University, demolition of old homes on property owned by Moorehead State University, and the completion of a heating and air conditioning project at the Hutchinson campus of Ridgewater College.

Overall spending for higher education would be \$169.9 million under Knoblach's bill and \$118.3 million under the governor's plan. Included in the House bill is \$2 million for planning costs to replace the Art Building at the University of Minnesota, which received no funding under the governor's plan. The House plan would not fund the St. Paul Microbial and Plant Genomics building at the U of M.

For K-12 spending, Knoblach's bill would spend nearly \$50 million compared to the governor's \$34.1 million.

The bill would spend slightly less than the governor's \$125 million recommended for the Department of Natural Resources and other environment provisions. But the bill would spend more for the Wastewater Infrastructure Fund through the Department of Trade and Economic Development, which improves the environment by helping communities upgrade failing sewer systems.

The bill also would spend \$44 million for bridges throughout the state.

Knoblach urged his colleagues to ask whether the bill is good for the entire state, not necessarily for their specific districts.

"I would hope that we can get away from the philosophy that if you have a project from your district you'll vote for the bill, but if there's not a project from your district you won't vote for the bill," Knoblach said.

**HOUSE
COMMITTEE
PROFILE**

Capital Investment

Chair: Knoblach
(R-St. Cloud)

Vice Chair: Dempsey
(R-Hastings)

Minority Lead: Kalis
(DFL-Walters)

Members: 21
(12 R, 9 DFL)

Scope: Reviews and approves capital appropriations for the state; sets policy related to the sale of bonds, debt management, and the manner and form in which capital requests are received; considers bonding requests from state agencies and members of the Legislature; allocates state bond proceeds for capital projects that meet a public purpose and for public facilities owned by public entities, and monitors the construction of all public improvements.

★ BUSINESS

Regulating funeral solicitation

A bill that would regulate solicitation and sale of funeral goods and services stalled in committee because of financial concerns March 15, but a separate provision to satisfy those concerns may keep it alive.

The bill (HF2713), sponsored by Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope), would prohibit funeral providers from soliciting business at a hospital, grave site, or nursing home — particularly when a person's impending death is apparent — when there has been no specific request from the individual.

The bill would allow certain solicitations if the person who is dying made a specific request ahead of time. In addition, those solicitations would require that providers follow set guidelines.

The bill had been approved by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee, but late concerns about possible costs associated with regulating the solicitation and sale of funeral goods and services had put its future this session in doubt.

The House Ways and Means Committee then included language to address the bill's financial impact in the health and human services omnibus measure (HF2699) March 15. Though the Health and Human Services Finance Committee did not approve Rest's bill, including the financial matter in the other bill gives her proposal new life.

The amendment to the health and human services omnibus bill would appropriate \$90,000 in fiscal year 2001 for the purpose of responding to public complaints about funeral goods and services solicitation.

The amendment also would require that a report be made by Jan. 15, 2001, to the chairs of the Senate Health and Family Security Budget Division and the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee regarding whether there is a need for additional funding.

The House Ways and Means Committee sent the funding plan to the House floor.

★ CHILDREN

Focusing on children

Two former elected officials joined a business executive to discuss family and children issues before a House committee March 15.

Former Republican state legislator Allen Quist along with former Democratic Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser and General Mills executive David Nasby spoke to the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee about the need to invest in children.

"We must recognize Minnesota's greatest natural resource, our children," Nasby said.

Though the trio is an unlikely political mix, they stood together behind the principle that public policy should promote strong, supportive families and minimize trends and influences leading to family break-ups.

Nasby told the committee that General Mills corporate headquarters added a child day care center, and employees have reacted positively.

"A return will come through employee loyalty and satisfaction," Nasby said.

The federal Head Start program is helping children learn, but not enough children are gaining these early skills, he said.

"For too many of Minnesota's new generation, there has been no start," he said.

Fraser agreed, saying many children are falling behind.

"When kids come into school and don't know their last name . . . you wonder how they are going to catch up," Fraser said. Many children do not recognize letters nor can they count to 10, he added.

Quist said public policy on early child-care issues should promote strong families.

"We need to be about shaping policy for children that is mostly non-ideological and non-political," Quist said.

Not all education issues, such as child care wages, can be solved by market forces, the speakers agreed.

"I do think there is a case for subsidized day care," Quist said.

Quist cited several recent studies, saying that 40 percent of teen-age women become pregnant by age 20, and current sex education pro-

grams have been unsuccessful in stopping unwanted pregnancies. Quist said the only programs that have curtailed teen-age pregnancy are abstinence-only methods.

"The bottom line is we need something that is effective, something that will work," Quist said.

He quoted another study that said a home without a father is the leading factor for teen-age pregnancy, suicide, crime, and poverty.

★ CRIME

Felony DWI heads to floor

A bill that would make a fourth DWI conviction in 10 years a felony is heading to the House floor.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) is sponsoring the bill (HF2745), which would provide for felony charges on a fourth drunken driving violation in a 10-year span.

The House Ways and Means Committee on March 15 rolled it into a larger bill (HF2699).

Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview) offered an amendment to require the Department of Corrections to study the use of private services to satisfy the mandatory incarceration sentences provided by the bill. The committee adopted the amendment.

Currently, the bill calls for a minimum sentence of five to seven years for a fourth DWI conviction in 10 years. The bill would allow judges to depart from mandatory sentences and impose jail time and other conditions.

Stanek approved of the lone amendment to the bill.

GOPHER CHECKOFF



Rep. Bob Milbert, left, explains his proposed "gopher checkoff," which would allow taxpayers who file electronically to designate up to 5 percent of their total tax liability to be spent on a program or a category of programs of their choice. He spoke during a March 15 news conference. Also attending the news conference were Reps. Henry Kalis and Kris Hasskamp.

"It fits with the language I already had before," he said.

However, the Senate version does not contain the minimum sentences in the House bill. The Senate version has no mandated minimum sentences, instead giving judges the discretion to determine the sentence for multiple offenders. Stanek said judges have already shown they will not send repeat offenders to prison.

"History tells us that is not going to happen," he said. "Am I supposed to believe that a person who picks up a fourth DWI is going to jail?"

Ready for release?

A bill that would establish a task force to study the state's policies for releasing people from prisons failed to advance out of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee March 10.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) said he and other lawmakers learned about a potential problem with those policies during a recent tour of state prisons.

When inmates have mental illness or are separated from the general prison population due to behavior problems, sometimes they are released at the end of their sentence with little or no effort to reintegrate them to the general population, Paymar said.

The bill (HF3984), sponsored by Paymar, would set up a task force to study and plan for a more gradual release program, so that inmates would not be released into society straight from solitary confinement.

The proposed task force would include four legislators, three people with expertise in mental health issues, and representatives of the Department of Corrections and the ombudsman for corrections.

But several committee members said such a task force could be organized within the Department of Corrections.

The motion to approve the bill failed on a 9-9 vote, so the bill remains in that committee.

Penalties for unsecured trailers

Trailers would be included in criminal vehicular homicide provisions, under a bill heading to the House floor.

Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) is sponsoring a bill (HF2610) that would provide criminal charges for a person whose trailer causes a fatality. The House Crime Prevention Committee approved the measure March 10 and sent it to the floor.

Nancy Sorgatz told the committee that her granddaughter died in an accident near

Waseca in 1997. A trailer broke free from an oncoming truck and struck her granddaughter's vehicle. Two people were killed. The driver of the truck had previously been warned about the chains connecting his truck to the trailer, Sorgatz said.

"Don't anyone ever say this was an accident," Sorgatz said. "It takes eight seconds to attach a safety chain, and it saves lives."

The bill says a driver would be negligent if the driver knows or has reason to know the trailer could cause injury or death.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) spoke in favor of the bill. He offered an amendment that clarified what qualifies as a trailer, saying he does not want any loopholes created in the bill. The committee approved the amendment.

As a result, anything pulled behind a vehicle is considered a trailer, be it a trailer hauling a boat, a recreational vehicle, a flatbed trailer, or a larger cargo hauler.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) was concerned that the bill would make someone negligent if the chain accidentally fell off. The committee amended the bill to clarify that a person is only negligent if he or she had knowledge or a reason to believe the connection between the trailer and vehicle would fail.

NEWBORN DROP-OFF



Father Andrew Cozzens, right, and Lilly Riordan who established the program for the drop-off of unwanted newborns in Dakota County testified March 10 before the House Crime Prevention Committee for a bill that would create a statewide program. Under the bill, the mother would not face prosecution if the unwanted newborn is dropped off at a hospital.

Funding bill advances

A measure that would appropriate more than \$4 million for new programs and emergency funding was approved March 14 by the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

To make way for that spending and the spending in a separate crime package, the committee decided to cut funding for some programs and transfer \$5.7 million from a special revenue fund.

"We don't have the money that the criminal justice system needs and the criminal justice system deserves," said Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada), committee chair.

The bill (HF3981), sponsored by Broecker, includes \$3.8 million in funding for state disaster payments resulting from floods and tornadoes in 1998 and 1999.

It also includes \$79,000 for extraordinary court costs for Carlton County, \$26,000 for a crosswalk awareness and safety program, and \$250,000 to establish a Ramsey County domestic abuse pilot project.

But the real significance of the bill may be what it doesn't fund.

The bill includes a one-time cut of \$234,000 in state civil legal services funding, a base cut of \$25,000 from the Ombudsman for Crime Victims, and a \$5 million reduction in juvenile treatment grants.

The measure also would eliminate the office of Ombudsman for Corrections, an independent agency established in 1972 to investigate complaints by staff, inmates, and others against the Department of Corrections, correctional facilities, or the Board of Pardons.

In addition, the committee voted to transfer a surplus in the special revenue fund from the money raised by the Auto Theft Prevention Board to the general fund so the committee could hit its spending targets.

For fiscal year 2001, there will be approximately \$5.7 million surplus from the theft prevention board. The board collects a surcharge on all auto insurance policies to distribute to law enforcement in the form of block grants to implement auto theft prevention programs.

State law limits the amount the board can spend each year. Several committee members objected to using the funds for other purposes, which are specifically collected for auto theft prevention.

The House Ways and Means Committee later approved the measure and included it in a larger spending bill that now heads to the House floor.

★ DEVELOPMENT

Omnibus measure advances

Workforce development is a major focus of an omnibus finance package approved March 13 by the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

The bill (HF4111), sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), would establish a task force responsible for reviewing recommendations of the governor's mini-cabinet on workforce development. The 20-member task force would develop and propose a cohesive workforce development strategy for the state and prepare recommendations for the 2001 session.

Also included in the bill are a couple of one-time appropriations to address underemployment and training issues.

The Department of Trade and Economic Development would receive \$750,000 for grants to local or regional economic development agencies to identify geographic areas where the local workforce has skills or education that is not being used.

The bill also would appropriate \$50,000 to the Department of Administration for a study to develop a 10-year plan to locate workforce centers on the campuses in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.

The growing technology economy is also addressed in the bill. It would appropriate \$1.5 million for grants to local governments to expand Internet access in rural Minnesota. Another \$200,000 would go to Minnesota Technology, Inc. for the e-Business Institute, which would provide assistance to rural businesses to expand their use of technology.

To provide funding for measures in the bill, the committee proposed a transfer of some money, elimination of an existing program, and the use of savings from the merger of the Department of Commerce and the Department of Public Service.

The bill would transfer \$1.8 million from the general fund to the workforce development fund to provide funding for the displaced homemaker's program.

In addition, \$800,000 would be provided by canceling funds for the Pathways Program, a grant program for educational institutions to partner with businesses in developing projects that provide training, new jobs, and career paths for individuals making the transition from public assistance to the workforce.

The program is administered through the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

McElroy, the committee chair, said that department officials said the program has not been used.

The bill moves to the House floor.

★ EDUCATION

Increased adult education funding

Funding for adult basic education would be increased and employment tracking would be provided, under the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee's omnibus spending bill.

The committee approved the bill (HF4107) March 13. The bill would add \$6.5 million for adult education programs, but would limit future spending for an individual program to 10 percent growth or five percent for all adult basic education programs statewide.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), also calls for spending an additional \$24.8 million in federal Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) dollars over the next three years.

The bill was referred to the House Ways and Means Committee.

The 1999 Legislature appropriated \$42.6 million to fund adult education programs for fiscal years 2000-01. The new bill would increase funding to \$49.2 million. Adult basic education offers classes to people who do not have high school diplomas. Many of the students are just beginning to learn English.

The bill includes \$900,000 for new programs, most notably \$700,000 for adult basic education supplemental service grants.

Transitional housing projects would receive \$2 million in federal assistance dollars over the next three years. About \$9.3 million in TANF funds would be designated for child-care services.

The bill incorporates a measure that would

require adult education teachers to request that students give their Social Security numbers for economic tracking. Sykora introduced the proposal, which would allow the Department of Economic Security to discern the pay level of graduates to see if the people are earning more after completing the program.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) spoke against the tracking, saying it would set a bad precedent. He said he feared it would open the door for more programs where Social Security numbers are used.

Sykora noted that people are not required to give their Social Security numbers; they are asked to voluntarily turn them over for the study.

Mariani offered one amendment that outlined an alternative tracking system. He also offered an amendment that would require the Department of Children, Families and Learning to develop its own alternative tracking system. The committee did not adopt either amendment.

The committee did adopt a Mariani amendment that states that future adult basic education funding would not be determined by the percent of students who provide their Social Security information.

Selling surplus computers

A bill that would allow school districts to dispose of surplus school computers without having to auction the property was passed March 13 by the House. The vote was 133-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka), the bill (HF2598) would allow districts to

SOCCER PITCH



Soccer balls from all over Minnesota fill the rotunda March 15 carrying messages for Gov. Jesse Ventura to support bonding for additional soccer fields around the state. The Minnesota Youth Soccer Association sponsored the rally.

dispose of a computer and related equipment if the school has used the computer for at least three years, has purchased the computer with state or federal funds, and no longer has a need for the property.

Under the bill, districts would have the option of conveying surplus equipment to another school district, the state Department of Corrections, the Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, or the family of a district student whose total family income meets the federal definition of poverty.

Districts wishing to dispose of school computers would be required by the bill to maintain an inventory of the property and reconcile the results of its inventory with property records at least once every two years.

The bill would grant the commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning access to the records.

Abeler's bill now goes to the Senate.

Rules for teacher preparation

A bill that would postpone the ability of the state Board of Teaching to adopt, amend, or repeal rules on institution and teacher preparation programs was passed March 13 by the House. The vote was 122-10.

The bill (HF3436), sponsored Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), would postpone the board's ability to make changes until Sept. 1, 2002.

Seifert's bill also would require that the Board of Teaching ask faculty and administrators from Minnesota post-secondary institutions with teacher preparation programs for the institutions' opinions on the board's proposed rules for those programs.

The state Board of Teaching would then be required to report to the Legislature by January 15, 2001, on institutions' opinions regarding proposed rules on institution and teacher preparation programs.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

K-12 spending plan

A \$28 million omnibus education spending bill that includes both permanent and one-time funding proposals was approved by both the House K-12 Education Finance Committee March 13 and the House Taxes Committee March 15.

The bill (HF3800), sponsored by Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington), chair of the K-12 committee, would call for \$11 million in secondary vocational spending for work training programs, \$10 million for technology initiatives, and \$8.5 million in funding for small school districts.

Seagren said the bill is lean compared with

the Senate's \$244 million education bill, but it addresses some of the critical issues that came before her committee this session.

While Gov. Jesse Ventura has said he doesn't favor any new major spending initiatives this year, earlier this session Seagren said she hoped he would be open to common measures contained in both the House and Senate bills.

The House bill also contains several notable policy measures of note. Provisions to establish a minimum public school year of 173 days and begin a special alternative teaching license for out-of-state teachers who meet certain requirements are included in the measure.

The alternative teaching license provision is an attempt, Seagren said, to address the problem of teacher shortages due to retirements, student enrollment growth, and policies requiring class-size reduction.

Language introduced by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) that would allow teachers and certain other school employees to use "reasonable force" when disciplining a student is also contained in Seagren's bill.

The bill was sent to the House Ways and Means Committee.

The Senate's plan, backed by Sen. Larry Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls), would provide about \$150 million in permanent funding and more than \$75 million in one-time funding.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Mosquito spraying limited

The House Local Government and Metro Affairs Committee approved a bill March 10 that would give the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) more authority in mosquito control on state-owned land.

The bill (HF3134), sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), would repeal the state law that requires the natural resources commissioner to allow the Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission to enter state property for mosquito control purposes.

Currently the commission is required to get

permission from private landowners to spray for mosquito control on privately owned land.

Officials from the DNR have testified that state land should receive similar treatment and that attention should be paid on the impact of mosquito control on nature's food chain. The chemicals used for mosquito control also kill midges, the insects that are the main food source for ducklings.

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland), the committee chair, offered an amendment that was adopted establishing a trial period until July 1, 2002, allowing the natural resources commissioner the ability to deny, modify, or revoke any approval for the commission to operate on state lands.

The bill was sent to the House floor.

Salaries saved, redistributed

Unspent money from job vacancies in state agencies would help pay for shortfalls in other areas, under a bill approved March 13 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

The bill (HF4080), sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), would spend \$11.4 million for the current biennium.

A shortfall of about \$410,000 in fiscal year 2001 is projected in the Wastewater Infrastructure Fund, a grant program for small

FIRE FUNDS



Cook County Sheriff David Wirt, left, tells the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee about the need for funds to be ready for possible forest fires in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area after last year's storm that blew over thousands of acres of trees. Also testifying for funding were Lake County Sheriff Steve Peterson, center, and St. Louis County Sheriff Rick Wahlberg.

communities that do not have sewer systems or that have old systems in need of major repairs. The money pays for staff of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency to evaluate the environmental aspects of the wastewater systems to be built through the grant program.

The bill would spend \$306,000 for that program and divert the remaining \$104,000 from the agency's current budget.

Holsten said state agencies save money by leaving positions vacant after someone resigns, and some positions are vacant for several months. The money that is saved can be diverted to the \$410,000 shortfall, he said.

The bill also would require the Office of Environmental Assistance to reduce its 2001 budget by \$104,000 through savings from vacancies, but that money would not be reallocated under the bill.

Other spending provisions include \$4 million for costs related to a U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld the hunting and fishing rights of the Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians and others, and \$400,000 for the Board of Water and Soil Resources for costs related to the replacement of wetlands.

And \$5 million would be spent for a new state program similar to the federal Crop Reserve Program. Farmers would be eligible for grants to set aside cropland for three years. Strips of trees would have to be planted on a small percentage of the land that is set aside, which would provide various environmental benefits.

Also, the bill would spend \$1.5 million to pay for anticipated expenses for emergency firefighting in forests. A severe storm in July 1999 knocked down thousands of acres of trees in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, which has increased the chances of a forest fire.

The House Ways and Means Committee later approved the bill and included it in a larger funding measure, which now heads to the floor.

★ GAME & FISH

Getting in the hunt

The House passed a bill March 13 that would improve some people's chances of getting a license to hunt moose. The vote was 133-0.

Under the bill (HF2838), sponsored by Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee), Minnesotans who have applied for and failed to get a license at least 10 times would be able to apply in a separate selection process.

The separate process would make 20 percent of all moose-hunting licenses available to those applicants who have repeatedly failed to win a license.

The state issues a limited number of such

licenses every other year, through a lottery system that includes all applicants in one pool. In 1999, 189 licenses were issued to hunt in northeastern Minnesota. There will not be a moose hunt in 2000.

The bill now moves to the Senate.

Permits for disabled hunters

A special hunting permit would be available to people who have a permanent disability, under a bill the House passed March 13. The vote was 129-2.

The bill (HF2603/SF2346*), sponsored by Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar), would allow the commissioner of natural resources to issue such permits to people who cannot step from a vehicle without the aid of a wheelchair, crutches, braces, or other means of support. Permits would also be available to people who have heart or lung conditions and require breathing assistance.

The permit would allow people with those types of conditions to use a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle while hunting in the state's wildlife management areas.

The bill now moves to the governor's desk.

★ GOVERNMENT

New budget office proposed

A proposal to resolve disagreements about the fiscal impacts of legislation was approved March 10 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

The bill (HF4073), sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), would establish a legislative budget office. The office would provide House members and senators with information regarding current and projected state revenue, expenditures, and taxes.

Currently, most of those duties are performed by the state Department of Finance. The bill would reduce that department's budget to pay for the legislative budget office.

The office would be part of the Legislative Coordinating Commission, a joint House-Senate organization.

Abrams described the proposed office as a small operation that would act in concert with the Finance Department.

Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins) said people from school districts have complained that the state uses different sets of numbers related to education funding.

"They're crying out for everyone to be on the same page," she said.

Abrams agreed, and he said that one of the office's main goals would be to achieve that kind of consistency.

"The public is better served if we have one set of numbers," Abrams said.

The bill now heads to the House Taxes Committee.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Omnibus funding plan

An omnibus spending bill that would increase penalties on welfare recipients who don't comply with work requirements and broaden eligibility for the state's senior prescription drug program awaits a vote on the House floor.

The bill was approved by the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee March 14 and by the House Ways and Means Committee one day later.

The bill (HF2699) would also impose a 24-hour "informed-consent" waiting period on women who want to have an abortion, and increase state reimbursement rates for nursing homes, mainly in rural Minnesota, that receive lower reimbursement payments than other homes.

"What this bill does is attempt to address the most drastic needs in our communities, and I believe it does that in a fiscally responsible manner," said Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), sponsor of the bill.

A portion of new spending under the bill would go to measures that would fund the proposed expansion of the prescription drug program, provide local intervention aid to counties for family employment, and increase the wages of personal-care attendants by 5 percent.

But new funding is offset in part by a measure in the bill that would shift a portion of Minnesota's federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds into the general fund, yielding the state a savings of approximately \$71 million.

Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls) suggested that the committee should designate how the transfer of TANF funds should be spent, which the committee did not do.

Greenfield also strongly disagreed with a measure in the bill that would cut welfare benefits from recipients who repeatedly don't follow the state's rules on program participation. He reminded the committee of the potential impact that could have on children and families.

Concern also arose regarding the measure on abortion. An amendment by Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) that would require a woman to be given certain information and to provide written consent at least 24 hours prior to a scheduled abortion was incorporated into the bill. It's considered by some to

be a tough sell with both the Senate and Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The bill also would establish an office of unlicensed and alternative health care that would be housed at the Department of Health.

A proposed amendment to the bill by Rep. Henry Todd Van Dellen (R-Bloomington) to use \$10 million of the state's general fund to pay for diabetes research resulted in a lengthy discussion between members of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The committee eventually adopted the amendment after it was altered by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) to take funds from the state's medical endowment fund instead.

The bill now heads to the House floor. It has become the vehicle for several other finance measures including state government, jobs and economic development, environment and natural resources, judiciary and agriculture.

★ INSURANCE

Loaner vehicle liability

The House passed a bill March 13 by a vote of 131-2 that would shift insurance liability costs on vehicles loaned out by repair shops from the shops to the drivers.

The bill (HF2719), sponsored by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), would require the costs of damages done to a repair shop rental vehicle to come first from the driver's liability insurance coverage. The repair shop's insurance would only pay the amount in excess of what the driver's insurance does not cover.

Many repair shops provide loaner vehicles while servicing their customers' vehicles. But some shops are discontinuing the service because their insurance is responsible for covering the costs if the loaner vehicle is involved in an accident.

Current state law requires that the driver's insurance covers the cost of damages done to rental cars involved in accidents. Consumers are given the option by many rental car companies of purchasing additional insurance coverage in the event of an accident.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Township name change

A new state law will help the residents of the township of Lake Edwards in Crow Wing County to drop the "s" from the town's name.

There has been confusion about whether or not the legal name of the township had the

"s" at the end, and the confusion has led to delays when the town has had to file documents with state and federal governments.

Township officials discovered that to legally change the name to the township of Lake Edward would ordinarily require a petition signed by at least 55 percent of the number of residents who voted in the last general election.

For Lake Edwards, a rural township located in the central part of the state with a population of approximately 1,500 people, the costs associated with that process seemed too high.

The new law allows the county board to change the name of the township upon receiving a resolution from the town board requesting the change.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the measure. The law is effective upon local action.

HF2521/SF2320*/CH253

★ METRO AFFAIRS

Changing the Met Council

In 1967, the Legislature established the Metropolitan Council, recognizing the need to coordinate and plan the development of the region.

Because the 16-member council is appointed by the governor and has property tax levying authority, there has been continuing debate through the years over the function and scope of the agency.

The council also provides transit and wastewater collection and treatment services.

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs committee heard two bills March 10 that take different approaches in addressing the council's authority.

The committee took no action on either measure but Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland), the committee chair, said that the discussion on the issues raised by both bills will continue.

One bill (HF532), sponsored by Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls), would change the

council from an appointed body to an elected body beginning in 2003.

Orfield said that an elected council would be more responsive than an appointed council. He said his bill is the same as those proposed in the 1960s by Arlen Erdahl, former legislator, secretary of state, and congressman, and by former Gov. Arne Carlson in the 1980s, before he won election to the state's top office. (As governor, Carlson vetoed a similar measure in 1997.)

Orfield said because of the levying authority of the council and because its authority falls somewhere between a local unit of government and a state agency, it is important for its members to be accountable.

The council's budget for 2000 exceeds \$474 million with a property tax levy of more than \$129 million.

Orfield said he supports the current council and its chair, Ted Mondale, but that because of the appointed nature of the membership, there is no guarantee that the philosophy and quality of the current council will continue in the future.

The second bill (HF2697), sponsored by Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan), would take the measure one step further. Buesgens' bill proposes to abolish the council by July 1, 2001.

Buesgens said it is time to take a serious look at whether the council is needed for the metropolitan area. He said the council's authority has evolved over the years and he agrees with Orfield that having a non-elected governing authority is a concern.

"One of the fundamental principles of freedom is no taxation without representation," Buesgens said.

Cash or charge?

Hennepin County taxpayers would be allowed to pay their property taxes by credit and debit cards, under a measure the House passed March 13.

The bill (HF3229), sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), would give that county's taxpayers the option of using credit cards, debit cards, or electronic or wire funds transfers to make tax payments.

Abrams said the bill would permit the county to establish a service charge for payments made by these methods.

The bill also would authorize the county to use electronic approvals to authenticate and validate county administrative actions, and would direct the county to establish policies and procedures to ensure the validity of electronic approvals.

Under the measure, county officials would also be allowed to use county credit cards for county business.

**HOUSE
COMMITTEE
PROFILE**

**Local Gov't &
Metropolitan
Affairs**

Chair: Larsen
(R-Lakeland)

Vice Chair: Tuma
(R-Northfield)

Minority Lead: Hasskamp
(DFL-Crosby)

Members: 23
(12 R, 10 DFL, 1 Ind.)

Scope: Examines issues related to all forms of local government — townships, cities, counties, metropolitan agencies, and regional development commissions.

Currently both the Minnesota Department of Revenue and the federal Internal Revenue Service allow taxpayers to file electronically, and thus accept credit card payments.

The bill was passed by a 133-0 vote and now moves to the Senate.

★ RECREATION

New plan for park permits

Annual permits for state park visitors would be valid for one year after the date of purchase, under a bill the House passed March 13. The vote was 134-0.

Currently, annual park permits are only valid for the calendar year, which discourages people from buying them in the late summer or fall, said Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), sponsor of the bill.

The bill would make the permits good for one year from the date of purchase.

Leppik said the proposal would likely increase the number of annual permits that are sold and encourage more visits to state parks year-round.

The bill (HF2505) now moves to the Senate.

Paintball gun restrictions

Paintball guns may make for fun in the hands of a weekend warrior, but many people believe they can be dangerous in the hands of children.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) is sponsoring a bill (HF3041) that would make it a misdemeanor for store clerks to sell

paintball guns to children under the age of 18 without the written consent of a parent or guardian.

"They look and they sound like toys," Leppik told the House Crime Prevention Committee on March 10. "The problem is they can be very, very dangerous."

The bill was approved and now heads to the House floor.

Paintball guns shoot gas-powered pellets filled with paint. People playing with paintball guns should be wearing eye protection, Leppik said.

"Kids are not aware of the hazards, even though it is printed on the box," she said.

Emergency rooms are seeing an increase of severe injuries from pellets striking people in the eye, Leppik said. She told a story about a 14-year-old boy who was struck near the eye and has now had three eye surgeries. The boy experiences excruciating pain and will likely lose his sight in that eye, she said.

"This is becoming more and more common because this is a popular game," she said.

Leppik said the guns are visibly different from a real gun.

"I don't think this could be mistaken for a real gun. They are big and colorful," she said.

The bill also would ban the use of paintball guns on state property.

★ TAXES

License tab fee reductions

The House Taxes Committee discussed two bills March 14 that would reduce license tab registration fees.

The committee took no action on either measure but both will be considered for inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Currently, the motor vehicle registration tax is \$10 plus an additional tax of 1.25 percent on the base value adjusted on a depreciation scale. The minimum tax is \$35.

According to the nonpartisan House Research Department, Minnesota ranks 23rd in the nation on average in license tab fees. In addition, about 38 percent of the motor vehicle owners in the state pay the minimum \$35 fee.

One bill (HF446), sponsored by Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester), would change the depreciation schedule to provide for a 10 percent annual depreciation over 10 years. The current depreciation schedule varies in the percentage of depreciation over the 10-year period.

Under Kuisle's proposal, the residents of the state would vote on a constitutional amendment to dedicate 30 percent of the revenue

from the motor vehicle sales tax to the highway user tax distribution fund. The remainder would continue to go to the general fund.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) the committee chair, said he doesn't favor including bills that propose constitutional amendments in omnibus measures. Proposed amendments should advance on their own, he said.

Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake), the sponsor of the second bill (HF3967), said that in his bill the license tab tax rate would not change, but the state would pay for a portion of the tax. The bill provides for a credit of 50 percent against license taxes to be applied to the portion of the tax that is between \$35 and \$500.

Vandever said that he agrees with the governor in that Minnesota's license tab fee rates do not compare favorably to neighboring states.

He said the advantage of his bill is that there is no need for a referendum and roads would get the same amount of money as they currently do.

★ TRANSPORTATION

'Busways' over light rail

Rather than invest in a light-rail system that is confined to the designated track, Minnesota should consider building a bus-only road in the Hiawatha Corridor, said Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska).

The House Transportation Finance Committee heard testimony on a bill (HF4071) that would replace the \$100 million bonds already appropriated for light rail with \$50 million in bonds and \$50 million in cash for a bus-only road.

Molnau, the sponsor of the bill, said the bus route, at a cost of \$43 million (according to a 1997 study) is far cheaper than the \$548 light rail line.

"We are proposing a more cost-effective proposal to light rail," Molnau said.

The committee did not act on Molnau's bill, and no vote is expected this year, according to committee staff.

The 11-mile Hiawatha Corridor would connect the airport to downtown Minneapolis.

Peter McLaughlin, chair of the Hennepin County Board, spoke against Molnau's bill. McLaughlin said the state Department of Transportation study that Molnau is referring to only examines a "busway" from the airport to the Metrodome, and does not complete the journey down Fifth Street to Nicollet Avenue in Minneapolis. McLaughlin said the final stretch in Minneapolis, featuring several proposed train stops, is where much of the final costs occur.



Dr. David Brown, an ophthalmologist from St. Paul, speaks March 9 in front of the House Commerce Committee in support of a bill that would regulate the sale, rental, discharge, and possession of paintball guns.

"Your product will be cheaper, but it will be inferior," McLaughlin said.

He said costs for the entire busway, from the airport to Nicollet Avenue, could reach as high as \$100 million.

Molnau said the busway would not cause the closure of through traffic on Fifth Street, but a light-rail line would.

McLaughlin said people would use light rail, but would not take a bus.

"This isn't only going to be less desirable, it's going to be slow," McLaughlin said. "You're going to be walking away from \$274 million in federal dollars." The federal money is available for light-rail programs but not bus-only roads.

Molnau countered, saying other U.S. cities have reported that express buses that do not stop at all stations are much quicker than trains, which cannot skip stations.

"If you give them an express route to Minneapolis, you will fill the bus," Molnau said.

Changes in seat belt plan

A plan to allow police more leeway to stop drivers for seat belt violations was significantly altered March 10 in the House Crime Prevention Committee.

The bill (HF857), sponsored by Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), initially would have allowed police to stop any car if any person in the front seat was not wearing a seat belt.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) offered an amendment that would make it a primary offense — something police can stop a car for — only for people under age 18 to ride in the front seat without a seat belt. However, there would be no change to the law for people 18 or older. The committee approved the amendment, then sent the bill to the House floor.

Under the amended bill, an officer could issue a \$25 ticket to the driver if the passenger is younger than age 15, or give the ticket to the passenger if that person is 15 to 17 years old.

The original proposal barely squeaked through the House Transportation Policy Committee on March 9 and does not have support from the governor.

Greenfield said he would be happy with incremental change provided by the amendment, although he favors his original bill.

"It's a compromise that still improves the law," Greenfield said.

Kathy Cooper, whose daughter died in a car accident last year, testified in favor of the primary offense language. She said the amended version would change little.

"I'm very disappointed," Cooper said. "I think they've totally confused the issue. It should be straight mandatory. That is the safe way, that is the best way."

The bill still would require all passengers in the back seat up to age 18 to wear a seat belt.

Similar legislation has been discussed several times in recent years, including bills that stalled in 1994 and 1997.

Funds to fight crime

House approves omnibus judiciary finance bill

The House passed an omnibus crime measure March 16 that would deal with sex offenders and criminal justice information. The vote was 134-0.

The measure (HF2688), sponsored by Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada), is a combination of five major crime initiatives introduced this session.

It would provide for the integrated criminal justice information systems and a domestic abuse pilot project in Ramsey County. It also would deal with sex offender penalties and registration, community notification about sex offenders, and a reduction in the number of sex offender cases handled by probation officers.

The sex offender measures would require some offenders to register for life, establish a Web site to post the names of all Level 3 sex offenders statewide, and limit sex offenders' ability to change their names.

As passed, the bill would appropriate \$16.5 million for all five provisions in fiscal year 2001. That includes \$7.5 million for the criminal justice information system plan.

Some members were critical of the \$7.5 million appropriation, which calls for local matching dollars, because they say it's too low.

However, House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) said earlier that it's important to get the program started even if it means spending more money on it later as it progresses.

"We're going to start this integrated system because we think it's the right thing to do," Sviggum told the House Ways and Means Committee.

A local match is required for grants under this bill. However, the House Taxes Committee limited the grants requiring local match to \$1 million.

On the House floor, Broecker emphasized that the money for the criminal justice system is only to cover the costs for the upcoming year, not for the entire project.

Also included in the bill is \$6.5 million for electronic finger-printing technology to replace the old-fashioned inking method.

Some have estimated that the entire integration project could cost as much as \$100 million to complete.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) attempted to amend appropriations in the bill so that it would provide \$15 million for criminal justice information systems rather than \$7.5 million. But the amendment was blocked on a procedural motion.

Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview) introduced an amendment on the floor to require that a risk assessment be conducted for any information systems projects where the state has allocated more than \$1 million. The study would need to be completed before the money is actually spent. It passed by an 89-44 vote.

Profile is no star

An unexpected move on the House floor aims to create a new alternative to the Profile of Learning

By MIKE DELARCO

Nothing is as it seems when it comes to the Profile of Learning. In a surprise move March 16, House members attached a major amendment to a bill that was thought to provide a viable compromise to the Profile, a much-maligned part of the state's Graduation Standards initiative.

The amendment, offered by Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) would create a new option for school accountability called the North Star Standard.

The amendment passed narrowly on a 68-66 vote. The result is a bill that would put the Profile on hold and allow districts to choose if they want to use the North Star Standard.

"My amendment to House File 3618 serves to uphold high standards currently expected of students. It will allow individual districts to implement the North Star Standard or tailor teaching to the needs of their students," Kielkucki said.

have to complete credits in up to 10 learning areas. Teachers would still be able to assign projects designed to test a student's ability to understand and apply subject matter, but such hands-on demonstrations, which are at the heart of the Profile of Learning, would no longer be standard requirements.

Kielkucki told members of the House Education Policy Committee earlier this session that the North Star Standard plan was created in response to critics who chastised House Republicans for trying to scrap the Profile during session last year while offering no clear alternative.

started incorporating requirements of the Profile of Learning into lesson plans two years ago, complaints began to surface.

Last year, the Legislature reached a stalemate over differences about how to fix the Profile and left the initiative intact. This year, talk of retooling the program intensified almost immediately after the beginning of the session — as teachers, students, and parents scurried to offer legislators ideas on a solution.

Not all agree, however, that the North Star Standard is the way to go.

"This bill (as amended) is a train wreck," said Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins). "I do not believe in playing politics with our kids, and that's what this bill does."

Rep. Henry Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth) supported the amended bill.

"The time is up, and the compromise is to scrap this failed experiment with our children," he said.

Department of Children, Families and Learning Commissioner Christine Jax testified before the House Education Policy Committee March 9 in favor of retaining the 24 standards currently required of students. Jax said she would prefer to "hold students harmless" for a two-year period by delaying strict enforcement of a minimum standard requirement.

"But I don't want to say we won't be open-minded," Jax said.

Before the Kielkucki amendment, the bill would have cut in half the number of Profile tasks — from 24 to 12 — that students in grades 9 to 12 would be required to complete before graduating. The bill also would have reduced the number of core learning areas from 10 to six, and simplified the description of those learning areas.

Also on the House floor, lawmakers rejected an amendment from Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) related to a controversy about writing tests given to all the state's 10th graders in January.

The amendment would have required test booklets to be returned to students after scoring and would have forbidden the test question from being used again.

The question asked students to write something about themselves they would like to change, and it drew fire because of the personal nature of the question. 



Members of the House Education Policy Committee work late into the evening March 9 crafting a measure that would alter the Profile of Learning.

No final vote was taken on the amended bill, but one is expected to take place within days. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel).

The North Star Standard, Kielkucki said, would steer away from the Profile's practical skills focus. The amendment details rewritten standards in such basics as science, math, English, and history.

Under the North Star plan, students would

A part of the state's Graduation Standards, the Profile of Learning was created to shift learning away from textbooks and lectures and move it in the direction of experiments, teamwork, research, and independent projects.

Under the Profile, students are required to perform various tasks in core learning areas that have practical applications for life beyond the classroom.

However, shortly after the state's teachers

Streamlined spending

State government spending measure would give the governor a raise but cut other costs

BY JON FURE

A bill that would give the governor a raise while cutting state spending by nearly \$10 million for the 2000-01 biennium is advancing in the House.

The bill (HF2500), sponsored by Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview), would eliminate the Office of Technology, the Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation, and the Office of Citizenship and Volunteer Services.

The bill was approved March 14 by the House State Government Finance Committee, which Krinkie chairs, and won approval in the House Ways and Means Committee one day later.

Under the proposal, fiscal year 2001 spending for Minnesota Planning, a state agency that acts as a long-range planning arm of the administration, would be reduced from \$4.4 million to \$2.4 million.

Those savings would pay for projected shortfalls in other areas, including \$48,000 to the Campaign Finance and Disclosure Board for costs related to an unsuccessful court case and \$90,000 to the Gambling Control Board for a workers' compensation claim.

The bill would increase the governor's salary from \$120,303 to \$150,000. That would allow proportional salary increases for commissioners of state department or other administrators, which are based on a percentage of the governor's salary.

The state recently has allowed exemptions to those limits, such as salaries for school superintendents.

Some other agencies and departments have requested exemptions, because the current limits on salaries for those positions have made it hard to find qualified candidates. The bill would raise the maximum salary for all such positions.

The bill also would repeal the governor's authority to abolish or merge departments in the executive branch. That issue gained notice when Gov. Jesse Ventura decided last year to merge the Public Safety and Commerce departments.

Here are some other key provisions of the bill.

Bleacher safety

The bill would modify a 1999 law that established new safety requirements for all bleachers that are taller than 30 inches. The bill would make those requirements apply only to bleachers standing 55 inches (nearly 5 feet) or higher.

The law requires bleachers to include guardrails or safety nets, and spaces between floorboards, seats, and guardrails cannot exceed four inches.

Those requirements are set to go into effect Jan. 1, 2001. But the bill would delay that effective date to Aug. 1, 2001.

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed \$100,000 from the provision in 1999 that would have helped communities comply with the requirements.

The bill would effectively exempt short sets of bleachers that are commonly placed in parks near sports fields, so that local communities and school districts would not be forced to replace them or equip them with safety nets.

Design-build ban

The Department of Transportation would be required to comply with current state law regarding bidding projects, under the measure.

Krinkie said a provision in the 1999 omnibus transportation finance law gave the department an exemption to allow the light-rail transit project along the Hiawatha Corridor to use a design-build method.

That method allows the state to use a single contractor for the design and construction of the project, instead of awarding separate bids for design and construction.

The bill would prohibit using the design-

build method for any state construction project, until specific policies and regulations can be established for that method.

Secretary of state funding

A provision in the bill would allow the Office of the Secretary of State to keep revenue from Uniform Commercial Code transactions.

Those transactions involve pledging personal property for collateral. People who file the transactions currently pay \$15, plus additional costs if the form exceeds nine pages. That money goes to the general fund.

But Krinkie said the revenue was originally intended to pay for upgrades to the computer system that is used for those transactions. Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer estimated that the transactions generate about \$2.3 million per year in revenue, while the office's costs of administering the transactions are only about two-thirds of that amount.

The bill would allow the revenue to be spent on upgrading that system, and would reduce the secretary of state's general fund support by \$2.3 million per year.

Office of Technology abolished

The Office of Technology is one of three small departments that would be eliminated under the bill. Its projected budget is \$2.7 million for 2001 and \$5.4 million for the following biennium.

Krinkie said the office's ability to review technology-related projects is limited. The office does not have jurisdiction over constitutional offices, the judicial branch, the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, or local units of government.

Also, the office has not been able to prevent excessive spending by reviewing technology-related legislative proposals, he said. One current legislative proposal would establish a statewide criminal justice information system, but Krinkie said there is little information on how it would work and how much it would cost.

"If you have a big enough truck, you can just blow through the check point," Krinkie said.

Commissioner of Administration David Fisher disagreed. The office's role is merely advisory, because nothing in state law gives it any regulatory authority, he said. But the office has had success in its advisory role.

"Technology budgets had no oversight until we got involved," he said. 

A taxing dilemma

Lawmakers debate whether it's more important to reduce property taxes or income taxes in the search for meaningful reform

BY DAVID MAEDA

Though much of the attention surrounding tax discussions this session has focused on issues such as permanent income tax cuts and reductions in license tab fees, a significant property tax reform plan follows closely behind.

The governor's tax plan proposes to carry over about \$855 million from the current budget surplus into the next biennium for potential reforms to the state's complicated property tax system.

Some lawmakers feel there is still room for property tax reform this year.

The House Taxes Committee's Property Tax Division discussed two bills this week that would continue property tax reform initiatives that began in 1997.

No action was taken on either bill but both will be considered for inclusion in the omnibus tax package, along with nearly 50 other property tax measures.

One bill (HF4030), sponsored by Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina), the division chair, would exempt residential homestead, agricultural, and seasonal recreation homestead property from the state-determined general education levy.

During a March 13 hearing on the bill, Erhardt said although he supports efforts to cut income tax rates, his proposal is an attempt to refocus some of the discussion on property tax reform.

Currently, county auditors determine the general education homestead credit for each homestead by calculating 83 percent of the general education tax rate applied to net tax capacity.

The bill proposes providing the exemption by first determining each property's tax in the present manner, then reducing that amount by an exemption amount equal to the general education tax upon the property.

Erhardt's bill, which the Department of Revenue estimates would cost more than \$775 million over the next biennium, also would reduce class rates for nearly all classes of property except first-tier homes.



Kent Warden, executive director of the Greater Minneapolis Building Owners and Managers Association, testifies March 15 before the Property Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee in support of a measure that would reduce property taxes and ease the burden on commercial properties.

Some feel such property tax relief is crucial. Richard Nelson, a Burnsville clergyman who owns a cabin in outstate Minnesota, said that the bill provides much needed "mercy" for Minnesota cabin owners.

Nelson said that his family's cabin was built in 1948 and cost about \$3,000. He said last year he paid more than \$3,000 in property taxes for the cabin that is now valued at around \$113,000.

Others like Glenn Dorfman of the Minnesota Association of Realtors feel income tax cuts would provide greater benefit.

Dorfman said that the state's high home ownership rates prove that a strong economy is more important for home ownership than lower property taxes are.

Though he said he supports continued compression of property tax rates, Dorfman said discussion of cutting property taxes should make it clear to taxpayers that to achieve such reform will inevitably require higher income and sales taxes.

"Income tax cuts give people money back to pay property taxes which will go up whether you cut them or not," he said.

Another bill (HF4089), sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), would compress class rates for all property classes with a rate over 1 percent. It also would reduce — from 8.5 percent to 7 percent — the limitation on the amount a property's market value may grow from one year to the next.

Abrams told the committee March 15 that the bill is the final piece of reform that began in 1997. However, that doesn't mean other property tax reform isn't possible or necessary.

The bill would reduce the rate for commercial/industrial properties valued over \$150,000 from 3.4 percent to 3 percent and for those properties under \$150,000 the rate would be reduced from 2.4 percent to 2 percent.

The Department of Revenue estimates Abram's bill would cost around \$308 million over the next biennium.

Kent Warden, the executive director of the Greater Minneapolis Building Owners and Managers Association, said past property tax relief provided by the Legislature has helped Minnesota businesses. But he said that the state still has the third-highest property taxes in the nation.

He said high tax rates mean higher rent rates for businesses and ultimately higher prices for consumers. In 1999, an average tenant company located in downtown Minneapolis paid \$9.12 per square foot, compared to \$3.35 per square foot for a comparable office space in Des Moines, Iowa, and \$1.93 per square foot for an office in Seattle, Washington, according to information provided by Warden.

Tom Casper, owner of Ciatti's Restaurant in Woodbury, said the state's high property tax rates place a great burden on "mom and pop" businesses like his own.

"My property tax bill for a 7,000 square foot building is \$54,000 a year or \$4,600 a month," Casper said. "We all love spaghetti. I'm concerned the day will come when I'll have to charge \$29.95 for a plate of spaghetti." 🍝

Seeking a cure for congestion

A \$425 million transportation spending measure would address metropolitan bottlenecks and reverse light-rail funding

By CHRIS VETTER

State legislators are considering a plan to eliminate future funding for light-rail transit projects and request that any unspent money for the line be returned to the state.

The proposal is included in the House Transportation Finance Committee's omnibus bill (HF2891), which would spend \$350 million in road improvements from the general fund and another \$75 million from the Trunk Highway Fund.

The committee narrowly approved the omnibus bill March 15 and sent it to the House Ways and Means Committee. Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska), sponsor of the bill, said it would make a strong commitment to improving roads and eliminating "bottlenecks" in the metro area.

"It's been a long time since we've had an emphasis on transportation," Molnau said. The omnibus bill is in addition to the \$382 million bonding recommendation the committee approved earlier this session.

A provision in the bill would require the Department of Transportation to return the unspent portions of the \$100 million the Legislature previously approved for light-rail transit along the Hiawatha Corridor. Current estimates show \$90 million to \$92 million has not been spent.

Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview), who is suing the governor for not doing a proper cost-benefit analysis of the light-rail proposal, backed the plan, which would effectively stop the current light-rail project.

"The governor and the commissioner (of transportation) would have you believe this is a done deal," Krinkie said.

However, it is not too late to reverse the bonding from the past two years, he said.

Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington) said the decision to move forward on light rail was made last year and the committee should not be debating a project that is already approved.

"I'm wondering why we are spending all this time, when the governor has promised a veto,"

Larson said. "The time has come to move on."

Krinkie said his major concern is that future Trunk Highway Fund dollars will be used on light-rail transit upgrades instead of on roads. He contends that people who would use light rail are people who are already using transit systems.

"This is not going to move a significant amount of new riders, no matter what they try to do," Krinkie said.

David Strom, legislative director of the Taxpayers League of Minnesota, told the committee that the Department of Transportation keeps changing its cost estimate of the project. Last year, the project was estimated to cost \$446 million; a recent study hiked the cost to \$548 million. A long-term cost study says the



Leslie Davis, president of Earth Protectors, testifies March 13 in opposition to a proposal to cancel the unspent remainder of the state funds for light-rail transit in the Hiawatha Corridor.

project could total more than \$700 million.

"Light-rail proponents have been fundamentally dishonest" about the costs, Strom said. "The light-rail system they are talking about now is not the system they presented to the Legislature."

Although project costs have climbed, Strom noted that the proposed length of the line was shortened, stops were removed, and the number of rail cars was reduced.

Molnau said the size, scope, and cost of the project is largely different from last year, which makes it worth debating.

Elwyn Tinklenberg, transportation commissioner, said the department told legislators repeatedly last year that its cost analysis was based on 1997 dollars, and inflation has caused the cost estimates to climb.

One of the main objectives of the omnibus bill is to resolve traffic congestion in other ways. The committee adopted an amendment that would split the general fund and Trunk Highway Fund money so \$201 million would be spent on Interstates 494 and 694 or congested roads linking those highways, while another \$201 million would be used for inter-regional corridors across the state.

Larson spoke against the amendment, saying the Twin Cities area could receive a majority of the money if the Transportation Department chooses projects in the seven-county metro area that are not inside the 694/494 loop.

A plan that would ban the department from planning commuter rail without legislative approval was also rolled into the omnibus bill. Molnau, who offered that proposal, said she prefers that local communities look at the upgrades and decide what is best for them.

The committee approved an amendment offered by Rep. Ray Vandevier (R-Forest Lake) that would allocate \$500,000 to the University of Minnesota to study personal rapid transit. The proposed system would place small, computer-controlled vehicles on elevated guideways as an alternate means of transit.

The omnibus bill also includes a proposal to study the effectiveness of ramp meters. Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) proposed the study, arguing Minnesotans should see if the system is needed. 🐼

Education innovation

Nearly a decade later, charter schools are a growing part of Minnesota's K-12 landscape

By MIKE DELARCO

City Academy on St. Paul's East Side has no plush classrooms or spacious auditoriums like other schools. Driving past the underused, city-operated recreational building, the world would never recognize the school as a place of learning.

Yet every day for more than eight years, students have listened daily to lessons about algebra, the periodic table, grammar, and government. Most who attend class are between the ages of 18 and 21. All come to City Academy to learn in an environment that encourages creativity while stepping beyond the bounds of "traditional" public schools.

Over the past several years, many other communities have caught on, and as a result, charter schools like City Academy can be spotted with greater frequency both in Minnesota

example.

The charter school movement began in 1988 when Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, called for the reform of public schools by describing what he referred to as "charter schools."

The basic concept behind charter schools was simple: a group of teachers or other would-be educators would approach a particular school district for permission to open a school. The school would then operate under a charter, or contract, with the local school board or the state.

The schools would receive state funding to operate, just like other public schools, but would have to come up with their own start-up capital and location.

In addition, charter schools would have authority to act independently of surrounding public schools and could move forward with the design and implementation of innovative teaching and learning programs.

The Minnesota Legislature passed its charter school law in 1991. The law allowed for the formation of eight results-oriented, student-centered charter schools and spelled out precisely how those schools should operate.

Many at the forefront of education reform at

the time expressed excitement over the possibilities sure to result from passage of the charter school legislation. Most legislators voting in favor of the bill shared that excitement.

"What we should do is bust open the old norms and let the teachers and students engage in new ways in a totally new structure, governed more by the learning opportunities than by the traditions of the past," former Rep. Ken Nelson (DFL-Mpls) was quoted as saying.

Over the past five years, the charter school movement has experienced significant growth. The state currently has 65 charter schools that are approved to operate during calendar year 2000. Among them are seven schools set to open this fall.

The Center for Educational Reform in Washington, D.C., reports there are nearly 1,700 charter schools operating nationwide in 31 states, serving approximately 350,000 students.

Of the schools that have been approved to operate since legislation on charter schools in the state of Minnesota became law, only three have closed for one reason or another, said Traci LaFerriere, charter school coordinator for the state Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Two additional schools — one being a school for the blind in St. Cloud — remain on the bubble, LaFerriere said.

"You're going to find that the schools that fail are ones having management trouble, and often the trouble can be traced to finances," she said.

But by and large charter schools in Minnesota have found a way to survive and in many cases thrive.

Under state law, a charter school must be formed either as a cooperative or nonprofit corporation. Once this is done, a governing body for the new school must be established. In Minnesota, teachers must form a majority of a school's governing board.

Until the bylaws of the charter school organization indicate the procedure for electing a permanent Board of Directors, a provisional board may act in its absence. This temporary board can write the contract, hire teachers, and take on other duties that are necessary to get the school up and running.

In addition, charter schools must be designed specifically to fulfill one or more of the following purposes: improve pupil learning and increase learning opportunities, use different and innovative teaching methods, use



Kindergarten students from Success Academy and their teacher visit with House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (at center in background) and other legislators March 14 to demonstrate how kindergartners are reading at and above the first-grade level. The visit was part of an effort to voice concern over funding needs for charter schools.

and in states across the nation.

Founded in 1992 and recognized as the nation's very first charter school, City Academy's structure and the faculty's commitment to young people continue to make the school a place people near and far use as an

different and innovative tools to measure learning, establish new forms of accountability, and create new professional opportunities for teachers.

Many of these goals are currently priorities for the 2000 Legislature. In fact, the current Legislature has been discussing ways to improve accountability systems in all public schools.

And faced with a significant potential teacher shortage in the coming years, legislators are also looking into various incentive plans, including increased teacher development.

While a charter school is exempt from most state and local laws and regulations, the school must show proof that students have acquired the educational skills specified in the initial contract for the charter to be renewed.

In Minnesota, charter school instructors are required to be licensed teachers, and they are entitled to retirement benefits under the letter of the school's charter.

Regarding curriculum, it's true charter schools have flexibility in what lessons are taught to students, but the state still sets minimum requirements for the subject matter that must be covered during the course of a year. Charter schools are also subject to the same periodic testing and public reporting as all public schools.

A 1998 report by the Humphrey Institute's Center for School Change titled *Making a Difference? Charter Schools, Evaluation and Student Performance* found that 21 out of 31 charter schools studied reported gains in student achievement after administering the same test at least twice.

According to *Minnesota Charter Schools: A Research Report*, parents of children who attend charter schools list small class size, challenging curriculum, good teachers, and greater opportunity for parental involvement as positive aspects of charter schools.

Some of the problems associated with charter schools have included the cost of start-up,

difficulties with student transportation, inadequate facilities, limited special education programming, and a difficult relationship with the school's sponsoring district.

State government has attempted to address the problem of start-up costs by offering \$50,000 start-up grants to qualifying schools. A limited amount of federal charter school funding can also be applied to a school's start-up cost.

Since charter schools were first established in Minnesota, their numbers have increased every year and will likely continue to grow. Lt. Gov. Mae Schunk has voiced the administration's support for charter schools.

Rural Minnesota is apparently ripe for growth in charter schools. Statistics show that about two-thirds of all existing charter schools are located in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. 



Calling for safety

Some lawmakers want motorists to hang up and drive

By the end of this year, more than 80 million people will be using cellular phones in the United States, according to the Cellular Telecommunications Industry Association.

Though cellular phones are often considered a staple of 21st century life, using them can become a safety issue when people dial-up while behind the wheel.

During 1999, legislators in 15 states considered bills to limit or prohibit cell phone use by drivers. None of those measures passed, but at least five states have such legislation pending this year.

The proposals range from a complete ban of cell phone use in a moving vehicle to guidelines for use. No proposals regarding this issue are currently before the Minnesota Legislature.

Proponents of regulating cell phone use say drivers are distracted and don't respond as quickly to road conditions. Opponents say that cell phones are no more of a distraction for drivers than the radio, eating food, or using vanity mirrors. And, they say, cell phones are often used to seek help during road emergencies.

Currently no state has laws specifically regulating cell phone use in automobiles, but all states have laws addressing careless or reckless driving.

The city of Brooklyn, Ohio, became the first jurisdiction in the country to significantly restrict cell phone use inside vehicles by passing a hands-free ordinance in March 1999.

The ordinance makes it a misdemeanor

to use a cell phone while driving unless both hands are on the steering wheel.

Though devices are available so drivers can keep their hands on the wheel, studies show they don't necessarily increase safety.

A 1997 study by the *New England Journal of Medicine* concluded that cell phone users were four times more likely to have crashes than non-users. And the study found that cell phone units that allow the hands to be free offer no safety advantage over hand-held units.

At least seven countries — England, Switzerland, Spain, Australia, Israel, Italy, and the Republic of Singapore — restrict or prohibit cell phone use while driving a motor vehicle.

(D. MAEDA)

Monday, March 13

HF4089—Abrams (R)

Taxes

Property tax class rates reduced, education homestead and agricultural credits modified, limited market value modified, mining tax distributions deduction eliminated from levy limit calculation, and levy limits extended.

HF4090—Abrams (R)

Taxes

Public finance provisions modified and money appropriated.

HF4091—Lenczewski (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Statutory cities authorized to elect council members by wards.

HF4092—Lenczewski (DFL)

Crime Prevention

Criminal and juvenile justice information policy group membership modified, data group created, technology infrastructure improvements authorized, and money appropriated.

HF4093—Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

Disabled persons reduced class rate homesteads market value increased.

HF4094—Johnson (DFL)

Transportation Policy

Photo identification equipment purchased and maintained by the state for existing driver's license agents, and money appropriated.

HF4095—Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

State individual income tax add-back calculation provided.

HF4096—Trimble (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

St. Paul Port Authority industrial development powers clarified.

HF4097—Leppik (R)

Higher Education Finance

Technical college printing and publishing programs created, and money appropriated.

HF4098—Johnson (DFL)

K-12 Education Finance

Detached and annexed land alternative bonded indebtedness allocation method created.

HF4099—Rest (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Tax increment financing powers and procedures modified.

HF4100—Swenson (R)

Health & Human Services Finance

Rural hospital capital improvement grant and loan program established, and money appropriated.

HF4101—Osskopp (R)

Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Great River Ridge trail constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF4102—McElroy (R)

Taxes

Multi-state sales and use tax collection system development authorized.

HF4103—Otremba (DFL)

K-12 Education Finance

Residential academy grants modified.

HF4104—Entenza (DFL)

Family & Early Childhood Education Finance

Kids capacity initiative pilot program grant authorized, report required, and money appropriated.

Wednesday, March 15

HF4105—Krinkie (R)

Taxes

Individual income tax rates reduced, married filing jointly brackets expanded, marriage penalty repealed, property tax class rates reduced, MinnesotaCare subsidized health insurance account created, and premium and provider taxes repealed.

HF4106—Seifert, M. (R)

Jobs & Economic Development Policy

Yellow Medicine County economic development authority authorized and powers provided.

HF4107—Sykora (R)

Ways & Means

Adult Basic Education programs, child care licensing and inservice training requirements, individual development accounts eligibility, and child care assistance requirements modified; energy assistance transferred; and money appropriated.

HF4108—Lenczewski (DFL)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Veterans preference termination rights expanded to include state employees.

HF4109—Abeler (R)

Health & Human Services Policy

Nursing facilities financial crisis to be addressed when developing policies related to long-term care services and nursing home rates.

HF4110—Abrams (R)

Taxes

Luggage cart and baby stroller rentals sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF4111—McElroy (R)

Ways & Means

Economic development supplemental appropriations bill.

HF4112—Krinkie (R)

Taxes

Circle Pines levy limit increased.

HF4113—Hasskamp (DFL)

Taxes

Sales and use tax rate reduced.

HF4114—Milbert (DFL)

Taxes

Legislative bill revenue estimate requirements modified.

HF4115—Milbert (DFL)

Taxes

Department of Revenue taxable sales interpretation instructions clarified.

HF4116—Leighton (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Coni-bear trapping restrictions imposed.

HF4117—Gunther (R)

Environment & Natural Resources Policy

State and county environmental partnership program created for Individual Sewer Treatment System (ISTS) improvements, and money appropriated.

HF4118—Milbert (DFL)

Taxes

Income taxpayers electronically filing tax liability designation authorized and special accounts created.

Thursday, March 16

HF4119—Tunheim (DFL)

Environment &

Natural Resources Finance

Red Lake watershed district flood analysis grant authorized and money appropriated.

HF4120—Abrams (R)

Taxes

Taconite production tax rate to remain the same for one year.

HF4121—McElroy (R)

Taxes

Nonresident income tax credit authorized for taxes paid in state of domicile.

HF4122—Hasskamp (DFL)

Taxes

Property tax market value increases limited.



It's not easy to amend the Minnesota Constitution, but that wasn't always the case. From 1857 to 1898, amendments required only a simple majority — more 'yes' votes than 'no' votes — at the polls.

That changed by way of a constitutional amendment approved in 1898 requiring a majority of all voters who went to the polls for that election. That means leaving the question blank counts as a 'no' vote.

The 1898 measure was known as the "brewer's amendment" because it was intended to make it more difficult for prohibitionists to ban liquor.

MONDAY, March 20

8 a.m.

ETHICS

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Elaine Harder
Agenda: Ethics complaint regarding Rep. Arlon Lindner.

Note: The committee may possibly reconvene 15 minutes after session in Room 10 of the State Office Building.

10 a.m.

TAXES

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: Omnibus tax bill presentation. Summary by House Research.

11 a.m.

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty
Agenda: Calendar for the Day for March 20.

1 p.m.

The House meets in session.

TUESDAY, March 21

9 a.m.

TAXES

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: Public testimony on the omnibus tax bill.

1 p.m.

The House meets in session.

WEDNESDAY, March 22

8 a.m.

TAXES

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: Mark-up of the omnibus tax bill.

10 a.m.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik
Agenda: Higher Education Services Office (HESO) presentation.

1 p.m.

The House meets in session.

THURSDAY, March 23

TAXES

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: Time, room, and agenda to be announced.

1 p.m.

The House meets in session.

FRIDAY, March 24

TAXES

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams
Agenda: Time, room, and agenda to be announced.

10 a.m.

The House meets in session.

Reflections

When the House goes “under call” for all members to vote on a crucial bill, the speaker directs the sergeant-at-arms to find and escort all members back to the chamber. Often, House business does not proceed until all members are at their desks.

Old stories prevail around the Capitol about the procedure. The one about the chief sergeant who had to drive miles out of town to bring a member back is an example.

Another is about the search to find Joe Rolette back in 1857 after he stole the bill that was to make St. Peter the state capital. So the story goes, the sergeant did find Rolette, but was coerced to sit and play cards until three days transpired for the bill to die.

Not all bills come under the Call of the House rule, but one of note is an 1881 controversial tonnage tax on the value of ore up on the Iron Range. The bill hung around in some form for 40 years as it was passed, repealed, vetoed, passed again, and amended. In 1909 for example, Gov. John Johnson vetoed a bill that would put a levy on the gross value of ore.

Then, during the 1921 session, a bill for

a tonnage tax on iron ore resurfaced with an amendment that levied tax on the occupation of ore mining. One lawmaker who voted for the occupation tax was Rep. Henry H. Emmons from Emmons Township on the Iowa State line.

Worth noting is his father, H.G. Emmons, who served in the Legislature for two terms in 1877 and 1878. The elder Emmons helped to pass a bill for legislative sessions to become biennial, and another for funds to pay for the cost of the capture of the Northfield bank robbers, the Jesse James-Cole Younger Gang.

H.H. Emmons’ time at the Capitol is also noteworthy in many aspects, but mostly because of how he kept a pledge to his constituency in Freeborn County to vote for the tonnage or occupation tax. This was not as simple as it sounds.

Emmons was very ill at the opening of the 1921 legislative session. So strongly was he committed to his lawmaker role, he traveled back and forth between treat-

ment at Rochester’s Mayo Clinic and St. Paul to execute his duties.

Emmons was present in session off and on for only 22 days. He returned on the 45th Day. On the morning of March 11 — the 47th Day of session— he arose from his deathbed, dressed, and went to the Capitol.

Emmons rested on a couch in the chamber lobby until a Call of the House was requested for the tax bill. He made his way to his desk, then voted when his name was called. This was his last official act. Henry H. Emmons died on March 31, 1921.

A week later, his colleagues read a resolution into the House Journal for “his untiring energy, zeal and conscientious application of his work in the Legislature.”

Emmons’ great granddaughter, Leah Cook, followed a Call to the House some 70 years later as a high school page. After college, she served as a legislative assistant and lobbyist in Maryland.

— LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

How a Bill Becomes

Idea

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

Legal form

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

Authors

3 Each bill must have a legislator to sponsor and introduce it in the Legislature. That legislator is the chief author whose name appears on the bill along with the bill's file number to identify it as it moves through the legislative process. There may be up to 34 co-authors from the House and four from the Senate. Their names also appear on the bill.

General Register

7 In the House, the General Register serves as a parking lot where bills await action by the full body. Bills chosen to appear on the Calendar for the Day or the Fiscal Calendar are drawn from the General Register.

In the Senate, a different procedure is used. Bills are listed on the General Orders agenda. Senate members, acting as the "committee of the whole," have a chance to debate the issue and offer amendments on the bill. Afterwards, they vote to recommend: passage of the bill, progress (delay action), or further committee action. And sometimes they recommend that a bill not pass. From here, the bill is placed on the Calendar.

Calendar for the Day

8 In the House, the Calendar for the Day is a list of bills the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee has designated for the full House to vote on. Members can vote to amend the bill, and after amendments are dispensed with, the bill is given its *third reading* before the vote of the full body is taken. The House also has a Fiscal Calendar, on which the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee or House Taxes Committee can call up for consideration any tax or finance bill that has had a second reading. The bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.

In the Senate, bills approved by the "committee of the whole" are placed on the Calendar. At this point, the bill has its *third reading*, after which time the bill cannot be amended unless the entire body agrees to it. Toward the end of the session, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration designates bills from the General Orders calendar to receive priority consideration. These Special Orders bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.

A bill needs 68 votes to pass the House and 34 votes to pass the Senate. If the House and Senate each pass the same version of the bill, it goes to the governor for a signature.



a Law in Minnesota

Introduction

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

Conference

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

Committee

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

Floor

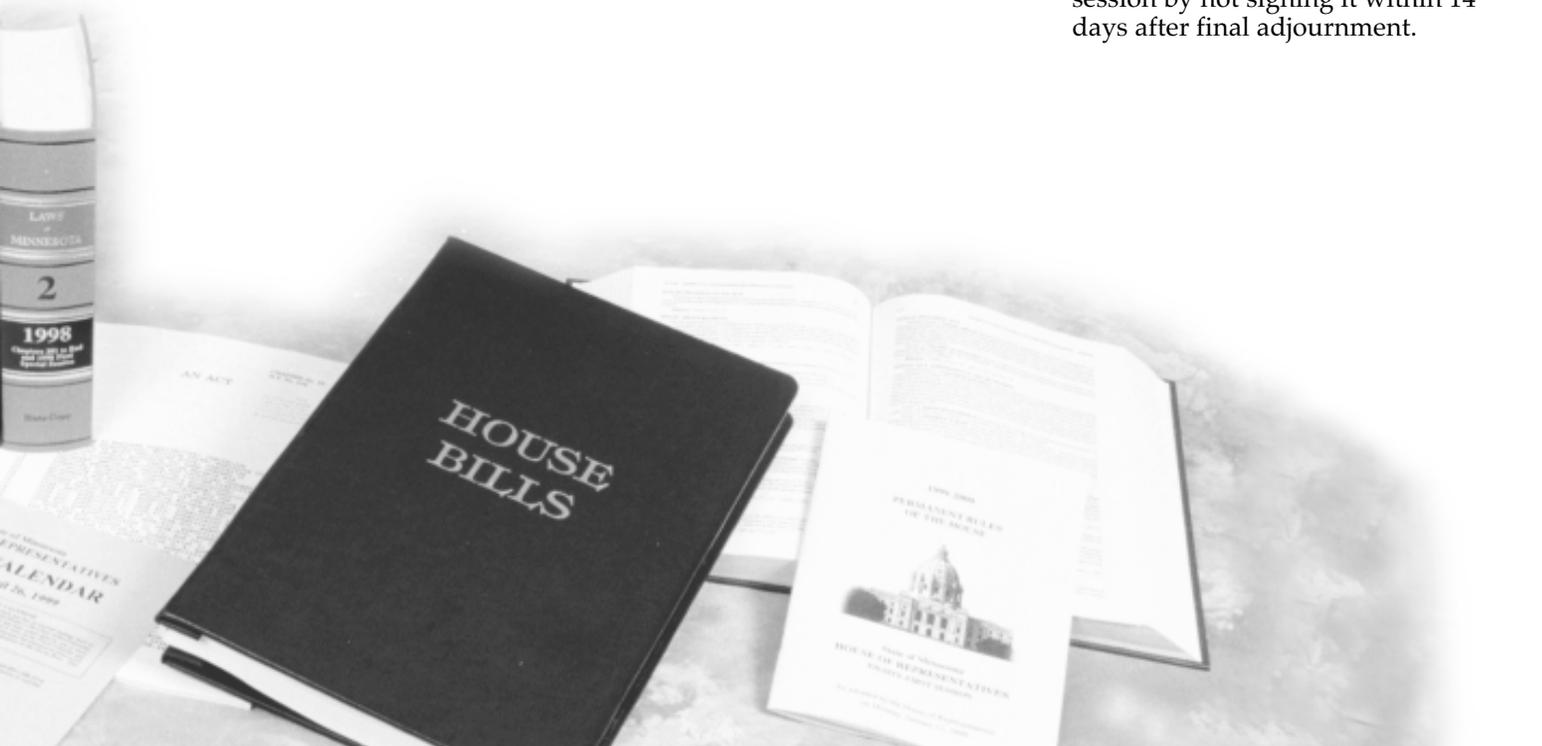
10 The conference committee's compromise bill then goes back to the House and the Senate for another vote. If both bodies pass the bill in this form, it is sent to the governor for his or her approval or disapproval. (If one or both bodies reject the report, it goes back to the conference committee for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

Floor

6 After the full House or Senate accepts the committee report, the bill has its *second reading* and is placed on the House agenda called the General Register or the Senate agenda called General Orders. (A committee can recommend that non-controversial bills bypass the General Register or General Orders and go onto the Consent Calendar, where bills usually pass without debate.) After this point, House and Senate procedures differ slightly.

Governor

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



MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

School district data

Percentage of growth in public school enrollment, 1989 to 1999	17
Students enrolled in public schools, 1989	727,000
In 1999	851,000
Percentage of districts with declines in enrollment, 1989 to 1999	38
Percentage of districts projecting enrollment to fall between 1998 and 2000	63
1999 school district general fund spending, in billions	\$5.4
in 1989	\$3.3
Percentage of inflation-adjusted growth in districts' general fund revenues per student, 1989 to 1998	16
Percentage of inflation-adjusted growth in districts' general fund spending per student, 1989 to 1998	9
Districts with statutory operating deficits, 1989	40
In 1998	10
In 1999 (preliminary figure)	22
Average teacher's salary, 1999	\$41,163
In 1989 (in 1999 dollars)	\$42,815
Average administrator's salary, 1999	\$65,811
In 1989 (in 1999 dollars)	\$63,889
Percentage of teachers with less than 10 years experience, 1999	38
In 1989	23
Percentage of increase in number of teachers per 1,000 students, 1989 to 1999	8
Teachers per 1,000 students, 1999	70
In 1998	67
Average total district expenditure per student, 1999	\$6,758
Number of districts in Minnesota, 1999	350
In 1989	435

Source: *School District Finances*, Office of the Legislative Auditor, February 2000.

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SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

MARCH 24, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 8

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HOUSE PASSES BONDING BILL

EDUCATION AND TAX PLANS ADVANCE



SESSION Weekly

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On the cover: The notebook computer on Rep. Bernie Lieder's desk in the House chamber shows a 19-second delay of the March 22 House proceedings, which are broadcast over the local area network.

—Photo by Laura Phillips

Education spending

Omnibus bill would supply additional funds for early childhood, K-12, and higher education

By **MIKE DELARCO & CHRIS VETTER**

The House moved March 21 to provide \$70 million in new general fund spending for a variety of education initiatives involving students from preschool to post-secondary. The vote was 78-48.

The bill combines early childhood and family education finance proposals with higher education and K-12 spending. But much of the money — \$60.7 million — would go to K-12 spending.

The omnibus bill includes a plan to suspend the state's Profile of Learning initiative and provide local districts with other options to ensure high standards for all students. The plan also seeks to improve Internet access and aid districts in recruiting teachers.

The measure also would shift \$7.4 million in federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) money in the current biennium for a variety of programs, including efforts to help provide child care for those on welfare and those moving off welfare.

The Senate has approved a much larger education spending plan that would provide about \$293 million. The spending bill's fate will be negotiated by a House-Senate conference committee.

Here is a look at highlights of the House bill (HF3800), which is sponsored by Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington).

Student accountability

An amendment approved on the floor attached the House plan to deal with the Profile of Learning to the omnibus spending measure.

Earlier this month, the House approved a separate bill (HF3618/SF3286*) that would put the much-criticized Profile on hold indefinitely, provide a new option called the North Star Standard, and allow districts more local control in measuring student performance.

By attaching the Profile revamp plan to the omnibus education funding bill, the House has ensured that debate over the Profile of Learning is now likely to occur on two fronts. Lawmakers are hoping not to repeat what happened in 1999, when a conference committee

could not agree on plans to alter the Profile and no changes were made.

A part of the state's Graduation Standards, the Profile was created to shift learning away from textbooks and lectures and move it in the direction of experiments, teamwork, research, and independent projects. Complaints about the Profile began to surface shortly after its inception, however, prompting teachers, students and parents to call for change.

Aid to recruit teachers

A provision in the bill allowing for a special alternative teaching license for out-of-state teachers would help districts fill teacher vacancies caused by early retirement, student enrollment growth, and policies requiring class-size reduction.

The bill would allow instructors who have gained experience in classrooms outside of Minnesota a two-year alternative Minnesota teaching license.

Teacher shortages are not unique to this state, however. Some experts forecast as many as 2 million openings for teachers nationwide. Loan forgiveness programs included in the education plan are viewed as a way Minnesota can beat other states in capturing new graduates with an eye toward teaching.

The bill also includes loan forgiveness funds to help school districts, especially rural ones, recruit and retain qualified teachers in science, math and other areas.

Vocational support

The bill would add \$11.3 million in secondary vocational aid to the current appropriation

for fiscal year 2001. The money would help to preserve work training programs.

Several high school students testified before the House K-12 Education Finance Committee earlier this month in support of vocational program preservation. When district funding becomes tight, they told members, work training programs are often unfairly identified for cuts.

The omnibus measure would also restore secondary vocational aid for fiscal year 2002. It would keep the aid at the lesser of \$73 per pupil in grades 10 to 12, or 25 percent of the approved program expenditures.

Internet initiatives

The House plan would provide \$10 million in grants to fund high-speed Internet links in schools.

House members, however, said they want to protect children from potentially harmful images that can be found on the Internet.



A House-approved education proposal would spend \$60.7 million for K-12 education, affecting students like the ones in this third-grade classroom at Jackson Elementary School in St. Paul.

The bill would require all public and charter school computers to be equipped with Internet filtering devices that would keep pornographic and other obscene images out of the classroom. Most Internet providers can do so at a minimal charge, said Seagren.

Library computers children have access to would also be covered under the plan.

The bill would set aside funds for telecommunications access grants to districts, and it would establish a task force to examine and recommend minimum technology standards for school districts.



Higher education spending

The bill would provide about \$11.6 million to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system to address unexpected increases in enrollment.

The money — \$5,792,000 in the current fiscal year and \$5,792,000 in fiscal year 2001 — would come from the state's general fund.

A separate portion of the bill would require MnSCU to establish and maintain a database that includes the location, description, and condition of all facilities owned by the system. The same would be required of the University of Minnesota.

The databases would have to be in place for the institutions to be eligible for bond funding to repair existing buildings or construct new ones. The U of M and MnSCU would have until 2003 to assemble the information.

Early childhood & adult programs

Under the bill, additional funds would be devoted to Early Childhood Family Education. A total of \$755,000 would be added to the funding for the program in the second year of the current biennium.

The bill also would revise the formula by which the state provides funds for Adult Basic Education. The program offers academic instruction necessary to earn a high school diploma or its equivalency for people age 16 years and over. Classes are offered through consortia of school districts and public non-profit organizations.

The current funding formula is based on the number of students served, which districts complain can be hard to predict from year to year. The proposed new formula, to be effective in the fiscal year that begins July 1, would consider several factors, including the total population in the area served, the hours of classroom time, and the number of drop outs and people with limited English proficiency in the area.

Supporters say the new formula would provide a more predictable base because it would be tied to population, which is easier to predict than enrollment. And the formula would be tied to factors that indicate need for Adult Basic Education.

The new formula would actually spend about \$500,000 less this biennium than is forecast under the current formula.

In addition, the bill would require Adult Basic Education providers to ask students for their Social Security numbers for economic tracking and program evaluation purposes. The Department of Economic Security would use the numbers to see if graduates begin earning more money after leaving the program.

Continued on page 22

A free ride

Governor sought to end railroad freebies for public officials

Gov. Andrew R. McGill clearly knew it required delicacy to suggest that the Legislature end a corrupt practice without accusing legislators of corruption.

In his 1887 inaugural address, McGill called on lawmakers and other officials to stop taking free passes from railroad companies, but McGill did so carefully.

Lawmakers in that era were accustomed to getting perks from the railroads. In fact, many state officials were unabashed about asking railroad companies for free trips and for special accommodations aboard the trains.

The practice was so commonplace that some officials thought they were supposed to get free passes by virtue of their position in government. And the railroads were generally willing to comply, although they did it grudgingly in some cases.



Gov. Andrew R. McGill

McGill sought to put an end to the situation, but it seems the newly elected Republican didn't want to begin his term by offending the Legislature.

Near the end of a long discussion of railroad-related issues — from taxation of railroad lands to grain storage by the rail companies — McGill brought up the need for cheaper passenger fares.

The size of the state and sparsity of the population demanded affordable transportation to link people to the large cities and public institutions, McGill said. Yet he acknowledged that those same factors made it impossible to have passenger rates as low as in the "thickly settled communities of the East."

The governor noted the progress that had been made toward cheaper fares before he pointed out that more could be done.

"There is, I apprehend, one obstacle in the way which it is in your power to remove," McGill said. "I allude to the practice . . . among railroad companies of issuing free passes."

McGill built his argument around the idea that average citizens were paying more for train tickets because the railroad

companies had to make up for all the freebies they gave to politicians and others in positions of power.

And members of the public were aware that the amount they paid was in part dictated by the number of people who rode for free, McGill said.

In the book *James J. Hill and the Opening of the West* by Albro Martin, several anecdotes describe the situation that prompted McGill's actions. For example, the secretary of state in 1880 sent a letter to railroad owner James J. Hill that plainly listed the names of 21 state officials who were to receive free tickets.

And in 1884, a candidate asked for tickets and told Hill that he would "try to render some service in return."

At some points, the governor's polite and somewhat indirect tone in his inaugural address gave way to blunt criticism of the long-running practice.

"It is a custom which smacks of favoritism on one side and injustice on the other," he said.

But McGill followed those words with an effort to assuage the egos of state officials.

"It may, however, be safely assumed that the influence of free passes on public men is much less than is generally supposed," he said. "(T)he cases where it swerves them from duty are . . . too rare to merit consideration."

The governor's speech made a simple case for legislative action to end the practice. The railroads could not be expected to stop providing free tickets on their own, he argued, because the heavily regulated companies could have met retaliation in some many ways.

McGill concluded his remarks on the subject by calling the railroad giveaways "a public evil" and asking for "suitable legislation to destroy it."

The 1885 Legislature did not heed McGill's suggestion, and some officials continued to request and receive free railroad tickets for years to come.

(N. HEALY)

★ BUSINESS

Electronic pawn records

Pawnbrokers who use computerized tracking of items will be required to use a uniform electronic format, under a new law signed March 23.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), who sponsored the measure in the House, said about 30 communities already ask pawnbrokers to use computerized tracking of items. Skoglund said his measure will make sure the electronic formats are all the same, enabling police access to a uniformed system for checking on possible stolen goods.

"When you pawn an item, a ticket is written both for your protection and so the law enforcement can check records," Skoglund explained.

There are approximately 300,000 transactions at pawn shops each year — far too many for police to check multiple systems or handwritten notes, Skoglund said.

"That's just impossible to track," he said. "It doesn't work if the thief steals in one city and tries to sell in another city."

The law will not require pawnbrokers to use electronic storage of information. However, if electronic tracking is used, it will have to be on the uniform system, under the law.

While only a handful of cities require computerized tracking of pawn items now, Skoglund said he thinks more cities will follow, as they realize it is a better way to catch thieves and return stolen property to the rightful owner.

Finally, the computerized tracking of pawn items could lead to a reduction of thefts, Skoglund said.

"If people think the stuff they steal will get them convicted, they won't steal it," he said.

The measure is effective March 24. Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls) carried the legislation in the Senate.

HF3766*/SF3673/CH274

★ CONSUMERS

Limits on auto glass perks

A bill that would limit auto glass rebates to \$35 and redefine what costs insurance companies must pay for glass replacement passed the House on March 22. The vote was 127-0.

"This is the peace treaty in the auto glass war," said Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville), sponsor of the bill (HF2656).



Lobbyists, protesters, and other citizens voice concerns and mill about outside the door to the House chamber March 22 before the session convened.

Wolf said glass companies, insurance companies, and the state Department of Commerce all agree on the measure.

According to an insurance company study last year, Minnesota's auto glass replacement costs are 69 percent higher than the national average and are the highest in the nation. Many Minnesota auto glass dealers offer boxes of steaks, rebates of up to \$200, or other incentives to customers.

Wolf offered a successful amendment that inserted Senate language which would establish that insurance companies would pay the market price for glass replacement, as determined by a survey of costs charged in communities around the state, not just in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

The House bill originally established the costs would be determined by averaging repair costs of three dealers in a county.

Wolf said the most important part of the bill is it would no longer require insurance companies to pay for "all reasonable costs" for window replacement. The state Court of Appeals ruled earlier this year that "reasonable costs" included any freebies offered by glass companies.

The new language in the bill would require insurance companies to pay the determined market price based on the survey.

Under the bill, insurance and glass companies would voluntarily donate money to a survey revolving fund. The Department of Commerce would then coordinate the survey of glass costs. There would be no cost to the state for the survey, Wolf said.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) asked what would happen if the companies did not fund the survey. Wolf responded by saying the

Legislature would immediately take the measure up again, because the deal would have been broken.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) said he supported the bill, but that it only takes care of half of the problem. Currently, insurance companies steer consumers to certain glass companies, Tuma said, rather than telling them they can go to local dealers who might install higher quality glass.

The House narrowly defeated an amendment by Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm) that would have required insurance companies to pass on any savings to customers in the form of lower premiums. The amendment failed on a 64-64 tie.

"It makes all the sense in the world," Tomassoni said.

Wolf said the amendment would have killed the bill.

The measure now awaits the governor's approval.

★ CRIME

Drug change delayed

The prescription painkiller Carisoprodol will not be classified as a controlled substance for at least one more year, under a law signed March 20 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

This is the third consecutive year the Legislature has delayed the effective date for classifying the painkiller and muscle relaxant. Under the law, Carisoprodol will become a schedule IV controlled substance on Aug. 1, 2001. The previous law would have made the drug a controlled substance on Aug. 1 of this year.

Officials say they needed to delay the action

another year while the U.S. Food and Drug Administration examines the painkiller to determine its effects.

Under Minnesota law, a schedule IV controlled substance is a drug that has a low potential for abuse and it is currently accepted for medical treatment in the United States. However, abuse may lead to physical or psychological dependence.

Doctors can prescribe drugs in schedule II to schedule V, but cannot prescribe drugs in schedule I. Classifying a drug like Carisoprodol as a controlled substance would make it more difficult for doctors to prescribe.

The original law went into effect in 1997. The Legislature has already delayed implementation of the schedule IV classification twice before this year.

Scheduling is done on the state level, which is usually consistent with federal drug regulations. Carisoprodol is not a controlled substance on the federal level.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) and Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the legislation. The law is effective Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2774/SF2485*/CH262

★ EDUCATION

Profile revamp passes House

The House passed a bill March 21 that would allow school districts frustrated with the problems associated with the state's Profile of Learning initiative to implement a new option for school accountability. The vote was 102-27.

The bill would put the much-criticized Profile on hold indefinitely. The measure also would provide a new option called the North Star Standard and allow districts more local control in measuring student performance.

Districts would be able to use either the North Star Standard or tailor teaching to the needs of their students, said Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie), who was the chief advocate for the new initiative.

The Profile was created to shift learning away from textbooks and lectures and move it in the direction of experiments, teamwork, research, and independent projects.

Under the Profile, students are required to perform various tasks in core learning areas that have practical applications for life beyond the classroom.

While completion of Profile tasks would no longer be required for student graduation purposes if the bill were to become law, teachers would still be allowed to use tasks found in the Profile as a guide to gauging student understanding, Kielkucki said.

The bill (HF3618/SF3286*), sponsored by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) was significantly

altered on the House floor March 16, when members voted to attach the North Star Standard provisions to the legislation. After the Kielkucki amendment went on, a vote on passage of the bill was delayed until March 21.

The North Star Standard, Kielkucki said, would ease the Profile's practical skills orientation. It would provide rewritten standards in such basics as science, math, English, and history.

Under the plan, students would have to complete credits in up to 10 learning areas. Teachers would still be able to assign projects designed to test a student's ability to understand and apply subject matter, but such hands-on demonstrations would no longer be a standard requirement.

The House bill still must be reconciled with a Senate version of the legislation that does not include the North Star Standard initiative.

The House later attached its Profile revamp plan to a separate education funding bill (HF3800), which means the debate over the Profile of Learning is now likely to occur on two fronts. (See related story, page 3.)

★ EMPLOYMENT

Training for former farmers

Struggling farmers could qualify sooner for the state's dislocated workers program, under a bill approved March 17 by the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

Currently farmers can qualify for the program once they have been unemployed as a result of economic conditions or because of natural disasters.

The bill would expand eligibility to farmers who have experienced a significant reduction in income due to inadequate crop or livestock prices, crop failures, or significant loss in crop yields due to pests, disease, adverse weather, or other natural phenomenon.

Sponsored by Rep. Jim Tunheim (DFL-Kennedy), the bill was sent to the House Rules Committee.

Kay Hegge, the flood and farm recovery coordinator for the Northwest Regional Development Commission, said that the process through which farmers become unemployed differs from other workers. She said farmers don't receive a pink slip and that closing down a farm can take years, due to a variety of legal reasons including tax consequences.

"Last year's state and federal assistance bought time but in some cases it bought false hope," she said.

Hegge said that over the past 14 months more than 200 farmers in her region, which has about 5,500 farmers, quit farming.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), the



Kay Hegge, the flood and farm recovery coordinator for the Northwest Regional Development Commission, testifies for a bill that would expand eligibility and provide training grants for specified working farmers and dislocated farmers. Hegge spoke during a March 17 hearing of the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

committee chair, said that the dislocated workers program is funded by employers and is set up so that those who lay off workers end up paying for their training. He said there is a concern that because farmers haven't been paying into the program, it may not be fair to expand eligibility.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) pointed out that displaced homemakers qualify under federal definitions as dislocated workers and thus precedence has been established that would allow further expansion to the farmers addressed in the bill.

Hegge said Greater Minnesota needs to begin to come up with alternatives for those unable to make it in farming, other than moving out of the area.

"We want to keep people there and people want to stay there," she said.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Banning gasoline additives

A bill that would ban gasoline additives that have caused severe water pollution in some states was passed March 22 by the House. The vote was 129-0.

The bill (HF3292/SF2946*), sponsored by Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea), would allow gasoline to contain only trace amounts of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) and ethyl tertiary butyl ether (ETBE). Both compounds are alternative fuel additives to ethanol.

Currently, those additives are not used in Minnesota's gasoline supply. But as other states ban the chemicals, Dorman said gasoline with those additives could be sent to Minnesota unless it is banned here.

The Senate version of the bill would allow gasoline in Minnesota to contain 0.5 percent of those additives, which can be monitored at gas pumps.

Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) proposed to reduce that threshold so that only 0.1 percent of the compound would be allowed in gasoline in Minnesota. Her amendment was approved.

Dorman supported that change, which had also been approved by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee, based on recommendations from the Pollution Control Agency and the Weights and Measures Division of the Department of Public Service.

Gasoline is moved through common pipelines throughout the country, so traces of those chemicals can be found in almost all gasoline.

The bill now moves to the Senate.

Underwater lumber recovery

A bill that would allow people to salvage logs from lake and river bottoms was approved March 21 by the House Ways and Means Committee.

Under the bill (HF2559/SF2546*), a person or company that wants to salvage a log that is underwater would apply for a lease through the state Department of Natural Resources. The fee for a lease would be \$500 for Minnesota residents and \$2,500 for those who live outside the state.

Terms of the lease would be negotiable.

Logs could be salvaged only if they are submerged at depths of 20 feet or more. The lease would require that precautions be taken to avoid disturbing the bottom of the lake or river.

Some of the proceeds from the leases would go to the state's general fund, and some would go to the game and fish fund. If the lake or river is on school trust fund lands, the money would go into the permanent school fund.

The state also would receive 25 percent of the money from the sale of the logs, based on the weighted average selling price.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack), now moves to the House floor.

★ ETHICS

Ethics complaint examined

Members of the House Ethics Committee are considering whether there is probable cause to continue investigating an ethics complaint against Rep. Arlon Lindner (R-Corcoran).

Four DFL House members filed a complaint against Lindner based on comments he made to Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul), during a floor debate Feb. 23 about the House prayer.

In the complaint, Lindner is charged with violating the norms of House behavior, bringing the House into dishonor, and suggesting members of the House should be excluded from proceedings.

Reps. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), Rob Leighton (DFL-Austin), Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope), and Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) signed the complaint.

The committee met March 20 and 21, taking direct testimony and rebuttal to establish whether there was probable cause that the charges are "more probably true than not." A decision has not yet been announced.

If the committee finds there is probable cause, it will schedule another hearing where more testimony and evidence can be brought forward. At that time the committee would then make its recommendation to the full House whether Lindner be reprimanded, censured, or expelled.

Entenza said that he and the other representatives who brought the complaint don't want Lindner to be either censured or

expelled. He said that if Lindner had apologized, they would have dropped the complaint.

During debate Feb. 23, there was an exchange between Paymar and Lindner regarding respect for all the religions represented in the House and how the prayer delivered before each floor session should represent a certain level of religious diversity.

At one point, Lindner responded to Paymar, who is Jewish, by saying, "don't impose your irreligious left views on me." Those are the words the complaining parties objected to.

Lindner's attorney, Rick Morgan of Minneapolis, said the representative meant the term "irreligious left" to be a political term in opposition to the words "religious right."

However, Entenza and others contended that the context of the debate — House prayer — suggested the terms could have been interpreted as a religious attack.

Lindner said he was shocked that a member was being called to answer for words he used in debate. He argued that a seldom-used House rule suggests that a member can never be called to answer for debate unless members object right away.

"Here I am, before you, because I exercised my First Amendment rights in a debate on the House floor," Lindner said. "Actually, I'm charged for what someone thought I said instead of what I actually said."

Lindner has not apologized publicly for his comments.

Several committee members said they were offended by the words Lindner used.

But Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) said that doesn't mean he shouldn't be allowed to say them. Davids said he feared that if the committee votes to continue the investigation, the committee will be charged with designating a "speech patrol" for House debate.

"I think what he did was wrong," Davids said. "The day we can't allow ourselves a little leeway on the House floor to speak freely, is the day we can no longer represent the people of Minnesota."

★ GAME & FISH

Permits for disabled hunters

A special hunting permit will be available to people who have a permanent disability, under a new law signed March 20 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The permit will allow people with certain medical conditions to use a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle while hunting in the state's wildlife management areas.

The law will allow the commissioner of natural resources to issue such permits to people who cannot step from a vehicle



Rick Morgan, attorney for Rep. Arlon Lindner, testifies March 20 in front of the House Ethics Committee. The committee was holding a hearing to determine if there is probable cause to support charges that Lindner violated House rules.

without the aid of a wheelchair, crutches, braces, or other means of support.

Permits will also be available to people who have heart or lung conditions and require breathing assistance.

Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) and Sen. Jane Krentz (DFL-May Township) sponsored the legislation. The law is effective Jan. 1, 2001. HF2603/SF2346*/CH265

★ **GOVERNMENT**

Clarifying access to data

A bill that would clarify state policies for accommodating requests for public data was approved March 16 by the House State Government Finance Committee.

Under the bill (HF2481), sponsored by Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center), government data that is stored on computer would be included in state law that applies to other types of public documents.

Current law allows people to inspect public data free of charge, but government entities can charge costs for making copies of public documents.

Carruthers said the bill would clarify that those laws, known collectively as the Data Practices Act, should apply to electronically stored data.

The bill also would set up an alternative dispute resolution process for situations where a person has a conflict with a government entity, for example, a disagreement regarding whether certain information is public. It would allow people in those situations to file a complaint with the state Department of Administration instead of going to court.

Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview) asked how the bill would affect one of his own requests for public information. He said he had asked the Minnesota Department of Transportation for public documents on the subject of light rail, including e-mails.

But the department responded that his request would cost nearly \$100,000, Krinkie said. He said those costs would include paying staff for several weeks to scan, retrieve, and store the information, plus hardware and software costs of \$51,000.

Carruthers said current law seems to apply to that type of situation, and the bill would clarify that the department would not need to provide copies of the e-mails and other documents, but that the inspection of the data should be free.

The bill now moves to the House Rules Committee.

★ **HEALTH**

Nursing mother jury duty

A judicial task force will suggest possible changes to jury rules for nursing mothers, under a law signed by Gov. Jesse Ventura on March 23.

The Supreme Court Jury Reform Task Force has been instructed to study the issue and suggest recommendations to accommodate the needs of nursing mothers who are selected for jury duty.

The House approved the Senate language earlier this month. Previously, the House bill would have exempted all nursing mothers from jury duty.

Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) and Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the new law. HF1865*/SF2094/CH269

Prescription drug discount cards

The House passed a bill March 22 that would prohibit the sale, marketing, promotion, or distribution of cards offering discounts for prescription drugs that fail to meet certain requirements. The vote was 129-0.

The bill (HF2883/SF2579*), sponsored by Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack), would allow an individual or the state attorney general to sue to stop any act and obtain damages any deception may have caused.

The measure is an attempt to protect consumers from promised discounts that are confusing or not backed by insurance policies.

Discounts that are deceptive or that are not authorized by contract with the pharmacies listed on the cards would be in violation if the bill were to become law.

Also, discount cards would have to prominently state that the discounts are not connected to health insurance.

Language in the bill would not apply, however, to vision care, glasses, or contact lenses provided by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Discounts promised under contract with the state of Minnesota or a consumer discount card issued by a store for use at that particular store would also be allowed.

Furthermore, a card administered by a health insurer, nonprofit health service plan corporation, or HMO would be exempt under the bill.

The bill was sent to the Senate.

★ **HUMAN SERVICES**

Safe haven for infants

The House passed a bill March 21 that would provide a safe place for unwanted newborns. The vote was 130-0.

The bill (HF2945), sponsored by Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), would allow the mother or a person who has the mother's permission to leave the child at a hospital.

As long as the child is less than 72 hours old and is unharmed, the mother would not face penalties from police or social services agencies.

"Hopefully this bill will take away some of the desperation of that young mother," Sykora said.

Sykora argued on behalf of the House bill over the Senate version.

The House bill would allow hospitals a 24-hour window to report that they have received a newborn, which, Sykora said, would give the mother adequate time to leave the area.

The House bill also does a better job of clarifying that it is not a crime to leave the child at the hospital, Sykora said.

The bill would call for hospitals to ask the mother about her medical history, although they would not be required to answer any questions.

Sykora's bill would allow hospitals to provide a numbered identification bracelet to the mother, to help link the parent to the baby in case reunification is sought later. But possession of such a bracelet would not allow the mother to take custody of the baby on demand.

The bill comes on the heels of some highly publicized cases where young mothers have abandoned their newborn children, including a case where a baby was found in a dumpster.

Sykora said people in desperate circumstances need a better option.

"Sadly enough, it seems like something we need to do today," she said. "This provides that safe place."

Rep. Linda Wejcman (DFL-Mpls) expressed concern about the specifics of language that would require the newborn be unharmed when left at the hospital. She wondered whether the bill would make it possible for a woman to be charged with a crime if she used drugs or alcohol during her pregnancy.

Sykora said that would not be the case. She said it would be difficult to know at the time of the drop off if the child suffered from any drug-related problems.

The New York Times reported earlier this month that Minnesota is among 23 states currently considering legislation to provide drop-off places for unwanted newborns.

In September 1999, Texas became the first state to enact such a measure after a rash of abandonments took place in the Houston area, according to the paper.

TAXES



Wadena County exemption

A new law will provide a one-time exemption to Wadena County from a truth-in-taxation publishing requirement.

Due to an oversight, the required public notice of the public hearing was not published, House sponsor Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee) said during a Feb. 22 hearing on the bill.

She said the county's auditor was new to the position. At the same time as preparing for the truth-in-taxation process, the auditor was also involved in administering a special election.

The county did meet its requirement of mailing notices to all taxpayers.

The state Department of Revenue ruled that the county did not substantially comply with state truth-in-taxation laws because of the failure to advertise the public hearing. The ruling would have required the county to use its previous year's levy.

Under the law, the county will be able to use its payable 2000 levy that was adopted at the public hearing.

During a House Taxes Committee hearing of the bill, department officials expressed concern about setting precedence by exempting the county from meeting its requirements.

Assistant Commissioner Jenny Engh said that the department supplies a checklist that clearly lays out each requirement of the truth-in-taxation process.

Daggett said that the mistake was not deliberate, and since the county had met its other notification requirements, the county's taxpayers were sufficiently made aware of the public hearing.

Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

The law becomes effective upon local approval.

SF2554*/HF3039/CH258

TRANSPORTATION



Spending plan cuts light rail

The House passed a \$425 million transportation spending bill March 21. The bill features \$350 million in spending from the general fund and another \$75 million in Trunk Highway Funds, mostly for road upgrades. The vote was 81-46.

The bill also would require that the state cancel appropriations previously approved for light-rail transit and return the unspent money, estimated to be about \$92 million.

In the past two years, the Legislature has approved a total of \$100 million for the 11-mile Hiawatha light-rail line. Elimination of

HEALTH CARE RALLY



Bloomington resident Bill Blom joins about 300 others in a March 22 rally in the Capitol rotunda seeking a cost of living adjustment for workers in programs that serve people with disabilities. The event was organized by the Minnesota Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities.

the bonding money does not have clear support in the Senate and is opposed by the governor.

The bulk of the funding in the bill would be used for road upgrades. Those road upgrades would be split evenly between the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota, with \$201 million spent on each area.

The bill (HF2891) is sponsored by Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska). Besides the funding items, the measure includes a study of the freeway ramp meters in the Twin Cities. The meters would be turned off to allow study of the impact on traffic.

Molnau defended the \$400,000 cost, saying her committee wants a thorough independent study that shows complete results of the experiment.

Another provision of the bill would require the Metropolitan Council to complete long-range plan for Metro Mobility, a program that provides transit for seniors and people with disabilities. The study would put Metro Mobility on equal footing with Metro Transit, the city bus system. The Met Council has already prepared a long-range plan for Metro Transit.

The bill also would provide \$450,000 in assistance for outstate communities to establish transit services.

A handful of amendments were attached to the omnibus bill on the House floor, but those provisions did not change the major funding plans.

Molnau offered an amendment that would allow the cities of Shorewood and Minnetonka to opt out of Metro Transit programs in favor of systems operated by the cities. Her amendment passed 70-58.

"Many of us have limited, almost no services," Molnau said.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen), who chairs the House Transportation Policy Committee, said that the tax dollars collected in Shorewood would equate to a \$70 one-way ride into Minneapolis because of the relatively few bus routes and riders in the city.

Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) spoke against the Molnau amendment, saying that poorer communities would not be able to opt out.

"This continues to undermine our public transit system," Orfield said.

An amendment offered by Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) was also approved. Trimble's amendment would eliminate the public safety motor vehicle surcharge. Trimble said the account now has \$15 million unspent dollars. His amendment would turn the money into grants for rural area ambulance services.

Trimble said the surcharge, which was originally supposed to be a one-time fee, is simply no longer needed.

The House rejected an amendment offered by Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) that would have cut license tab fees and created a multi-modal transportation fund. The idea is similar to a plan supported by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The proposal also would have placed a constitutional amendment on the November ballot to permanently devote revenue generated from the motor vehicle sales tax into a fund that could be used for light rail, busways, or roads.

"It goes a long way towards addressing the things we need to be looking at this year," said

Correction

The March 17 edition of *Session Weekly* contained an error related to committee testimony by Leslie Davis, president of Earth Protectors. A photo of Davis accompanied a story on transportation funding, and the photo caption incorrectly described Davis' testimony. It should be made clear that Davis spoke March 13 in support of a proposal to cancel the unspent remainder of the state funds for light-rail transit in the Hiawatha Corridor. We regret the error.

Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove.)

Marko found fault with the omnibus bill's focus on highway construction.

"The House bill before us doesn't treat transit very well," Marko said. "Where is transit in this bill? We are looking for a long-term fix. If not now, when?"

Molnau opposed the Juhnke amendment, saying the plan did not clarify where road improvement money would be spent.

"There is nothing in this amendment that says Greater Minnesota gets a dime," Molnau said.

Transit revenue debated

The House Taxes Committee considered a bill March 17 that would abolish the property tax levy by the Metropolitan Council for public transit in the Twin Cities area.

The measure would appropriate money from the general fund to replace the levy.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), who is sponsoring the bill (HF4087), said that the Twin Cities' reliance on property taxes to fund transit is unique.

According to a 1998 Legislative Auditor's report, property taxes provided 43 percent of the

Minneapolis-St. Paul area's transit operating funds, compared with an average of 2 percent in Minnesota's other metropolitan areas.

McElroy said he wants to make sure the provision would be included in the discussion of the governor's proposal to transfer funds from the motor vehicle sales tax into a new multi-modal transportation fund.

Under the bill, the Met Council's authority to levy would end in 2001. The state would then appropriate \$118 million to the council to provide transit services for that year.

The bill would provide a permanent reduction in each municipality's homestead and agricultural credit aid equal to the Met Council's transit levy. The bill also would require the Met Council to provide grants to municipalities that have opted out of the transit system and provide their own transit services.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), committee chair and a co-sponsor of the measure, said the bill sets the stage for the next level of debate on transit funding.

He said that debate on transit issues will be limited until the reliance on property taxes is resolved.

McElroy's measure is included in the omnibus tax bill advancing in the House.

Blue lights for collector cars

Collector vehicles would be able to display unique blue lights, under a bill the House passed 123-0 on March 22.

Currently, blue lights are only allowed on road maintenance equipment, snow removal vehicles, emergency vehicles, and motorcycles.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) is sponsoring the bill (HF3053), which would allow a blue light of one inch in diameter as part of the rear brake lights.

Bill Strusinski of the Minnesota Street Rod Association told the House Transportation Policy Committee last month that many of the collector cars have very tiny rear brake lights and the lights are not as bright as modern brake lights.

Strusinski said collector cars would be safer because the brighter blue light would make the rear brake light more visible.

Dennis Lazenberry of the Minnesota State Patrol said he does not object to this modification, but cautioned that he doesn't want to see more modifications in the future.

The bill now goes to the Senate.



Hard time

35 states provide felony DWI penalties

Felony convictions for multiple drinking and driving offenses are already practiced in 35 states, according to the National Survey of State Laws.

Another 13 states raise drinking and driving offenses to felony-level crimes if a person is injured or killed, if the driving causes damages, or a child is in the car.

None of the states with felony DWI convictions match the "four violations in 10 years" proposal that is moving forward in the Minnesota Legislature, according to the report.

Several states provide for a felony after a third DWI conviction. West Virginia, Illinois, Iowa, Vermont, Arizona, Nevada, and Kansas call for a felony charge for a third offense,

regardless of the time lapsed between offenses.

South Dakota, Alaska, Delaware, and Missouri bring felony charges for an offender's third drunken driving offense within five years. Michigan, Louisiana, and Texas have a felony charge for a third offense in 10 years.

Missouri law specifies that a felony DWI can be expunged after 10 years if no new alcohol-related offenses have occurred during that time.

Oklahoma law calls for a felony on a second offense in a 10-year span. A conviction calls for one to five years in jail and a \$2,500 maximum fine. New York, Idaho, and Indiana also have felony DWI laws for second offenses.

While some states, such as Arkansas and Illinois, send felony DWI convicts to prison, most states with felony DWI laws currently incarcerate the offender in local jails.

Two states — Oregon and Tennessee — never raise drunken driving to a felony.

Currently, Minnesota law provides for a gross misdemeanor conviction for the second and subsequent violations.

A third violation calls for a minimum 30 days in jail or eight hours of community service for each day not served in jail.

State law does provide for a felony when the offense causes substantial body harm or death.

(C. VETTER)

Building plans

House bonding plan lines up with governor's recommendations only on the bottom line

By JON FURE

The House passed a bonding bill March 23 that would spend about the same as Gov. Jesse Ventura's capital investment proposal. The vote was 94-39.

The bill (HF4078), sponsored by Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud), would use slightly less than the governor's recommendation of \$400 million in general obligation bonding.

The governor arrived at the \$400 million figure by taking the average amount of bonding bills over the past 15 years. Some lawmakers have argued that the figure is too low, but Knoblach said that he and other committee members decided to accept the governor's guidelines.

"We think the \$400 million is reasonable," Knoblach said. "Certainly there are many competing needs — there always are — but we're trying to focus on projects where the state has a clear mission and not as much on local projects."

A 1999 law established criteria for evaluating requests for bonding projects. The projects were ranked according to whether they would use state and non-state funding, help fulfill a mission of regional or statewide importance, and be supported by all governing bodies immediately affected by the project.

Projects earned negative marks if they would require additional state funding for operation, expand the state's role into a new policy area, create serious inequities among local jurisdictions, or compete with other local facilities.

Under the House bill, nearly \$526 million would be spent from the sale of bonds for capital investment projects statewide. That amount includes \$32 million that has been cancelled from old bonding projects. The bill would use \$2 million in cash directly from the general fund, \$68.6 million in user-financed bonds, and \$20.6 million from the Trunk Highway Fund, in addition to \$399.9 million in general obligation bonds.

The numbers are similar to the amounts proposed by Gov. Jesse Ventura in his capital budget plan.

Ventura's plan called for \$499 million for capital projects, including \$37 million in cancellations. The governor asked for \$400 million in general obligation bonding, \$1 million directly from the general fund, \$34 million in user-financed bonds, and \$27 million from the Trunk Highway Fund.

Here are some highlights of the House bill.

U of M facilities

Overall spending for higher education would be \$169.9 million under the bill, compared to \$118.3 million under the governor's plan.

For the University of Minnesota, the bill would spend \$2 million to plan and design a new Art Building, which would not be funded under the governor's plan.

Total bonding for the U of M in the House bill would be about \$66.7 million. The governor recommended \$54 million in bonding for the university.

MnSCU construction

Projects in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system would receive \$103.2 million under the bill, compared to \$64.3 million in the governor's plan.

Anoka-Hennepin Technical College would receive \$12.5 million under the House bill for roof repairs; improvements to the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system; and other necessary repairs.

Initially, the MnSCU board decided to close the campus because it couldn't afford to make the necessary repairs. Ventura's plan did not recommend funding the repairs. The House proposal would keep the campus open.

The bill would provide \$6.9 million for construction of athletic and academic facilities at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The money would be part of the Taylor Center project, which benefited from a \$9.2 million



The Taylor Center athletic facility, now under construction on the campus of Minnesota State University, Mankato, would receive \$6.9 million in the House bonding proposal.

But the House bill would not fund the governor's recommended \$10 million for the Microbial and Plant Genomics building at the U of M campus in St. Paul.

Other projects at U of M campuses in St. Paul, Crookston, and Morris would receive funding under the bill. A total of \$9 million would go to maintenance and repair projects on all U of M campuses, which is \$7 million less than the university requested.

donation from Minnesota Timberwolves owner and Mankato businessman Glen Taylor.

The House bill would match the governor's proposed \$30 million for maintenance and repair projects throughout the MnSCU system. MnSCU requested \$100 million for maintenance and repair, and officials said at least \$56 million would be needed to prevent the system's \$500 million maintenance backlog from growing even larger.

The House bill specifies that maintenance and repair money would pay for several projects that were line-item vetoed by Ventura last year, including a new boiler system for Winona State University, demolition of old homes on property owned by Moorhead State University, and the completion of a heating and air conditioning project at the Hutchinson campus of Ridgewater College.

The House bill would not fund an information technology center at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, which would receive \$11.7 million under the governor's plan.

Other MnSCU campuses that would receive funding under the House bill include Northwest Technical College in Bemidji, St. Cloud State University, Northland Community Technical College in Thief River Falls, Winona State University, and Rochester Community and Technical College.

K-12 and early childhood education

The bill would spend \$51.5 million for K-12 schools and early childhood education facilities. The governor's plan would spend \$34.1 million in those areas.

The bill would spend about \$1.8 million less than the governor's plan for magnet schools in the metropolitan area. Other communities that would receive funding for school projects under the House bill include Caledonia, La Porte, Red Lake, and Cass Lake.

State buildings

The bill would spend a total of \$48.5 million for building and maintenance projects for state agency buildings that are used by state agencies and departments. The governor's plan would spend \$93.4 million for those projects.

One of the governor's top priorities is \$58 million for a new building for the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. But the House bill would spend only \$28 million to build a laboratory facility.

The bill also would not fund repairs to a building used by the Department of Health on Delaware Street in Minneapolis. Ventura sought \$4.3 million for that project.

A provision in the House bill would provide additional money for maintenance to state buildings or schools. It would allow an organization, such as a state department or a college, to retain money from bonding revenue if the project is completed for less than the expected cost.

Currently, if a project costs less than the amount that is bid, the money is returned to the state. The bill would allow the organization that uses the building to retain that money for asset preservation.



The House bonding bill includes \$28 million for construction of a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension lab, while continuing to use the existing facility, shown here. The governor had recommended \$58 million to replace the facility.

The bill includes \$150,000 for a World War II memorial on Capitol grounds, a project that was line-item vetoed by Ventura in 1999.

Corrections projects

Spending for correctional facilities in the House bill is nearly the same as Ventura requested. The House bill would spend \$16.7 million, compared to the governor's proposed \$19.5 million.

The Stillwater prison would receive \$1.5 million to make security repairs, including work to replace crumbling sections of the wall around the prison yard.

The proposal also would fund projects for Faribault, Oak Park Heights, Lino Lakes, and Red Wing. The House plan would spend \$3.1 million less than the governor's plan for the Faribault project, which calls for sewer repair at the facility. And the House bill includes a \$2.7 million storm sewer project at Bayport that is not in the governor's plan.

Environment and agriculture

The bill would spend about \$21 million less than the governor's plan for projects related to agriculture, environment, and natural resources.

The governor's plan would spend about \$7.3 million more than the House bill for building projects in state parks and offices for the Department of Natural Resources.

The House bill would include \$7 million for grant programs to help cities clean up brownfields, which is not in the governor's plan. Brownfields are parcels of commercial land that are idle or under-used due to high costs of cleaning up pollution problems.

Wastewater system improvements would receive \$32.6 million, under the House bill. The money would provide matching grants to communities through the Public Facilities Authority, which is part of the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources would receive \$20 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program under the House bill. The program is matched by federal funds, and it establishes conservation easements on agriculture land along the Minnesota River, which reduces soil erosion into the river, helps control flooding, and establishes wildlife habitat.

The bill would require the board to determine if it would need additional funding for administrative costs if the Legislature were to appropriate \$20 million in 2001 and 2002, which would fully fund the program. A total of \$140 million in federal matching funds is available through September 2002.

The governor's plan would spend \$25 million for that program, which would be matched by about \$58 million in federal funds.

Transportation improvements

The bill would spend \$44 million for repairs to bridges throughout the state, while the governor's plan would spend \$30 million.

Rail Service Improvement Loans would not receive funding under the governor's plan but would receive \$5 million under the House bill.

The House bill would not fund a proposed \$6.7 million Regional Transportation Management Center. ■■■

A tall order

Welfare changes and other noteworthy measures are included in a thick omnibus bill that would fund a wide array of government programs

The House passed a far-reaching state government spending measure March 20 that would appropriate a net total of \$83.9 million yet this biennium.

However, that money would come from federal funds and designated state spending funds. The bill (HF2699), sponsored by Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), also would produce a net savings of \$27.7 million to the general fund over the course of the 2000-01 biennium.

The House debated the omnibus bill and about 60 proposed amendments for about 12 hours before passing it on an 85-42 vote.

The most significant portions of the bill, which also elicited the most debate, were the health and human services items, including penalties for failing to meet the state's welfare-to-work requirements, a waiting period for abortions, and increased eligibility for a prescription drug program.

The bill also includes spending for agriculture, judiciary, environment, state government, and economic development.

Gov. Jesse Ventura did not submit a supplemental budget for this session. He only made suggestions for emergency and deficiency spending, some of which were included in the bill.

Health, human services spending

The state would actually reduce general fund spending on health and human services for the 2000-01 biennium by \$47.1 million. However, the bill would spend \$90.5 million in federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds over the biennium and \$4.6 million from the Health Care Access fund to pay for provisions.

The bill would devote \$10 million from the general fund for diabetes research at the University of Minnesota. The bill also would fund measures to prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancy and youth at-risk to enter prostitution.

Welfare reform

Welfare recipients could face tougher sanctions if the state finds they have failed to comply with work requirements of the Minnesota Family Investment Program.

All benefits would be cut off if the recipient was out of compliance for a sixth time. However, a hearing and a review of the recipient's case file would be required before case closure could occur.

The House adopted an amendment to the bill that would require a county agency to monitor children in households where benefits have been discontinued. Members were concerned about the well-being of those children.

Prescription drugs

Disabled people under age 65 who are on Medicare would benefit by a provision of the bill aimed at expanding eligibility for enrollment in the state's senior prescription drug program.

The state program provides funds to help pay for prescriptions, which are not covered by the federal Medicare system.

The bill also would make more people eligible to receive help paying for drugs by

doubling the asset limit for inclusion in the program.

Abortion provisions

Women seeking an abortion would have to meet "informed consent" requirements before they could undergo the procedure.

Whether in person or over the phone, the woman would have to receive certain information at least 24 hours before the abortion could be performed, according to the bill.

The measure would require a woman to be given certain information pertaining to the procedure and other options.

Nursing homes

The bill would increase state reimbursement rates for nursing homes, mainly in rural



Trishalla Bell of Minneapolis holds 1-year-old Rosemary Abdul-Salam, right, as her sister, 4-year-old Anna, waits while members of the Welfare Rights Committee meet with House members outside the House chamber during debate on the state government appropriations bill.

Minnesota, that receive lower payments than other homes in the state.

It also would appropriate \$21 million in one-time grants to homes for staff enrichment activities such as retention, recruiting, development and training.

Alternative health care

The omnibus bill would establish an office of unlicensed complementary and alternative health care.

Alternative health care practitioners include people who provide services such as acupuncture, energetic healing, aromatherapy, herbalism, and meditation as a means to alleviate sicknesses.

The bill would eliminate criminal sanctions for practicing alternative health care. The plan would establish an office to regulate the industry by investigating complaints against unlicensed practitioners, dispensing discipline, and serving as a center for information on complementary and alternative health care practices.

Streamlining committees

A plan to establish joint House and Senate standing committees is included in the bill. The idea was proposed this year as an alternative to a unicameral legislature.

The plan, proposed by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), would allow a bill to be heard by a group of lawmakers from both chambers, as opposed to the current system where separate versions of a bill are heard by separate committees at different times in the House and Senate.

Under the proposal, a joint committee would pass one bill that would advance in each chamber. The bill would go back and forth

A raise for the governor

The governor's salary would increase from \$120,303 to \$150,000 per year, and salaries of constitutional officers and other state officials also would be allowed to increase.

Many officials' salaries are based on a percentage of the governor's pay. Some agencies and departments have requested exemptions to the limit, due to the difficulty of finding qualified candidates. The bill would raise the maximum salary for all such positions.

A hold on telecommunications

A program known as Connecting Minnesota would temporarily be stopped under the bill.

The program involves installing a fiber optic cable network and other telecommunication infrastructure throughout the state.

But a recent order from the Federal Communications Commission expressed concerns about possible anti-competitive effects of the program.

The bill would cause the program to cease until those concerns are resolved.

Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) said the provision could cause the state to breach a contract related to the program. The state has a contract with Universal Communication Networks Inc., and the company has indicated that it would sue for damages if the bill becomes law, Entenza said.

An analysis from the state Department of Finance and the Office of the Attorney General estimates that the state could be liable for damages ranging from \$15 million to \$35 million if a court were to rule against the state.

Abolishing offices

The Office of Technology, the Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation, and the Office of Citizenship and Volunteer Services would be abolished, which would reduce state spending by

\$4.2 million in the current biennium.

The bill also would repeal the governor's authority to abolish or merge departments in the executive branch.

That issue gained notice when Gov. Jesse Ventura decided last year to merge the Public

Safety and Commerce departments, without first consulting the Legislature.

No design-build

The bill would repeal a part of the 1999 omnibus transportation finance law that gave the Department of Transportation an exemption to bidding laws.

That law allowed the light-rail transit project along the Hiawatha Corridor to use a design-build method. The design-build method employs a single contractor for both the design and construction of the project, instead of awarding separate bids for design and construction.

The bill would prohibit the state from using the design-build method for any state construction project, until policies and regulations for that method can be established.

Modifying bleacher laws

The bill would modify a 1999 law that established new safety requirements for all bleachers that are taller than 30 inches. Those requirements would apply only to bleachers standing 55 inches (nearly 5 feet) or higher.

The law requires bleachers to include guardrails or safety nets, and spaces between floorboards, seats, and guardrails cannot exceed four inches.

New bleachers would have to meet those requirements by Aug. 1, 2001. Existing bleachers up to that date would be exempt if the gaps do not exceed nine inches.

The bill would effectively exempt short sets of bleachers that are commonly placed in parks near sports fields, so that local communities and school districts would not be forced to replace them or equip them with safety nets.

Secretary of state funding

The bill would allow the Office of the Secretary of State to keep money it takes in from Uniform Commercial Code transactions.

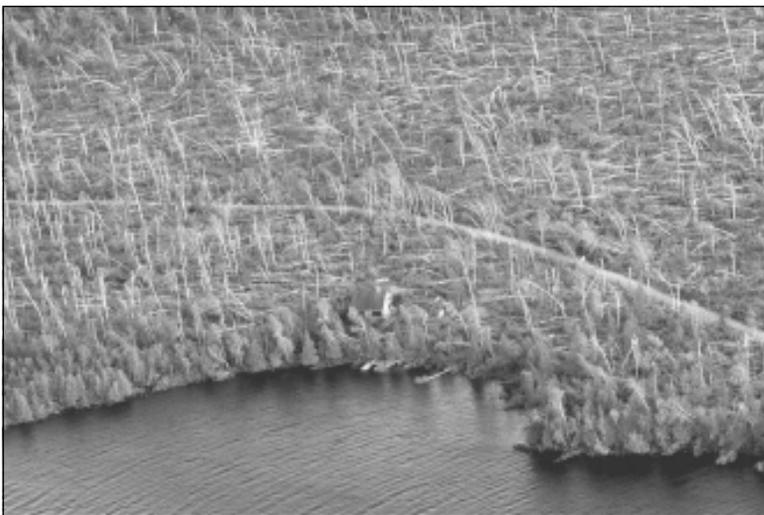
People who file the transactions pay a surcharge, and that money goes to the state's general fund. The surcharge generates about \$2.3 million per year in revenue to the general fund, but the office receives only about two-thirds of that amount for the related costs, according to Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer.

Under the bill, the office would be allowed to keep revenue from those transactions, and its general fund budget would be reduced in future biennia.

Environmental spending

A total of \$11.4 million from the general fund would be spent on environment-related provisions, under the bill.

Of that amount, \$5 million would create a new state program similar to the federal Crop Re-



Thousands of acres of trees in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area were blown down during a severe storm in July 1999. The state government appropriations bill includes funding for emergency firefighting in the area, where downed trees have created a fire risk.

Photo courtesy of the University of Minnesota Department of Forest Resources

between the House and Senate, and each chamber could amend the bill until one version is agreed upon.

The plan would reduce the need for conference committees, McElroy said.

serve Program. Farmers would be eligible for grants to set aside cropland for three years. Strips of trees would have to be planted on a small percentage of the land that is set aside, which would provide various environmental benefits.

The bill also would authorize the state to pay \$4 million for costs related to a U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld the hunting and fishing rights of the Mille Lacs Band of Chippewa Indians and others.

Anticipated costs of \$1.5 million for emergency firefighting expenses in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area is also included in the bill. Thousands of acres of trees were blown down by a storm last summer and those trees now create a fire hazard in the recreation area, officials say.

Appraising state lands

The University of Minnesota, Duluth would conduct an inventory and appraisal of state lands within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, under a provision that was added to the bill March 20.

The state owns about 100,000 acres of land, known as school trust land, in that area. Most of the land was donated from the federal government when Minnesota became a state.

The state-owned land is located on various parcels and is surrounded by federal land. Revenue from the land, through leases and the sale of logging rights, goes to the state's permanent school fund.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said the inventory would determine exactly how many acres of land belong to the state and provide other detailed information about the land.

Rukavina said that information would allow the state to negotiate a land exchange with the federal government, so that the state-owned parcels would be separate from the federal land.

Opponents of the measure said the \$200,000 cost of the inventory and appraisal would reduce the amount of money that goes into the permanent school fund. But Rukavina said the inventory would identify more state-owned land, which would increase the amount of money that goes into the school fund.

Judiciary finance

Several crime prevention and judiciary system measures are also included in the bill, but it also reflects more of a cost savings for the overall measure.

The bill includes \$3.8 million for emergency disaster disbursement from damage relating to storms in 1998 and 1999.

The measure would eliminate the Office of the Ombudsman for Corrections as of fiscal year 2001.

It also would hike fees for petty and gross

misdemeanors and would require that juvenile offenders who are turned over to the Department of Corrections must be placed in Minnesota facilities.

Key judiciary spending measures are included in a separate bill (HF2688), known as "Katie's Law" for Katie Poirier because it includes many measures designed to protect the public from sex offenders. That bill, passed by the House earlier, would appropriate \$13.9 million in fiscal year 2001 from the general fund and another \$2.3 million from the special revenue fund.

Total spending for the two judiciary measures is \$20 million.

DWI penalties

Included in the bill is the felony DWI measure, which would make a person's fourth conviction for drunken driving within a 10-year span a felony, including possible prison time.

Currently, the maximum penalty for drunken driving is a gross misdemeanor.

Endangering children

Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) offered an amendment on the floor that would raise the maximum penalty for people who endanger the health of children. The amendment passed 118-5.

Wenzel referred to the amendment as the "Jessica Swanson legislation," saying the measure would ensure that people who are responsible for the death of a child get reasonable prison sentences. (Swanson, a Cannon Falls girl, was killed by her mother's boyfriend, who got what many considered a light sentence after pleading guilty to child endangerment as part of a plea agreement.)

The measure would raise the maximum penalty for child endangerment from 10 years in prison and a \$10,000 fine to 20 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine. The measure would increase the sentencing guideline, as well, so anyone found guilty would serve at least 40 months in prison.

Auto theft program

The bill would abolish the Auto Theft Prevention Board.

The board, comprised of law enforcement and public safety officials, is required to develop and implement statewide strategies to combat automobile theft.

Currently, the program collects \$1 per year on all auto insurance premiums. That money is then disbursed through grants to local law enforcement agencies to fight auto theft, through more officers, "bait cars," and other methods.

About \$5.7 million in surplus from the board's account would be transferred to the general fund, and any remaining funds would

also go to the general fund.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) argued in favor of keeping the program, noting that car thefts have dropped since its inception.

"For the mere price of a cup of coffee, we are seeing auto thefts going down," she said.

Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City), who offered the proposal as an amendment, said car thefts are likely down because there are more police or because more offenders are now in jail. Osskopp said that if auto thefts climb next year, he would be willing to reinstate the board.

Juvenile offenders

Juvenile offenders would be required to go to the state juvenile facility in Red Wing or a private facility within the state, unless there are safety reasons to transfer the juvenile out of Minnesota.

The bill would require a report stating the reasons for transferring juveniles elsewhere.

Corrections officials say the state is losing revenue because so many juvenile offenders are not staying in state institutions.

To help counties pay for juvenile incarceration and keep more of them in state, the bill would require the counties to pay only half the per diem costs, instead of the full amount counties currently pay. The Department of Corrections would be responsible for the remaining half of the costs.

Funds for agriculture

The portion of the bill dealing with agriculture would provide funding for farm programs, activities, and research.

The bill would appropriate \$5.8 million through fiscal year 2001, including about \$4.8 million from the general fund.

It also would appropriate \$135,000 to the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture for a grant to develop farm business software to complement existing farm management tools.

The bill would provide new funding for research and demonstration on farm water quality and quantity management. Work would be done on contract sites in Lamberton and Waseca.

Stopping pseudorabies

The bill would provide \$245,000 to the Board of Animal Control to continue vaccinations against pseudorabies, a highly contagious disease that causes respiratory and reproductive problems in swine.

The 1999 Legislature approved \$1.25 million for the vaccination program.

In addition, a resolution asking the state of Iowa to accelerate its program of swine pseu-

dorabies control and eradication was deemed unnecessary and was deleted from the bill March 20 by the House.

Ethanol funding

The bill would provide supplemental funding for the state's ethanol producer payment program by increasing the maximum payment to producers by \$3 million.

Producers that had payments capped at between 12 million and 15 million gallons per year would be given an eligibility of 15 million retroactive to July 1, 1999, under the bill.

Changes to loan programs

An increase in maximum state participation in several farming loan incentive programs would occur under the bill.

Those programs include beginning farmer loans, restructured loans, seller-sponsored loans, and agricultural improvement loans.

The bill also would address changes to rules regarding eligibility in the restructured loan and livestock expansion loan programs.

New funding would be provided by the bill for an agroforestry loan program. The agroforestry loan program would help finance the production of short-rotation wood crops in Minnesota.

A stipulation would require that agroforestry program grants be matched dollar-for-dollar by non-state money.

Program caps expanded

Eligibility caps for some Rural Finance Authority programs would be increased, and an increase in Agriculture Chemical Response and Reimbursement Account funding would be provided for farm sites where clean-up activities are particularly expensive.

The current cap of \$200,000 for a corrective action would be expanded to \$350,000.

Meat inspection

Approximately \$500,000 in additional money would be appropriated by the bill to the commissioner of agriculture for the state's meat inspection program.

Half of the additional money would be reimbursed by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Economic development

The bill would appropriate money for a number of economic development provisions, focussed on technology development and programs to train workers.

As rural areas struggle to keep workers in the area and develop alternatives to a struggling farm economy, the metropolitan area faces the challenge of a developing technology economy and

training workers to meet the changing needs.

McElroy, the chair of the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee, said although the committee didn't have a great deal of funding to work with, several different economic development issues are addressed.

The bill would spend \$283,000 from the general fund and \$500,000 from federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds. Initiatives are also funded from a shift in money saved from the Department of Commerce taking over duties of the Department of Public Safety and the cancellation of a Department of Trade and Economic Development program.

Rural development initiatives

Among the provisions that would assist Greater Minnesota is a \$1.5 million appropriation for catalyst grants to local governments to expand Internet access in rural Minnesota.

The communities eligible for the grants would not typically receive Internet access through existing technology.

The bill also would provide \$750,000 for grants to economic development agencies for labor force assessments that will identify areas where the area's workforce skills and education are being underused.

Penalties for worker deaths

The bill would also increase penalties in cases where a worker dies on the job due in part to company violations of workplace safety laws.

The bill would provide new fines if a serious, willful, or repeated violation of an U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration standard causes or contributes to an employee's death. Penalties would range from \$25,000 to \$50,000, depending on the violation.

McElroy said the provision aims to address an inequity in current law where the family of a worker killed on the job receives little compensation. He said even with the proposed increase in fines, those fines go to a state workers' compensation fund and not to the families.

Homeless assistance

The problem of homelessness, identified by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency as a significant statewide issue, is also addressed in the bill.



The House passed a bill that would provide additional funding for ethanol production at plants like this one in Claremont.

The bill would appropriate \$500,000 to the state's Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program. The program provides grants to recipients to assist families, youth, and individuals who are homeless or at the imminent risk of becoming homeless.

No bust for Blackmun

The House voted to remove a provision from the bill that would have commissioned a bust of former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun.

The bust would have been installed on the second floor of the State Capitol opposite the bust of former U.S. Chief Justice Warren Burger.

Only three Minnesotans have served on the U.S. Supreme Court — Blackmun, Burger, and Pierce Butler.

Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie), sponsor of the amendment, said that Butler has not been honored in the Capitol and that bills proposing commemorative work are usually heard by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee, which had not heard this proposal.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) said the amendment had been added during the House Ways and Means Committee's hearing of the bill. He said that he offered the proposal because of Blackmun's historical contributions and because he was a St. Paul native.

The location across from the Burger bust in the Capitol is currently unoccupied, Trimble said, and would seem to be the ideal place to honor Blackmun, who wrote the court's opinion in the Roe v. Wade case.

Trimble said that the Historical Society would not receive a state appropriation for the work but had agreed to complete the project using private funds. 

Choice cuts

House tax plan would reduce taxes and provide rebates

BY DAVID MAEDA

Rebates, permanent tax reductions, and continued agricultural assistance are all part of the omnibus bill approved March 22 by the House Taxes Committee.

The bill (HF4127), sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), was sent to the House Ways and Means Committee.

More than \$1.3 billion in tax relief during the current biennium and \$1.7 billion in the next biennium are included in the bill's provisions.

While there is little disagreement that with continuing budget surpluses the time is right for tax cuts, there is some disagreement over where the cuts should come from.

Abrams, the committee's chair, said the bill would provide income and property tax reductions for nearly all Minnesotans, as well as relief for farmers and the state's businesses.

But Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) disagreed with the bill's approach.

"I don't think this bill provides the best way, or the fairest way, to provide tax relief for citizens," Carruthers said.

Matt Smith, commissioner of the state Department of Revenue, argued the bill as a whole is not structurally balanced.

Smith said that according to current forecast numbers, the administration believes that spending and tax cut initiatives for the next biennium should not exceed a combined total of \$549 million per year.

"It's inescapable that not everything in the bill will be able to be enacted," Smith said. "In a word, the bill is too big."

But Abrams countered by saying that the past 17 budget forecasts have been wrong and that, using the administration's own structural balance criteria, the tax bill the governor signed into law last year was not balanced.

The current bill would provide an indi-

vidual income tax rate reduction in all three brackets. The middle bracket would receive the largest cut from 7.25 percent to 6.5 percent.

Wayne Cox, the executive director of Minnesota Citizens for Tax Justice, said under the proposal, 60 percent of the state's taxpayers, those with incomes under \$45,000, would receive less than taxpayers in the top one percent in income.

Duane Benson, the executive director of the Minnesota Business Partnership, said that the income tax cuts are important for the state's businesses to attract and retain quality workers.

"The notion of long-term competitiveness,



Matt Smith, commissioner of the state Department of Revenue, told the House Taxes Committee March 21 that its omnibus bill calls for tax cuts that would be too large.

the bill takes a grand step in that direction," Benson said.

A sales tax rebate similar to last year's is also included in the bill. The minimum rebate amount for married couples would be \$129, with a maximum of \$1,860. The minimum for single filers would be \$73, with a maximum amount of \$930.

The proposal differs from last year's rebate in that it would allow those taxpayers with a qualified dependent to increase their rebate amount by either \$20 per dependent or the amount the rebate would increase when the dependent's income is added to the taxpayer's income, whichever is greater.

Abrams said another key component of this year's tax relief plan is a proposed increase in the percentage of earnings used in calculating the working family credit.

The earned income tax credit provides a wage supplement equal to a percentage of the earnings of low-income people. The state's working family credit is also based on a percentage of earnings.

Abrams also pointed to the proposed expansion of the levy basis of the education homestead credit and the education agricultural credit as another key portion of the bill.

Further agricultural aid would be provided in an agricultural assistance program similar to one established last year. Farmers in counties that have been declared by the president as weather-related disaster areas would qualify for assistance equal to \$4 per acre. The maximum payment would be \$5,600. The eligible counties include Kittson, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau.

The bill also would provide for compression in class rates for all property classes with a rate over 1 percent. The largest reduction would be for regular or market-value apartments and for commercial/industrial properties. The bill would reduce those rates by 0.4 percent.

Jack Horner, from the Minnesota Multi-Housing Association, said the property tax relief is badly needed and will help address the growing rental housing shortage in the state.

Glenn Dorfman, from the Minnesota Association of Realtors, said the tax relief provided in the bill is necessary and sustainable. He complimented the bill as providing substantial relief this year, saying when it comes to income and property taxes, taxpayers are always told something will be done the next year.

"The revenue forecasts are always conservative," Dorfman said.

Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) reminded Dorfman that this year's tax bill continues reductions from last year.

"Those who say 'next year will never come' forget that last year ever happened," Rest said. 

Political cover

The current governor isn't the first to receive attention from the national media or to catch criticism for it

BY CHRIS VETTER

Gov. Jesse Ventura isn't the only chief executive of Minnesota to have his mug spread across the cover of a national magazine. Nor was he the first whose nationally noted interview sparked some political controversy.

On the Aug. 13, 1973, issue of *Time*, Gov. Wendell Anderson sported a broad smile as he proudly displayed a northern pike he pulled from a Minnesota lake. Dominant on the cover was the headline, "The Good Life in Minnesota."

The 12-page spread in the magazine featured 25 photos, showing Minnesota's glistening lakes, Minneapolis' art centers, and the state's prominent citizens. The issue, then selling for 50 cents, sold out at most area stores within a few hours, according to news reports.

Much of the article read like an advertisement or tourism pamphlet, tempting people to visit the state.

"If the American good life has anywhere survived in some intelligent equilibrium, it may be in Minnesota," the article stated. "Some of the nation's more agreeable qualities are evident there: courtesy and fairness, honesty, a capacity for innovation, hard work, intellectual adventure and responsibility."

The piece opened with a description of children at a lake, calling the scene "a slice of America's Norman Rockwell past." Several Minnesotans were interviewed, proclaiming the state is the best place to live and raise a family.

Along with the praise, the article joked about mosquitoes "half the size of dive bombers" and mentioned the harsh Minnesota winters.

The section concluded with a one-page feature on Anderson, in which the writer suggested the governor could be a vice presidential candidate in 1976. Several local newspaper reports about the *Time* article focused on the prospects of Anderson in Washington.

Heaping praise upon Anderson, the article noted that he had a good camera-presence while campaigning. And it said Anderson possessed "athletic dash and youthful charm that make many of his constituents think of a Midwestern Kennedy."

Minnesota is known for its clean political process, its low high school dropout rate and low crime rate, the article said. The variety of activities offered — from skiing, hunting, or theater productions — make the state an attractive place to live.

Even though it was great press for Minnesota and exposed its tourism industry to *Time*'s 4 million subscribers and 20 million readers in 1973, not all Minnesotans liked the story, according to newspaper accounts.

"Women have condemned the feature for ignoring the state's female notables. Republicans have criticized the story for mentioning only Democrats," wrote the *St. Paul Sun*. "And Democrats have accused *Time* of writing a campaign piece for Anderson and his party associates."

Among the nine politicians mentioned in the article, only one was a Republican — former Gov. Harold Stassen.

The *Minneapolis Tribune* agreed, saying the article focused on only people close to Anderson.

"The article does not mention Attorney General Warren Spannaus, Senate Majority Leader Nicholas Coleman or other DFLers who do not have close relations with the governor," the *Tribune* article said. "Nor does it make more than passing reference to any state Republicans."

The *Minneapolis Tribune* also said, "The magazine cover story that boosted Gov. Wendell Anderson to national prominence was shaped considerably by David Lebedoff, the governor's close friend and political advisor."

The newspaper contended Lebedoff supplied *Time* with a list of people, many of whom were interviewed in the story. One unnamed Demo-

crat quoted in the *Tribune* story said, "The way the governor's people cultivated, fertilized and nurtured (the article) was masterful."

The three "average citizens" quoted in the story all had direct ties to the Anderson administration or to Lebedoff, the *Tribune* wrote. They were all young rising politicians who worked for Anderson during his 1970 campaign.

The *Time* feature inaccurately credited Anderson with creating a legal protection for the St. Croix River, said the *Minneapolis Tribune*. Instead, the newspaper reported, the law actually originated at the federal level, where Sen. Walter Mondale was responsible for the legislation.

But criticism of the article went beyond political matters. Several members of the African-American community said the article perpetuated a culture of racism in U.S. society during the early 1970s.

Gleason Glover of the Minneapolis Urban

League was quoted by the *Time* article as having said the problems of racism and unemployment in the state at that time were "manageable." The article said 1 percent of the state's population was black.

Glover later said the *Time* story omitted part of his sentence, which put some conditions on his statements.

"In general, blacks seem to feel that *Time Magazine's* description of Minnesota was good for the state's national reputation, but rather bad for its black residents," wrote the *St. Paul Sun*.

A St. Paul woman told the *Sun* that the maga-

zine gave the impression that, "Minnesota is a good place if you want to get away from the black folk and so forth."

Anderson continued to be questioned about the feature weeks after it appeared. In a Sept. 9 *Minneapolis Tribune* article that same year, Anderson defended his role in working with the weekly magazine.

"We cooperated 100 percent with *Time*," he said. "To fail to do so would have been unwise and not in the best interests of the people of Minnesota." 🐾



Gov. Wendell Anderson appeared on the cover of *Time* during the summer of 1973, but not without a swirl of controversy.

Photo illustration by Paul Battaglia

Legislative terms to know

amend: the action a legislator takes to change or propose a change in a bill, motion, report, or even another amendment by adding, omitting, or altering language.

bicameral: a legislature containing two houses.

biennium: the two-year period by which the state budget is set and under which the legislative session operates. Money is appropriated for a two-year budget cycle during the odd-numbered years.

bill: a proposal calling for a new law, a change in current law, the repeal of current law, or a constitutional amendment. It consists of a title, enacting clause, and body (text), which is examined and approved by the revisor of statutes.

bill, resolution: a proposal, introduced as a House or Senate file, that urges another governmental body to take or refrain from a certain action. A resolution can also simply express the opinion, sentiments, or intent of a body, or both, if the resolution is a joint one.

Calendar for the Day: a list of bills the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee has designated for action by the full House. The bills, which are drawn from the General Register, can be amended. After amendments are considered, the bill receives a third reading and a vote of the full body is taken.

caucus: 1) a group of House members or senators who affiliate with the same political party or faction such as the DFL Caucus, the Republican Caucus, the majority caucus, or the minority caucus; 2) a meeting of such a group.

chief author: the main author, or sponsor, of a bill.

companion bills: identical bills introduced in the House and Senate.

concurrence: action in which one body approves or adopts a proposal or action taken by the other house.

conference committee: a group of six or 10 members, with equal numbers from the House and Senate, who are appointed to reach a compromise between the House and Senate versions of a bill.

conference committee report: language of a bill as agreed upon by a conference committee.

Consent Calendar: a list of non-controversial bills that await a vote on the floor of the House or Senate.

enacting clause: the constitutionally required portion of a bill which formally expresses the intent that it become law: “Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Minnesota . . .”

engrossment: the current text of a bill or resolution which includes or incorporates all adopted amendments to the title and/or text.

enrollment: a bill that has been passed by both houses and has been put in final form to be presented to the governor for his signature.

final passage: the vote taken on a bill after its third reading, requiring a majority of all elected members of a legislative body for approval.

first reading: the reporting of a bill to the body at the time of its introduction and referral to committee.

Fiscal Calendar: a list of tax or spending bills that await action by the entire House. The chair of the House Ways and Means Committee or House Taxes Committee can call up — via the Fiscal Calendar — any tax or spending bill that has had a second reading. The bill can then be debated, amended, and passed in one day.

floor: after a bill passes through the committee process, it is sent to the “floor” in either the House or Senate, meaning it is placed on any of the various bill lists while awaiting debate by all members.

General Register: a list of bills that have had second readings in the House and await action by the full body. Bills from the General Register are placed on the Calendar for the Day or the Fiscal Calendar for action by the House.

House file: the number assigned to a bill before it is introduced. It is listed at the top of the bill. HF2379, for example.

introduced (n., introduction): the formal presentation of a bill to a body of the Legislature. The bill gets its first reading at this time and is then referred to a committee.

journals: refers to either the Journal of the Senate or the Journal of the House, which are the official records of the respective bodies.

legislative intent: what the Legislature really meant when it approved a specific law.

legislative session: the term session is used loosely and has many different meanings — 1) the two-year period during which the Legislature meets; 2) regular session refers to the annual meetings of the Legislature; 3) daily sessions refer to the times when the House and Senate meet in their respective chambers.

line-item veto: (see veto, line item)

lobbyist: a person acting individually or for an interest group who tries to influence legislation.

majority: the party, either DFL or Republican, that has the most members elected in either the House or the Senate.

minority: the party, either DFL or Republican, that has the fewest members elected in either the House or Senate.

new language: the language in a bill that is added, or proposed to be added, to existing state law. New language in bills is always underlined.

omnibus: a term used to describe large bills, such as tax and appropriations bills, that contain many different proposals.

page: a person employed by the House or Senate to run errands, to assist committees, and to perform a variety of other legislative tasks.

pocket veto: (see veto, pocket)

recommendation: the action a committee takes on a bill. Although in common usage a committee is said to pass a bill, technically, it recommends a bill to pass.

repassage: a final vote on a bill previously passed in another form to include amendments of the other chamber or a conference committee.

repeal: to eliminate a law, or section of a law, by an act of the Legislature.

resolution: (see bill, resolution)

second reading: reporting of a bill to the body, following the adoption of the committee report, that places it on the Consent Calendar or the General Register in the House.

Senate file: the number assigned to a bill before it is introduced. It is listed at the top of the bill. SF1354, for example.

session: 1) the biennial period during which the Legislature meets; 2) regular session, the annual meeting of the Legislature between the

first Tuesday after the first Monday in January and the first Monday after the third Saturday in May; 3) special or extra session, a meeting of the Legislature after the end of 120 legislative days in the biennium or after the date set by law for adjournment; 4) daily session, a meeting of the House or Senate in its chamber. (Note: The House and Senate meet only two days a week during the early part of the session; every day after the session's midpoint.)

sine die: when the Legislature adjourns "without a date certain" in the even-numbered years, the second year of the biennium.

sponsor: a chief author or co-author of a bill.

stricken language: language that is proposed to be eliminated from existing state law. Stricken language in bills is always crossed out.

third reading: the final reporting of a bill to the body before its final passage. No amendments, except amendments to the title, may be offered after the third reading unless unanimous consent is granted.

unicameral: a single body legislature.

unofficial engrossment: amendment by the other house of a bill which has been passed by its house of origin. For example, the House

cannot officially amend a Senate bill, so when the House considers a Senate bill and makes changes, that engrossment is unofficial until the bill returns to the Senate and the Senate adopts the engrossment.

veto: the constitutional power of the governor to refuse to sign a bill, thus preventing it from becoming law unless it is passed again (with a two-thirds majority) by both houses of the Legislature.

veto, line-item: the power or action of the governor, rejecting a portion or portions of an appropriations bill, while approving the rest.

veto, pocket: rejection of a bill by the governor after the Legislature has adjourned sine die, preventing its reconsideration by the Legislature.

yield: to surrender the floor temporarily to another member for the purpose of hearing a question or inquiry. "Mister Speaker, will Rep. Jennings yield to a question?"



Water safety

States move to reduce drunken boating

Since the 1950s, states have been placing limits on driving an automobile under the influence of alcohol, but only in the past few years have lawmakers focused attention on the dangers of drinking while boating.

Most states have passed blood-alcohol concentration limits for boaters and have moved to extend other provisions of drunken driving laws to boating.

Forty-eight states have set a legal blood-alcohol concentration limit of 0.10 or lower for boating and drinking. Florida, Georgia, New York, and Wisconsin set limits at 0.02 or lower — essentially "not a drop" standards — for boaters under the legal drinking age.

The U.S. Coast Guard advocates a 0.08 standard. The Coast Guard says a boat operator with a blood-alcohol concentration above 0.10 is ten times more likely to be killed in a boating accident than a boater with no alcohol in his or her system.

On average more than 800 people a year are killed in boating accidents. Alcohol plays

a major role in over 50 percent of recreational boating fatalities, according to the Coast Guard.

Minnesota has seen its share of alcohol-related boating accidents, including a 1999 tragedy on the St. Croix River that killed five men. Tests found that all of the men were legally drunk when their two powerboats collided in the middle of the night.

However, the U.S. Foundation for Boating Safety reports that 75 percent of alcohol related boating accidents and injuries do not involve actual collisions. Such things as people falling on deck or overboard and missteps at the dock are a greater threat, according to the foundation.

During 1998, Washington passed a law establishing the offenses of homicide or

assault by watercraft. Several other state laws that year extended implied consent provisions in existing drunken driving laws to boating. Implied consent means that a person who accepts the privilege of operating a vehicle, in this case a boat, automatically gives consent for a test to determine his or her blood-alcohol level.

A Minnesota law passed in 1997 applied the state's DWI laws to operators of boats, snowmobiles, and other off-road vehicles. The laws set the blood-alcohol concentration limit at 0.10 and include an implied consent provision.

The state's penalties for drunken operation of an automobile, boat, or snowmobile are cumulative, meaning a person convicted of boating while drunk who is later picked up for illegal operation of a snowmobile will face penalties associated with a second DWI offense.

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill has passed both the House and Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor, who has several options when considering a bill, can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill;
- or do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium (even-numbered years), a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (Latin for adjournment "without a date certain"). If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes (save pocket vetoes) the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills

passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history—at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

This information is also available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "It's a New Day" link, then click on "The Legislative Log."

Key:

CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
251	2980	2763*	Fishing season modified.	2/16/00	
252	2634	2411*	Northern Itasca hospital board membership requirements modified.	3/1/00	
253	2521	2320*	Lake Edwards township name change.	3/1/00	
254	76	86*	K-12 education technical changes provided.	3/7/00	
255	2067*	2071	Juvenile offenders modifications.	3/7/00	
256	2722*	2502	Kittson County town dissolution authority.	3/7/00	
257	2535*	2291	Shorewood authorized to elect city council members by wards.	3/13/00	
258	3039	2554*	Wadena County truth in taxation process advertisement requirement penalty exemption.	3/13/00	
259	3338*	2907	Scott County officials duties reorganized.	3/14/00	
260	2749*	2464	Revisor's bill.	3/14/00	
261	2642*	2552	Search firms surety bonding requirements modified.	3/14/00	
262	2774	2485*	Carisoprodol schedule IV controlled substance listing effective date delayed.	3/20/00	
263	2680	2465*	Political party treasurers authorized to sign political contribution refund receipt forms.	3/20/00	
264	3232	2692*	Business corporations and limited liability companies shareholder rights modified.	3/20/00	
265	2603	2346*	Permanently disabled hunters permit privileges modified.	3/20/00	
266	2723*	2528	McLeod County office authority extended.	3/23/00	
267	3236*	3236	Vital record certified copy issuance provisions modified.	3/23/00	
268	979*	2059	Landlords authorized to apportion utility payments among units.	3/23/00	
269	1865*	2094	Nursing mothers needs study by the Supreme Court Jury Reform Task Force required.	3/23/00	
270	2815*	2386	Hennepin County District Court fine proceeds distribution modified.	3/23/00	
271	3064	2776*	St. Louis County nursing home renovation approval deadline extended.	3/23/00	
272	3762	3355*	Port authority electronic funds disbursement authorized.	3/23/00	
273	2927*	2685	Metropolitan Inter-County Association group insurance protection authorized.	3/23/00	
274	3766*	3676	Pawnbrokers computerized records transmission format specified.	3/23/00	
275	2873*	2516	Anoka County department head time requirements clarified.	3/23/00	

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

Monday, March 20

HF4123—Wenzel (DFL)
Taxes
Poultry feed sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF4124—Harder (R)
Taxes
Farm machinery sales and use tax definition modified to include all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).

HF4125—Lenczewski (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Bloomington nursing home moratorium exception authorized.

Tuesday, March 21

HF4126—Schumacher (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
School district health and safety program revenue eligibility expanded to include pupil and staff safety improvements.

Wednesday, March 22

HF4127—Abrams (R)
Ways & Means
Omnibus tax bill and money appropriated.

Thursday, March 23

HF4128—Larson, D. (DFL)
Taxes
Individual income tax marriage penalty credit expanded.

HF4129—Olson (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Pollution prevention and water conservation loan program established for specified sewage treatment systems, and money appropriated.

Continued from page 4.

Federal funds for programs

The bill would shift \$7.4 million in federal TANF money for state programs during the current biennium.

A total of \$3.2 million would establish a Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Social Services Child Care pool to provide child care assistance for welfare participants who are receiving mental health treatment or chemical dependency treatment

as an approved activity in the participant's employment plan or job search support plan. Currently, MFIP, which is the state's welfare reform initiative, does not provide child care for MFIP participants for the amount of time necessary to participate in such treatment. Another sum of nearly \$1.1 million would help to ensure people moving off welfare can get child care through the Basic Sliding Fee program.

The bill calls for another \$1 million in TANF funds for transitional housing and \$1.8

million for an English as a second language and citizenship grants.

Finally, the omnibus measure would designate TANF funding for male responsibility grants, which support programs to teach teens about demands responsibilities of parenthood. Last year, the Legislature allocated \$250,000 in the fiscal year that begins July 1, but the bill would eliminate the general fund spending and pay for the grants through the federal money. 

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

Schedule is subject to change.
For information updates, call House Calls at **(651) 296-9283**.

All meetings are open to the public.
Sign language interpreter services:
(651) 224-6548 v/tty.

To have the House committee schedule delivered to your e-mail address, send an e-mail message to join-houseschedule@ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us or direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/scripts/lyris.pl?join=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

MONDAY, March 27

11 a.m.

The House meets in session.

TUESDAY, March 28

8 a.m.

Topic Selection Subcommittee/ Legislative Audit Commission

224 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Working session to review results of legislative survey and select topics to be presented for consideration by full Legislative Audit Commission.

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

WEDNESDAY, March 29

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

2 p.m. or immediately after session

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: Rules of Civil Procedure; violations, state agencies; informational.

THURSDAY, March 30

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

FRIDAY, March 31

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

Reflections

Inside, they drill a hole in the ice to drop a line and continue their favorite pastime, undeterred by sub-zero weather. Depending on how elaborate the house is, it may contain all the comforts of home including cots and heaters, with four or more ice holes for visiting fishing buddies.

Such an example was made recently for daytime television. Governor Jesse Ventura visited with ABC-TV's "The View" co-host, Lisa Ling on a frozen lake, to pursue the art of ice fishing. Whether or not a fish was actually caught, the "gov" pulled up one over a foot longer than his guest's catch.

While ice-fishing is unique, in winter and summer, fishing lovers attend festivals and contests where they try to catch the largest walleye, bass, trout, or any of 156 fish species in competition that swim the state's lakes and streams. No contestants have recently topped the 17 pound, 8 ounce walleye caught a few years ago.

Yet, avid sportspeople are driven to spend \$1.9 billion on sport fishing to visit the 6,000 fishable lakes and 15,000 miles of stream each year.

While few if any fishes are found in the

Capitol building's motif, a few renditions are seen in the State Office Building. Artist Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison) has many of his works in his office with others on exhibit around the building.

Rep. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) has three large mounted lake trout he caught while ice fishing, while Rep. Sondra Erickson (R-Princeton) has a mounted walleye with an otter in pursuit in her office.

The most impressive fishes in the building hang in the basement cafeteria. They are an 8-foot walleye and three multi-colored species by artist, Anne Nyen.

An 8-foot walleye will never be caught, but Minnesotans may still have difficulty for some time in breaking the record for the largest fish caught — a 94 pound, 4 ounce lake sturgeon from the Kettle River.

Presently for them, this is the "big one that got away."

— LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT



MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
 175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
 ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155-1298

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Managing state parks

State parks operated by the Parks and Recreation Division of the	
Department of Natural Resources	66
Operating budget of the Parks and Recreation Division, 1999, in millions	\$24
Revenues from park visitors, as percentage of budget	31
Full- and part-time employees in the Parks and Recreation Division, 1999	785
Percentage of operating budget devoted to salaries	73
Repair costs for state park buildings, 1998, in millions	\$13.7
Total visits to Minnesota state parks, 1998, in millions	8.6
Percentage total visits that were to Fort Snelling State Park (most of any park)	8.1
Percentage of park visitors from Minnesota	80
Year first state park was established in Minnesota (Itasca)	1891
Number of buildings within state parks on the National Register of	
Historic Places	595
Number of historic districts or landmarks	62
Miles of trail in the state park system	1,255
Miles of road in the state park system	332
Percentage of day users of state parks who said their visit exceeded	
expectations or they were completely satisfied, 1998	69
In 1987	72
Percentage of day users of state parks who said their visit could have been	
better or they were completely dissatisfied, 1998	5
In 1987	6
Percentage of day users of state parks who went to the parks for hiking	
(highest of any activity), 1998	57
Number of state parks that have no permanent staff	8
Number of annual park permits sold, 1998	107,785
Number of daily park permits sold, 1998	271,118
Percentage increase of annual park permits sold, 1990-1998	3
Percentage decrease of daily park permits sold, 1990-1998	4.5
Minnesota's rank among 50 states for total acres in state park system, 1998	3

Source: *State Park Management*, Office of the Legislative Auditor, January 2000.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For general information, call:
House Information Office
(651) 296-2146 or
1-800-657-3550

To obtain a copy of a bill, call:
Chief Clerk's Office
(651) 296-2314

To find out about bill introductions or
 the status of a specific bill, call:
House Index Office
(651) 296-6646

For an up-to-date recorded message
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 agendas, call:
Committee Hotline
(651) 296-9283

The House of Representatives can be
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<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us>

Teletypewriter for the hearing impaired.
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SESSION

Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

MARCH 31, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 9

In this issue:

HOUSE PASSES TAX CUT

“KATIE’S LAW” SENT TO GOVERNOR

HF4130-HF4134

SESSION Weekly

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On the cover: A ray of sunlight shines through the dome of the Capitol and illuminates the people conducting business outside the House chamber March 30.

— Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Tax cuts passed

The House plan would reduce income taxes, provide rebates, and make a long list of changes in tax laws

By DAVID MAEDA

Minnesota taxpayers would save around \$3.2 billion over the next three years under a bill the House passed March 27.

The measure includes across-the-board income tax cuts, reductions in property class rates, farm relief, and a \$489 million sales tax rebate.

The bill (HF4127) passed by an 85-47 vote in the House and now goes to a House-Senate conference committee to reconcile differences with the Senate tax plan.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the bill's sponsor and the House Taxes Committee chair, said the measure would "permanently and significantly reduce the tax burden on every Minnesotan."

Noticeably absent from the proposal is Gov. Jesse Ventura's primary tax cut proposal this

House Minority Leader Rep. Thomas Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) said that because the bill doesn't rely on the Department of Finance's budget projections, it calls for cuts that are too large to maintain balance in the budget. And Pugh pointed out the governor has indicated that he will not sign the bill if it reaches his desk.

Much of the six-hour floor debate centered on the proposed income tax rate reduction for the upper bracket. Members offered several unsuccessful amendments to delete that provision and provide further agricultural assistance, property tax relief, license tab cuts, or retroactive sales tax rebates.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said the bill doesn't provide enough relief for enough Minnesotans.

"Seventy-six percent of the people of this state under your income tax cuts are going to get less than a buck a week," Rukavina said.

Pugh said although he agreed with some of the bill's provisions, it would provide too much relief for the state's highest income taxpayers.

"There is money for the lower tax bracket, and a little relief for rural Minnesota," Pugh said. "But that

money is just spilled along the way in comparison to what happens for the upper class, the elite earners, who get up to 50 times the relief as some of our working class in Minnesota."

Majority Leader Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) said that the bill's income tax cuts

are important for the state's economic development. He said that with an emerging technological world economy, the state has to find a way to remain competitive and keep its business and workers in the state.

"We now live in an economy where with a click of a mouse you can take data, capital, money, information, and goods and electronically whip them from Minneapolis to Moorhead to Montevideo to Malaysia to Milan," Pawlenty said. "You don't need to be here in Minnesota in the year 2000 if you're an entrepreneur in the new economy."

Abrams said that most members could agree on what was at the base of the bill.

"We believe that not collecting the money in the first place or sending it all back is in the best interest of all Minnesotans," he said. "Government ought to collect only the revenue necessary to do the job that government should be doing."

Here are some of the bill's major provisions.

Cutting income taxes

The bill would reduce individual income tax rates in all three brackets.

The top rate, which is applied to income over \$85,450 per year, would be reduced from 8 percent to 7.5 percent,

The middle rate, which is on income from \$21,240 to \$85,450 per year, would be reduced from 7.25 percent to 6.5 percent

And the bottom rate, which is on income below \$21,240, would be cut from 5.5 percent to 5 percent.

Taxes for transit

The Twin Cities' transit funding would shift to the state, abolishing the property tax levy authority of the Metropolitan Council for transit in the metro area.

Under the proposed change, the Legislature would appropriate money from the general fund to replace the levy. The Met Council's authority to levy would end beginning in 2001.

As a result, \$118 million would then be appropriated to the Met Council to provide transit services for that year. The bill would provide a permanent reduction in each municipality's homestead and agricultural credit aid equal to the Met Council's transit levy.

The bill also would require the Met Council to provide grants to municipalities that have opted out of the transit system and provide their own transit services.



House Speaker Steve Sviggum displays the lunchbox he brought to his desk during debate of the omnibus tax bill, containing provisions the Republican Caucus has dubbed the "Lunch Bucket Agenda for 2000."

year, a reduction in motor vehicle license registration fees.

Abrams said that the state's license tab fees rank between 21st and 23rd nationally and that he and other House members are more interested in reducing the taxes where Minnesota ranks in the top 10.



Light-rail transit funding

The bill would prohibit local units of government in the metropolitan area from levying a property tax for light rail.

Officials from Hennepin County testified that they have agreed property taxes will not be used for the proposed Hiawatha light-rail project's operating costs. But they said they will need to levy for construction costs.

A successful amendment offered by Pawlenty would require Hennepin County voters to approve the county's levy for the light-rail project as part of this fall's general election.

Pawlenty said that light rail represents a new direction for the state, and with the controversy and questions surrounding the project, a referendum would help clear up concerns.

Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) argued against the amendment, saying that county road projects too are often surrounded by concern and that the light-rail project was not unique in that regard.

Corporate income taxes

Under current law, most corporations are taxed according to a three-factor formula, based 70 percent on sales, 15 percent on property, and 15 percent on payroll. Because of this, corporations that have facilities and employees in the state are often taxed more than out-of-state competitors who pay the state's corporate taxes based on their sales, Abrams said.

The bill would change the formula to an 80 percent sales, 10 percent property, and 10 percent payroll tax ratio for 2000, and a 90 percent sales, 5 percent property, and 5 percent payroll ratio thereafter.

Solid waste tax rates

In 1997, the solid waste management tax was enacted with the intent to raise about \$44.5 million per year. However the amount raised since then has exceeded that amount. In 1999, the tax raised about \$49 million.

The tax is levied on solid waste services that are purchased by households, businesses, and government agencies. It applies to the disposal of materials, so it is designed to give incentives for recycling.

The bill would lower the tax rates proportionately to a level that is estimated to raise the \$44.5 million per year.

Sales tax rebate

The bill would provide a sales tax rebate similar to last year's rebate. The minimum amount for married couples would be \$129, with a maximum of \$1,860. The minimum for

Continued on page 17

A deal's a deal

Drafters of a compromise on the Minnesota Constitution fought to keep their agreement intact

One criticism of the current legislative process is that too much power is in the hands of conference committees.

Critics do not like the fact that small panels of lawmakers produce conference committee reports that cannot be amended by the full House or Senate. Each chamber must accept the entire conference committee report or reject it.

Controversy of that stipulation can be traced all the way back to the Territorial Legislature's constitutional convention of 1857.

Residents of the territory voted for delegates to the constitutional convention in a June 1, 1857 election. Due to allegations of fraudulent voting, Democrats and Republicans organized separate conventions, and each drafted a state constitution.

To resolve conflicts between the two documents, a "compromise committee" — five members from each party — was appointed to work out the differences. When they finally reached a compromise in late August and submitted the proposed state Constitution to their respective parties, nobody was completely happy with the results, according to the 1921 book *A History of the Constitution of Minnesota* by William Anderson.

Thomas Galbraith, a Republican member of the compromise committee, presented the Constitution to his fellow Republican delegates, calling it "as good a Constitution as we could get under the circumstances." He also said that adopting one document was "paramount to all other questions, in order to avoid a prospective state of anarchy." Some of his fellow party delegates voted against the Constitution, but no amendments were proposed.

In the Democratic convention, delegates tried to amend the boundaries of the judicial districts and other items that were specified in the compromise committee's document.

But Willis A. Gorman, a Democratic member of the compromise committee who was the territorial governor from 1853 to 1856, strongly opposed allowing amendments to the report, especially considering the difficulty both sides experienced in

reaching a compromise in the first place.

"If the report of the committee of conference is to be amended by this convention, we may safely calculate on sitting here for weeks before we can finish our labors," Gorman said. "If we are to open the door by the adoption of a single amendment to this report, no one can predict when we shall end."

Some of his fellow delegates were uninspired by his speech and continued proposing amendments. But a recess was called for "private consultation" regarding the report.

When the Democratic convention resumed that afternoon, all of the amendments were voted down and the compromise report was adopted. The vote was 38-13.

Gorman's speech was fitting, because he probably knew better than anyone how hard it had been to reach a compromise.

The compromise committee had begun meeting Aug. 18, and by Aug. 25, the committee members had virtually given up hope that they could reach a compromise.

They began making plans to submit two constitutions to voters, when Gorman and Republican Thomas Wilson came to blows, which observers later said was like "a thunderstorm in clearing the air."

Suffrage was one of the major points of disagreement. At the time, only white males were allowed to vote, but Republican delegates of Minnesota's constitutional convention wanted to give the right to vote to all males.

The issue was resolved by establishing an easy process of amending the Constitution. A simple majority in the Legislature could submit a constitutional amendment to voters. It could be adopted by a majority of those who voted on the question.

It was the easiest amending process of any state in the nation, according to Anderson. Republicans favored the compromise, because it would allow them to put the suffrage question before voters as soon as they took control of the Legislature.

That theory proved correct, as the question was put before voters twice before it was adopted in 1868.

(J. FURE)

★ **BUSINESS**

Liquor license provisions

Cities would have more control over issuing liquor licenses to local theaters, under a bill the House passed March 24. The vote was 98-31.

Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie) is sponsoring the omnibus liquor bill (HF3974/SF3581*), which now heads to a conference committee. The legislation would address rural population issues for social clubs and would cut red tape for local theaters that want to obtain liquor licenses.

The bill would reduce the number of members in social clubs — such as the Lions Club — needed to obtain a liquor license from 50 to 20.

In addition, rather than coming to the Legislature, which meets only a few months of the year, the bill would require the state to turn over the licensing authority for theater events to city councils, which meet throughout the year.

“Cities should be free to make those determinations,” Paulsen said.

Rep. Greg Davids, (R-Preston), agreed it would be better to give cities the authority.

“Rather than every time running to the Legislature, they could run to their city council,” Davids said.

A theater event is defined as an activity held in an auditorium where live action, from music to dance, is presented to people who have obtained tickets to the event.

The bill also would allow a commercial establishment to make wine on the premises for use on the premises. Individuals under age 21 could not help make wine, under the bill.

Liquor stores would be allowed to offer wine-tasting events on their premises. The bill defines a wine-tasting event as an activity that does not last beyond four hours and patrons do not pay for each individual glass of wine.

The bill also authorizes on-sale liquor licenses to several small towns across the state, from Duluth and Anoka to Eveleth and Springfield. The Legislature generally approves a handful of similar licenses each year.

The House version would allow the state agriculture society to sell alcohol at state fairs events that are not held during the fair. The Senate bill does not include this provision.

Raising requirements for CPAs

Students would have to spend more time in the classroom before they become licensed certified public accountants, under a bill the House passed March 30. The vote was 102-26.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) is sponsoring the bill (HF2969/SF2803*), which would require all accountants seeking licensure to complete 150 hours, or credits, before certification. Currently, students must complete 120 hours to become certified.

The public expects certified public accountants (CPAs) to have experience in the field and background knowledge, he said.

Tuma said 46 states have already established a 150-hour requirement, and the three remaining states are working on legislation to reach that mark.

“Our accountants are at a disadvantage in the national market,” Tuma said.

The bill would require all accountants who take the certified public accounting exam after July 1, 2006, to have 150 semester hours. Accountants who passed the test prior to July 1, 2006, would be grandfathered in.

“If he’s already a CPA and he’s already licensed, he’s OK,” Tuma said.

Students who take the public accountant exam after July 1, 2006, would be required to possess a bachelor’s degree or higher with a major in accounting or business. Currently, students can take the test if they have completed two years of study with a passing grade average at a college or university.

According to one study, most students have completed 143 hours by the time they take the test, Tuma said.

Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) said the bill is needed so accountants would have reciprocity with other states, allowing them to take their degrees and use them across the United States.

Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) spoke against the bill, saying it would require students to spend more money on unnecessary classes. Dehler said students would have to spend thousands of additional dollars on classes.

The bill now returns to the Senate.

★ **CRIME**

Fugitive apprehension unit

A formal fugitive apprehension unit in the state Department of Corrections will be created under a law signed March 28 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The unit will have limited police powers to investigate and arrest Department of Corrections escapees and parole violators.

“These are all convicted felons,” said Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), who sponsored the measure. “We get to hunt these people down with people who know them best.”

There is currently an apprehension unit with 13 employees. However, that unit does not have police powers, and the workers cannot carry firearms. Under the law, those employees will be trained by law enforcement to become officers.

Stanek said there were three things he wanted to accomplish with this law. First, he wanted to give the workers the adequate tools to do their job, which includes the right to carry firearms. The law also allows the unit to attend deadly force training.

Second, the law establishes the flow of information between corrections officials working inside a prison and police officers working the street. The information exchange is needed because inmates still have ties to illegal activity, Stanek said.

“They’re still involved in all kinds of connections with gangs and drugs,” he said.

Finally, the police powers were limited to hunting the fugitives and parole violators, so the unit could concentrate on its task.

Under the law, the unit is required to inform a city’s police force when they enter a town to conduct surveillance or to make arrests. Stanek said this portion of the law is another step toward improving the flow of information between law enforcement units.

The law gives the fugitive apprehension unit initial processing power of the fugitive — such as taking the person’s fingerprints and photos — unless directed differently by the law enforcement agency with primary jurisdiction.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the measure in the Senate. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3003/SF3097*/CH291

★ ELECTIONS

Limiting election-day registration

While Minnesota is one of the few states in the nation that allows people to register and vote on election day, the House passed a bill March 29 that would modify the requirements for that same-day registration. The vote was 70-60.

The bill (HF2826), sponsored by Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), would repeal the state law that allows a person without identification to register to vote on an election day if a registered voter from the same precinct vouches for that person.

Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson) was among the opponents of that provision.

"I don't think it's appropriate to be restricting people's ability to vote," he said.

Other House members said the bill would make voting more difficult for students, homeless people, or anyone who moves into a new precinct shortly before an election.

But Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview) said it is difficult for election judges to determine if a person without identification is ineligible to vote.

For example, election judges currently do not have the means to verify whether a person without proper identification is even a citizen of the United States, Krinkie said.

Minnesota law allows people to present several forms of identification to register and vote on an election day. Those include a driver's license, a student identification card, a passport, or a utility bill with the person's name and current address. Those laws would not change under the bill.

"It's easy to vote if you take any time or consideration," Krinkie said.

The bill would make several other minor changes to state election laws.

It would move the beginning date of the terms of office for soil and water conservation district supervisors, school board members, town officers, and hospital district officers to the first Monday in January to conform with other elected offices.

And voter registration forms that are submitted with driver's license applications would have to be sent within 10 business days to the county auditor, under the bill.

Currently, there is no time limit for the public safety department to send the forms to the county auditor. When the bill was discussed in committee earlier this session, Secretary of State Mary Kiffmeyer said there have been long delays where people find that they are not registered when they go to vote.

The bill now moves to the Senate.

★ EMPLOYMENT

Exposure to bloodborne diseases

The House passed a bill March 24 aimed at reducing occupational exposures to bloodborne pathogens through sharps injuries. The vote was 129-0.

The bill (HF2639/SF2397*), sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), would require employers to comply with federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations on bloodborne pathogens.

It also would require that employers review written exposure control plans annually and document in the plan consideration of appropriate methods they would use to eliminate or minimize exposure.

"This is a very important issue. It's an issue that can cost people their lives," said Ozment.

Sharps are needles and other medical devices used in testing. They are often used to draw blood and therefore carry the most risk for exposure to diseases carried through the blood.

Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka) spoke in support of the bill. He told members that his wife, a nurse, was stuck by a needle while on the job. She developed hepatitis, and because of complications, she nearly died.

"This is a good bill," Abeler said, "a bill we need to support."

Under the bill, a company safety committee would be required to make recommendations for the use of effective engineering controls to limit injury. Representatives of employees who may use or encounter a device that could create exposure to bloodborne pathogens would be appointed to the committee.

Finally, the bill would require that an employer establish internal procedures to document how employees become exposed and the circumstances surrounding an incident of exposure. The bill also lists information that employers would be required to document.

The bill now moves to a House-Senate conference committee.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Permission for mosquito spraying

The Metropolitan Mosquito Control District would need the approval of the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources before spraying state lands, under a bill the House passed March 24. The vote was 121-7.

Under current law, a landowner can refuse

to allow Mosquito Control to spray his or her land with insecticides, but that same courtesy is not always given regarding publicly owned land.

In July 1999, Mosquito Control sprayed chemicals at Fort Snelling State Park, despite objections from the DNR.

The DNR should have jurisdiction over the decision to spray chemicals in wildlife management areas, because the DNR has the expertise in the chemicals' effects on vegetation, water quality, wildlife habitat, and related issues, said Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee and sponsor of the bill (HF3134).

Ozment added that current law allows the Department of Health to authorize spraying for mosquitoes that are known to carry diseases.

The bill now moves to the Senate.

Underwater lumber recovery

A bill that would allow people to salvage logs from lake and river bottoms was passed March 29 by the House. The vote was 129-3.

Under the bill (HF2559/SF2546*), a person or company that wants to salvage a log that is underwater would apply for a lease through the state Department of Natural Resources.

The fee for a lease would be \$500 for Minnesota residents and \$2,500 for those who live outside the state. Terms of the lease would be negotiable.

Logs could be salvaged only if they are submerged at depths of 20 feet or more. The lease would require that precautions be taken to avoid disturbing the bottom of the lake or river.

Also, the person or company with a lease would have to notify the Minnesota Historical Society if they find a historical artifact, such as a sled that was used to carry logs across a frozen lake.

Some of the proceeds from the leases would go to the state's general fund, and some would go to the game and fish fund. If the lake or river were on school trust fund lands, the money would go into the permanent school fund.

The state also would receive 25 percent of the money from the sale of the logs, based on the weighted average selling price.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora), now moves to the governor's desk.

Panel halts Lindner matter

There is not enough evidence to support claims that Rep. Arlon Lindner (R-Corcoran) violated House rules with his comments in a Feb. 23 debate, according to a March 24 ruling by the House Ethics Committee.

The committee also recommended that rules regarding speech and debate on the floor be studied and revised.

Lindner was accused of violating House rules in three ways in the floor debate regarding the prayer that opens each House floor session.

Four DFL members — Reps. Matt Entenza (St. Paul), Rob Leighton (Austin), Ann H. Rest (New Hope), and Wes Skoglund (Mpls) — submitted a complaint to the committee that Lindner had violated the norms of House behavior, brought the House into dishonor, and suggested members should be excluded from proceedings.

During floor debate Feb. 23, Lindner, in response to Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul), used the term “irreligious left” in reference to Paymar’s views. Paymar is Jewish, and some interpreted Lindner’s remarks to be directed against people of the Jewish faith.

The committee met on March 20 and 21 to hear testimony and rebuttal to determine if there was probable cause to pursue the matter. During those two days, Entenza argued that the complainants did not want Lindner to be censured or expelled, they merely wanted him to apologize for his comments.

Lindner declined to apologize. Both he and his attorney, Richard Morgan of Minneapolis, said he may not have expressed himself eloquently, but he said what he meant.

Committee members then met in executive session March 23 to discuss the testimony and reach a conclusion.

In their ruling, which was unanimous, members noted that Lindner’s comments were regrettable, but that discipline would be inappropriate and no further action should be taken.

“Matters like this are very difficult for everyone,” Entenza said after the committee issued its report. “I think your recommendation is very good.”

The report also said that certain rules governing speech must be revised because they contradict one another.

During his presentation, Morgan argued that House rule 2.31, which governs offensive words in debate, says that a member must not be called to answer for offensive speech unless another member takes exception immediately after the words are uttered or before the House takes up other business.

LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPANIMENT



The Park Singers from St. Louis Park High School sing the invocation to open the March 24 floor session. Amy Butzen, *right*, conducts “America the Beautiful” as harpist Melissa Froehlich, the legislative assistant to Reps. Larry Howes and Mary Liz Holberg, accompanies the choir.

Entenza said the rule is archaic and pertains to obscenities used in debate.

The committee suggested the rule is not clear.

Lindner said he was pleased with the committee’s ruling.

“I think the Minnesota House of Representatives tested its commitment to free speech, open debate, and tolerance to religious diversity,” he said. “We have passed the test.”

Rostberg investigation delayed

An investigation into an ethics complaint against Rep. Jim Rostberg (R-Isanti) has been put on hold until criminal proceedings are complete.

The House Ethics Committee unanimously ruled March 24 that it would defer the investigation. Rostberg is facing three charges of criminal sexual conduct in Isanti County.

The ethics complaint against Rostberg, signed by House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) and Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), alleges that he brought dishonor to the House as a result of his recent arrest.

Rostberg was arrested March 2 in the Capitol and was charged in Isanti County the next day.

According to the criminal complaint, Rostberg is charged with engaging in criminal sexual contact with a girl under 13 over a period of five years. The girl is now 14.

Rostberg has said he is innocent of the charges against him.

★ FAMILY

Help for mentally ill teens

Parents would have more control in admitting mentally ill children to hospitals under a bill the House passed March 27.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) is sponsoring the bill (HF3107/SF2634*), which would add mental illness to a law on involuntary admission and treatment.

State law currently allows parents to admit a child under age 18 to a hospital without the child’s consent if the child is mentally retarded or chemically dependent. But the same does not go for children who are mentally ill.

The law allows parents to admit children to hospitals for a mental illness up to age 16. The bill would extend that to age 18. Even if the 16- or 17-year-old child refused treatment, the parents would be able to admit the child to a hospital.

“It empowers the parents to get help for their teen-agers,” Greiling said.

The bill stems from a proposal by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, Greiling added.

The bill also has a provision that would require hospital officials to inform a patient when a family member makes an inquiry about the patient’s health. The patient would then have to authorize the release of any information.

“It makes medical people more proactive in talking to families,” Greiling said.

The bill now heads to the governor’s desk.

Crackdown on cheating

Gamblers would be prohibited from using devices that could count cards or analyze strategy under a bill the House passed March 29. The vote was 92-38.

Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) is sponsoring the bill (HF3571/SF2828*), which would establish several new felonies involving devices that change the outcome of a game.

Attempting to remove money, chips, or tokens from a slot machine or such device would be a felony, as would using counterfeit chips or tokens.

An employee of the gambling licensee who cheats, as defined by the bill, also would be guilty of a felony.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said the bill could be too harsh.

"I'm afraid that someone we didn't intend to will be a felon under this law," Rukavina said.

He offered an amendment to change the felony provisions to misdemeanors. The amendment was rejected.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) questioned if a pen could be considered a "device" for counting cards and if a person using a pen at a card table could be convicted of a felony. The bill states that a book, graph, periodical, chart, or pamphlet would not be considered a probability-calculating device.

Skoglund said a felony conviction should be reserved for people who prey on others, and not people who adjust the odds of winning.

The bill also would make it a felony to manufacture, sell, or distribute cards, tokens, or dice used to violate these gambling provisions. Another portion of the bill would make it a felony to instruct someone else to violate the bill.

Legislators introduced the bill in light of the upcoming opening of a card club at Canterbury Park in Shakopee. Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan) said it would be wise to have the provisions of the bill in place.

"Let it open with honesty and integrity," Buesgens said.

The House amended the bill to expand the list of legal recipients where charitable gambling organizations can make contributions. The amendment would allow organizations to contribute to community arts groups.

Currently, contributions can be made to public and private educational institutions, scholarships, churches, natural resources projects, or recreational and community facilities.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

Expanding fraud provisions

Tampering with gambling devices or claiming a gambling prize through fraud or use of counterfeit equipment would become a felony under a bill passed by the House on March 27. The vote was 128-0.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) is sponsoring the bill (HF3023/SF2701*), which would establish felonies if the dollar amount involved exceeds \$2,500. The maximum penalty for such a felony would be three years in prison and a \$6,000 fine.

Fraud involving dollar amounts of \$500 or less would constitute a misdemeanor, and incidents involving between \$500 and \$2,500 would be gross misdemeanors.

The bill would make it illegal to knowingly claim a gambling prize using altered or counterfeit equipment. It also would be illegal to claim a prize through fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

Tampering with gambling equipment in an attempt to influence the outcome of the game also would be illegal.

During the House Crime Prevention Committee discussion last month, Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) expressed concern about the tampering provision. Stanek wondered if it would be tampering to draw a line through a pulltab. He said he preferred the maximum penalty be a gross misdemeanor instead of a felony.

King Wilson, executive director for Allied Charities of Minnesota, testified at that hearing that the bill is needed to curb the growth of cheating in gambling.

Norm Pint, director of gambling enforcement for the Department of Public Safety, said he is concerned that more people will attempt to tamper or cheat on games because people are getting away with it.

The bill now heads to the governor's desk.

★ **GAME & FISH****Lifetime hunting, fishing licenses**

The House passed a bill March 30 that would establish lifetime licenses for hunting and fishing. The vote was 112-10.

The bill (HF3510), sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), initially aimed only to make permanent a law that is set to be repealed this year.

That law allows people in five Minnesota counties to obtain two deer hunting licenses — one license to use a firearm and one to use a bow and arrow — and to take one deer with each license. The five counties are Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Pennington, and Roseau.

The Senate added the proposal for lifetime

licenses to the bill, and the House voted to accept that proposal.

Under the bill, fees for lifetime licenses would be based on four groups: ages 3 and under, ages 4 to 15, ages 16 to 50, and ages 51 and older.

Lifetime fishing licenses for Minnesota residents in those age groups would cost \$227, \$300, \$383, and \$201 respectively. People who have that license would still need to purchase annual stamps if they want to fish for salmon or trout. For non-residents, the prices would be higher.

Lifetime small-game hunting licenses for residents would cost \$217, \$290, \$363, and \$213 for the same age groups. Those would also be available to non-residents at a higher price.

Lifetime deer hunting licenses for residents would cost \$337, \$450, \$573, and \$383 respectively.

The bill also would allow lifetime sporting licenses for residents that would cover fishing and small-game hunting. Such licenses would cost \$357, \$480, \$613, and \$413 respectively.

Non-residents could not get lifetime deer hunting or sporting licenses.

Revenue from the licenses would establish a lifetime fish and wildlife trust fund. Money in that fund would be invested by the state Board of Investment, and it would pay for projects that currently are funded by revenue from annual hunting and fishing licenses.

The bill now goes to the governor's desk.

Lighted lures OK'd

The House passed a bill March 23 that would allow anglers to use lighted fishing lures. The vote was 71-57.

Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley), sponsor of the bill (HF3352/SF3586*), said the lures are used in neighboring states. Current state law allows lighted lures to be manufactured and sold in Minnesota, but does not allow anglers to use them.

The House modified the bill to specify that the batteries used in lighted fishing lures cannot contain mercury. That change was made due to concerns the batteries could be swallowed by fish or lost in the water.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) said that mercury has been eliminated from most batteries because of pollution problems related to element. She said that even small amounts of mercury can cause serious problems in water.

Mercury pollution has caused some Minnesota lakes and rivers to be subject to fish advisories that warn people against eating fish caught in those areas, Wagenius said.

The bill awaits the governor's signature.

★ GOVERNMENT

Confirmation bill vetoed

Gov. Jesse Ventura delivered his first veto of the 2000 Legislative Session March 24 on a bill that would have limited the term of an acting or temporary commissioner of a state department.

Under current law, commissioners are appointed by the governor, subject to the Senate's confirmation of the appointment. The bill would have limited the term of an acting or temporary commissioner to 18 months.

In his veto message, Ventura said the bill would have punished a commissioner for the Senate's failure to "fulfill its obligation to act" within the time limit.

"The confirmation of commissioners is an important role for the Senate," the governor wrote. "It is imperative to maintain a certain level of accountability and a clear expectation for all parties involved."

Ventura, who earlier this session had the Senate reject one of his appointees, acknowledged that there is a need for change.

"I look forward to working with the Legislature to create a comprehensive piece of legislation that addresses the concerns of both the legislative and executive branches of government on this matter," he wrote.

Rep. Sondra Erickson (R-Princeton) and Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora) sponsored the bill. HF118*/SF160/CH277

Monarch as state butterfly

The House passed a bill March 24 that would make the monarch the state butterfly. The vote was 107-25.

Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake), sponsor of the bill (HF2588/SF2326*), said state symbols represent things that are great about Minnesota.

The idea came from fourth graders at OH Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi, Mares said. Those students and many others study the monarch's unique migration habits and other distinctive qualities, he said.

The students wanted to participate in the lawmaking process, he said, and they proposed the bill as a way to get involved.

Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) proposed adding a clause that would cancel the legislation after four years, so that the issue could be revisited at that time. That would allow another group of students to get involved by proposing to keep the monarch as the state butterfly or to propose another kind of butterfly for that distinction, he said. But the House rejected that proposal.

The bill has been sent to the governor.

Turning over state property

A piece of state property that previously housed a juvenile correctional facility would be turned over to the city of Sauk Centre under a bill the House passed March 28. The vote was 116-13.

Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria), sponsor of the bill (HF2819/SF2444*), said the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Sauk Centre was closed in July 1999 and has been vacant since then.

It was established in 1911 as a facility for delinquent girls, but became coeducational in 1967.

Under state law, when an agency vacates a piece of property, the state Department of Administration offers the property to other state agencies or departments that might want to use the property. But in this case, no other agency expressed interest, Cassell said.

When the correctional facility closed, it eliminated many jobs in the city, Cassell said. By transferring the land to the city, local officials can use the property for economic development or for city or county government purposes, he said.

Cassell added that the land originally was purchased by the city and given to the state in the early 1900s to be used as a correctional facility. The city also extended water and sewer lines to the buildings and has continued to maintain that system.

The bill now goes to the governor's desk.

★ HEALTH

Resident assistant regulations

A bill that would regulate how nursing homes train and employ resident assistants to aid patients with eating and drinking was passed March 27 by the House. The vote was 107-23.

Under the bill (HF3226/SF2896*), sponsored by Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls), resident attendants could not be counted in a nursing facility's minimum staffing requirement.

Resident assistants also would need to undergo a criminal background check before being allowed to attend to patient needs, Nornes said.

The bill is an attempt to ease concerns expressed by the children and spouses of nursing facility patients who, at times, are unable to properly feed or replenish themselves.

Aid to patients struggling to eat or drink is often unavailable, according to testimony before the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee, due to staffing shortages plaguing many nursing facilities in the state.

Rules are currently in place governing the

frequency of staff visits, Nornes said, but some nursing home residents need to be checked more or less frequently, he said.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), speaking in support of the bill, agreed.

"Whenever you have a one-size-fits-all situation, it doesn't work well for our senior citizens," Bradley said.

The bill would allow the resident or a guardian to request in writing a variation of the time interval for monitoring.

It also would require the commissioner of the Department of Health to examine state and federal regulations governing nursing facility care and to develop and implement alternative procedures for the nursing home survey process.

The commissioner of the Department of Health would be required under the bill to develop a proposal to decrease regulations that impede direct care of nursing facility residents.

The bill now goes to the governor.

Disqualified health professionals

A bill that would redirect the authority to determine whether a licensed health professional is disqualified from direct patient contact was passed March 27 by the House. The vote was 127-0.

The bill (HF3365/SF2941*), sponsored by Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka), would shift authority away from the Department of Human Services while making changes to related definitions of maltreatment and neglect.

Under current law, if a background check reveals a potentially disqualifying history, the department determines whether the professional in question fits the statutory criteria prohibiting direct patient contact.

The bill would require health-related licensing boards, not the department, to determine whether someone should be disqualified from providing contact.

The measure also would provide that a determination may be made as part of the existing health-related licensing board complaint, investigation, or hearing process. Furthermore, it would require that the determination be made within 90 days of notification.

The licensing board would be instructed, if the bill were to become law, to consider the nature and extent of any injury or harm resulting from conduct, the seriousness of the misconduct, and the extent that disqualification from patient contact is necessary to protect people receiving services.

The bill would allow the board to determine the duration of any disqualification or to establish conditions under which a health professional may hold a position allowing direct contact with patients.

Licensing boards, under the bill, would have jurisdiction over previously disqualified non-licensed individuals who later seek to be licensed.

Furthermore, the bill would permit health professionals previously disqualified because of "substantiated maltreatment of a vulnerable adult" after October 1, 1995, to petition for review, and would require the commissioner of the department to notify eligible individuals of that right.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

Training care providers

The House passed a bill March 29 aimed at protecting the health and well-being of children dependent upon certain medical devices to live. The vote was 132-0.

The bill (HF3342/SF3025*), sponsored by Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul), would attempt to decrease the chance that a child left with a foster or respite care provider could suffer harm due to a provider's inexperience or lack of training with the special equipment needed to care for the child.

Care providers, under the bill, would be required to have training or experience with a child's medical equipment before being allowed to care for the child.

Sharon Morrissey and husband Don Baierl of St. Paul testified earlier this month before the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee in favor of the bill. The couple lost an infant daughter in 1997 because a care provider didn't know precisely how to operate the child's equipment.

To help prevent a situation like that from occurring again, Mariani told House

members, legislation needs to be put in place to ensure safety when children in need of special care are left with foster or respite care providers.

Agencies that place children in homes, even if it's only on a temporary basis, would be required by the bill to ensure that the care provider has the necessary training before being entrusted with the child.

While the Department of Health and Human Services would be called upon to create a training system under the bill, Mariani said he expects there would be little, if any, fiscal impact incurred by the department.

The bill now returns to the Senate.

Contract stacking regulated

A bill that would expand the scope of health provisions regulating network shadow contracting by including physicians and other occupations regulated by the Board of Medical Practice and Dentists in the definition of a "health care provider" was passed March 28 by the House. The vote was 124-7.

Network shadow contracting refers to the practice of health insurance companies requiring care providers to participate in a network under a category of coverage different from the categories to which the existing contract between the company and provider applies, without the consent of the provider.

The measure would require that parties be notified of a change and offer their consent.

The bill (HF3310/SF3055*), sponsored by Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka), would include hospitals, licensed dentists, chiropractors, and individuals licensed, registered, or regulated by the board in the definition of a health care provider.

It also would eliminate an exemption for nonprofit health service plan corporations (such as Blue Cross Blue Shield and Delta Dental) from the state's definition of a "network organization."

Furthermore, the bill would require that the commissioner of the Department of Health study whether state laws have increased premium costs for health-related coverage and, if so, by how much.

A study of whether current statutes have limited the ability of employers to purchase managed care plans would also be in required. The commissioner would then have to report the findings by Jan. 15, 2002.

The measure now awaits the governor's approval.

★ HOUSING

Interest on security deposits

A new law effective Aug. 1, 2000, will delay a scheduled increase in the interest rate paid by property owners on tenant security deposits.

Current law sets the rate at 3 percent until 2001, and after that time the rate was to be increased to 4 percent. The new law will change the date of the increase to 4 percent from May 1, 2001, to May 1, 2004.

State law related to the interest rate on security deposits has been adjusted several times in recent years. The 1992 Legislature changed the rate from 5.5 percent to 4 percent until May 1, 1997, but the rate was to return to 5.5 percent thereafter. In 1996, the rate was cut to 3 percent until May 1, 1999, with an increase to 4 percent thereafter.

The 1998 Legislature extended the 3 percent rate until 2001, and the new law will give it three more years.

Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter) and Sen. James Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul) sponsored the legislation, which was signed by the governor March 24.

HF3132*/SF2890/CH282

★ HUMAN SERVICES

No licenses for offenders

The House passed a bill March 28 that would extend foster care licensure privileges to certain providers while tightening periods of licensure disqualification for individuals found guilty of certain criminal offenses. The vote was 130-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), the bill (HF3103/SF3005*) would make several technical and substantive changes to laws relating to Department of Human Services licensing.

ARTS DAY



As part of the 18th annual Arts Education Day at the Capitol March 29, second- and third-graders from Whittier Community School for the Arts demonstrate how they learn math through music and dance.

It would allow certain adult foster care providers not required to be licensed by the department to seek licensure in order to avoid potential losses of funding.

The bill would add gross misdemeanor offenses related to prostitution to the list of crimes that require at least a 10-year disqualification for family day care or foster care licenses. A gross misdemeanor offense related to neglect or endangerment of a child would also be included in the 10-year disqualification list, under the bill.

Furthermore, the bill would require a lifetime disqualification of day care or foster care licensure for a felony-level offense pertaining to neglect or endangerment.

Also, the bill would allow tribal organizations performing licensing functions to have the same access to criminal history data as counties. Counties performing licensing functions delegated by the state, however, would have the same tort liability as the state if the bill were to become law.

The bill now goes to the governor's desk.

★ **INSURANCE**

Insurance for vicarious liability

A bill awaiting the governor's signature would allow insurance companies to sell vicarious liability insurance to cover the costs of punitive or exemplary damages.

Vicarious liability insurance covers instances where a defendant is liable not for what he or she did, but rather for that defendant's responsibility for or relationship to another defendant. The insurance will thus be available to an employer who must pay damages for an act committed by an employee even though the employer may not have done anything wrong.

For example, the bill (HF2675/SF2569*) would allow an employer to purchase insurance to cover sexual harassment claims, where an employee is accused of the wrongdoing but the employer is responsible, even though he or she might not have had anything to do with the harassment directly.

The insurance covers the costs of punitive and exemplary damages that are awarded by courts in addition to compensatory damages. Punitive damages are meant to punish defendants while exemplary damages are meant to set an example to deter the defendant or others from repeating the behavior.

The House passed the measure March 24. It is sponsored by Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin).

The bill moves to the governor's desk.

★ **LAW**

Liability for providing alcohol

People over age 21 could face civil penalties for supplying alcohol to those under 21 under a bill the House passed March 28. The vote was 92-39.

Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center), who is sponsoring the measure, said the bill (HF2555/SF1733*) would curb parties where adults serve liquor to juveniles. Adults would be less likely to supply alcohol to juveniles at a party if they know they could be held liable in a civil suit for the juveniles' actions when they leave the premises, Carruthers said.

"When adults go and give booze to kids, you know what happens? Kids get killed. That's the reality," Carruthers said during floor debate.

The bill would apply to people who do not have liquor licenses, covering events such as social parties.

The 1999 Legislature passed a measure that established felony penalties for people who provide alcohol to minors if a minor proceeds to cause death or great bodily harm.

Carruthers' current bill is the second major initiative to come in response to accidents like the one that killed St. Paul teen-ager Kevin Brockway, who died in a New Year's Eve 1997 car accident after leaving a party where a parent provided liquor.

The bill would make the adult liable if he or she supplied alcohol, had control over the premises, and was in a reasonable position to stop the juvenile from drinking, or if he or she knowingly and recklessly permitted the consumption of alcohol.

The Senate bill includes a provision that would prohibit coverage for liability on a homeowner's insurance policy. That language is not in the House bill.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) opposed the bill, saying the measure would place fiscal consequences on people that are too great.

"Accidents are going to happen, and kids are going to be kids," Rukavina said. "There are going to be a lot of innocent people hurt by this bill."

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said the bill should also include liability for people who are under age 21 who provide alcohol.

The bill moves to the Senate.

★ **MILITARY**

POW resolution

A bill that would urge the federal government to take action to free Americans who might be held as prisoners of war was passed by the House on March 27. The vote was 128-1.

The bill (HF4060/SF2348*), sponsored by Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul), would send a resolution to the president of the United States and to leaders in Congress.

The resolution would state that photographs from satellites and planes have shown names and rescue codes of missing servicemen written on the ground in Vietnam and Laos. Also, other reports have indicated American prisoners of war are still being held in North Korea, China, Russia, and Vietnam.

The resolution also states that a U.S. Senate committee has made a recommendation for action that the executive branch has not acted on, and that the U.S. government has "rebuffed overtures from Vietnam and North Korea regarding the release of live American POWs."

The bill now moves to the governor's desk.

★ **RECREATION**

New plan for park permits

Annual permits for state parks will be valid for a full year after the date of purchase, under a new law signed March 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Currently, annual park permits are valid only for the calendar year.

Proponents of the new law, which is effective Aug. 1, 2000, said that it likely will increase the number of annual permits that are sold and encourage more visits to state parks year-round.

Earlier this year, an official from the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Natural Resources said survey results show the state could sell about 5,000 more permits per year.

The change could make enforcement more difficult than the current system, where an annual permit is distinctive and easy for park employees to see. But the official told lawmakers the change will be manageable because the sticker will be designed to clearly show the month and year it expires.

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

HF2505*/SF2289/CH278

New fine for studs

A bill that would add a civil penalty for using metal traction devices, or studs, on snowmobiles was passed March 28 by the House. The vote was 131-0.

Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine), sponsor of the bill (HF3555/SF3283*), said the civil penalty was inadvertently left out of a law that was passed last year that required people to

purchase a sticker for their snowmobiles if they intend to use studs.

That law contains criminal penalties for people who drive a snowmobile with studs on paved state trails. Westerberg's bill would establish civil penalties for people who have snowmobile studs but have not purchased the sticker.

For the first offense, the penalty would not exceed \$50. The fine for a second offense would not exceed \$300, and for third and subsequent offenses the fine would not exceed \$600.

The bill now moves to the governor's desk.

★ SAFETY

Radio system source code

Bidders on the state's 800-megahertz public safety radio system would be allowed access to the source code of the system under a bill approved March 29 by the House Taxes Committee.

The measure was included in part of a public finance bill (SF3730) that makes a number of changes in the authority of local governments to issue bonds and incur debt.

The 800-megahertz radio system would allow public safety officials to communicate on a universal system.

An amendment offered by Rep. Henry Todd Van Dellen (R-Plymouth) would require the state Department of Administration to disclose and provide access to the source code to bidders on the radio system's contract.

Laura Bishop, who is director of legislative affairs for the state Department of Administration and is overseeing the contracting of the project, said that the department is close to reaching an agreement with the vendors that would make the amendment obsolete.

She said the dispute centers around the modification by Motorola of standards established by the Association of Public Safety Communication Officials, known as APCO Project 25. That standard agreement allows

THE ELITE SIX



Demonstrating their opposition to the House tax bill, a group calling themselves the "Elite 6 Percent" jokingly celebrate as DFL amendments are defeated during March 27 debate on the floor of the House. The amendments sought to eliminate a provision in the bill that would provide a reduction in the tax rate on the highest income bracket. They are, from left, Susan Heinrich (dressed as a maid), Terrence and Camilla Hempelman, Ken Bradley, Ann Michaels, and Rich Kronfeld.

different vendors to offer equipment that would work within the system.

Motorola holds the state's contract for the system's architecture.

She said Motorola has indicated potential additions to the standards that other vendors contend will give that company an unfair advantage of offering radio equipment that works better within the system's architecture.

Bishop said that the state's attorney general told her that requiring the disclosure of one vendor's source code to other vendors is unconstitutional because it is proprietary information.

State technology contracts often require vendors to submit the source code, which is the programming language that executes a program, in escrow. This protects the state in the event that the vendor goes out of business or otherwise stops supporting the product.

The bill was sent to the House Ways and Means Committee.

★ TRANSPORTATION

One plate for collector cars

Cars manufactured prior to 1972 and classic or model cars will only be required to have one license plate, under a law signed March 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) sponsored the measure, which will allow cars with a pioneer, classic car, collector, or street rod license to only display one plate.

If the car owner chooses to display just one plate, that plate must be located on the rear of the car, the law states.

Previously, the law allowed cars manufactured prior to 1968 to display just one plate.

"This covers muscle cars made in 1971 or 1972," Haas said.

The reason for the change came from constituents who believed that two plates on their

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street rods were not necessary, Haas said.

The new law also states that only one plate is needed for cars built prior to 1972 that are used for general transportation purposes.

"Some people do use them for driving around," Haas said. "You don't see many of these cars in the winter."

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the Senate bill. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.
HF2824*/SF2578/CH280

C. Elmer Anderson highway

A Minnesota road will be named in honor of a former governor, under a law signed March 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The portion of Highway 371 from Baxter to Barrows in Crow Wing County, which is known as the Brainerd bypass, will be named the C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway.

Anderson, who died in January 1998, served as Minnesota governor from 1951 to 1955. He also served as lieutenant governor for 11 non-consecutive years. When he was first elected lieutenant governor in 1938, Anderson was only 26 years old.

Anderson, a Republican and a native of Brainerd, became governor in 1951 when Gov. Luther Youngdahl resigned to accept an appointment to the federal bench. Anderson defeated Orville Freeman in 1952 but lost to the same man in 1954. (Governors served only two-year terms at the time.)

After leaving the statehouse, Anderson returned to Brainerd, where he was a businessman

and, for 10 years, served as the town's mayor.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) was quoted at Anderson's funeral as saying he was always proud of Brainerd and stayed active in the issues important to the area.

Signs designating the road must be funded from non-public money, according to the new law, which is effective Aug. 1, 2000.

Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the measure.

HF2502*/SF3207/CH279

Red Bull highway

A portion of Interstate 35 will be renamed to honor a military unit, under a law signed March 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The stretch of freeway will be re-named the 34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division Highway. Private money must be used to purchase and place signs. The designation will extend from the Iowa border to the Twin Cities.

The Red Bull Division, comprised of National Guard members from Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota, was the first division deployed overseas during World War II, according to the Minnesota National Guard. The division was stationed in North Africa and Italy during the war.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) and Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing) sponsored the measure, which is effective Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3156*/SF2709/CH281

Highway named after contractor

A southern Minnesota highway will be named after a noted contractor and transportation advocate, under a law signed March 28 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The stretch of Highway 4 from Sleepy Eye to St. James will be named the Richard J. Mathiowetz Memorial Highway. Mathiowetz, a Sleepy Eye native, was dubbed a "legendary contractor" in the December issue of Construction Bulletin. He died Oct. 31, 1999, at age 64.

Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet) sponsored the law. Swenson said that Mathiowetz was always traveling to the State Capitol, seeking funding for roads and highways.

"He had been an energetic advocate for good roads and highways," Swenson said.

Mathiowetz began working at his father's construction company when he turned 18, and he was involved in contracting throughout his life. Swenson said Mathiowetz deserves to have a highway named after him due to his long-standing reputation as a contractor in the area.

Funds for the purchase and placement of signs marking the highway must come through non-public sources.

Sen. Dennis Frederickson (R-New Ulm) sponsored the law in the Senate. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3142*/SF2844/CH288



Off the telemarket

Laws allow consumers to prevent telemarketers from reaching them

Several states are taking on the telemarketing industry by passing legislation that addresses consumers' ability to block sales calls from coming into their homes.

According to the Direct Marketing Association, the telemarketing industry generated \$482 billion in sales and employed over 9.1 million people during 1998.

Caller identification technology became readily available in the mid-1990s, and many consumers thought it would be the solution to keeping pesky telemarketers from interrupting their dinner.

But just as soon as consumers had the

ability to see who was calling, users on the other end could block their phone numbers from appearing on the display of the caller ID box.

Then, phone companies began offering consumers the ability to have a line that rejects blocked calls.

Several new laws have been enacted to halt attempts by telemarketers to maneuver around these technologies.

An Illinois law that took effect Jan. 1 prohibits telemarketers from blocking their identities from caller ID users in the state.

Georgia also recently initiated tougher regulations on telemarketers. A new law

there allows residents to be placed on a "no-call" list, for a \$5 fee. For each telemarketing call made to a person on that list, a telemarketer can be fined \$2,000.

Tennessee has a similar law although residents there are not charged a fee to get on the no-call list.

Florida has had a no-call list law since 1990. During those 10 years, the list has grown to about 120,000 names and the state has assessed more than \$300,000 in fines to about 50 companies.

Minnesota's only major regulations on the telemarketing industry involve criminal penalties for fraud.

Protection from predators

A bill awaiting the governor's signature would provide a variety of new methods to track sex offenders

BY MICHELLE KIBIGER

The House and Senate have come to an agreement on start-up funding for a statewide integrated criminal justice information system that will help law enforcement keep track of registered sex offenders and other criminals around the state.

The House voted March 27 to concur with Senate amendments to a bill (HF2688) that is being called "Katie's Law" and gave the bill final passage on a 129-2 vote.

Now it's up to the governor whether the provision will become law.

The two main backers of the House bill, Reps. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) and Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), said this week they expect Gov. Jesse Ventura to sign the bill, despite earlier admonitions that he would not support new spending — such as that for the new police information system — in a non-budget year.

"I feel this bill is one of the most important of the year," Broecker said during debate on the House floor.

The final version of the bill would spend \$12 million to implement the statewide information system, which is a compromise between the \$7.5 million in the original House bill and the \$15 million originally pledged by the Senate.

Some lawmakers are concerned that the overall project could cost as much as \$100 million before completion.

In addition, the bill would spend \$5 million to increase the number of probation officers handling sex offenders and thereby decrease the number of clients each officer has.

A probation officer is one of the checkpoints along the way for many sex offenders.

Legislators created the bill because of concerns that the state is not adequately tracking sex offenders and other criminals, since there is no statewide system that law enforcement agents can access on a traffic stop or other routine activity.

Early in the 2000 session, Pam Poirier, whose 19-year-old daughter, Katie, was abducted from a Moose Lake convenience store and presumed murdered last May, spoke in favor of laws that toughen guidelines on sex offenders.

Donald Blom, a six-time convicted sex offender, will stand trial next month for Poirier's abduction and apparent murder.

The bill would expand certain requirements for sex offender registration. Under the bill, anyone who moves to Minnesota to work or go to school would be required to register if he or she falls under the definitions of sexual psychopath or sexual predator.

Lifetime registration would be required for

sexual predator in Minnesota or any other state.

Twenty-year registration would be required for any level 2 or level 3 offenders, unless a longer registration applies.

In addition, the bill would require the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to verify the address of each offender at least four times a year. Each offender would still report his or her address annually or if it changes.

If the offender does not follow through with verification requirements, the state could take information about them and make it public through electronic means.

Sex offenders would be required to provide all primary and secondary addresses, including those for recreational purposes, and all the addresses of property they lease, own, or rent. They would also have to list where they work or where they attend school. And offenders would have to provide the makes and models of all their vehicles.

Violators of the predatory offender registration requirements would face felony penalties instead of misdemeanors, under the bill.

In addition, the bill would require the state



Pam and Steve Poirier listen to House debate earlier this session on a bill designed to protect people from sex offenders. The measure, known as "Katie's Law," won final passage March 27. The Poiriers' daughter, Katie, was abducted and presumed murdered in May 1999. The alleged killer has a long record of sex crimes.

registered offenders who have been convicted more than once, for those who commit aggravated sex offenses (involving force or threat or if the victim is younger than 12), and for anyone required to register as a sexual psychopath or

to create and maintain a Web site where all information about Level 3 sex offenders, the most serious, would be posted and accessible by the public.

Continued on page 21

Conflict avoidance

In response to light-rail transit troubles, a bill attempts to eliminate potential conflicts of interest in awarding contracts for state projects

BY JON FURE

Alleged conflicts of interest regarding the Hiawatha Corridor light-rail project have led to a proposal that would clarify the state's procedures for avoiding such conflicts.

The bill (HF4133), sponsored by Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview), was approved March 28 by the House State Government Finance Committee.

The bill would add some requirements to the state's policies in seeking bids and awarding contracts.

Each of the requirements in the bill relates to conflict of interest claims during the bidding process for the Hiawatha project.

The state has awarded bids for engineering and project management services for the Hiawatha project at various times since September 1998.

One of the conflict of interest claims is that the engineering firm Parsons Brinkerhoff had an unfair advantage over other firms that were competing for the contract as project manager. The Parsons Brinkerhoff firm was awarded the bid to manage the project after it had served as the interim project manager.

The Department of Transportation made the firm interim project manager through an amendment to the preliminary engineering contract.

Another firm that was competing for the project manager contract, Booz, Allen & Hamilton, contacted the department and expressed concern related to the how the contract was awarded.

That led to a decision by the Federal Transit Administration, which is providing grant money to the Hiawatha project, that the interim director, William Stead of the Parsons Brinkerhoff firm, could not serve as the project manager.

Stead responded to questions at the March 28 committee meeting, and he said he agreed to be reassigned March 17, along with another Parsons Brinkerhoff employee, but he did not agree that their actions were a conflict of interest.

Rep. Mark Gleason (DFL-Richfield) said he doesn't agree with the conflict of interest

ing to obtain another state contract, that vendor would be prohibited from participating in the decision on awarding the contract.

The transit administration had determined that Stead was not sufficiently "walled off" from that process in his capacity as interim project manager.

Two other provisions of the bill relate to changes that have been made in the Hiawatha project during the bidding process, which also led to complaints from companies that were competing for the bids.

Under the bill, people or companies that respond to a "request for proposal" or other solicitation document would need to be notified if the request is substantially changed or if the response due date is changed.



Brian Crowtleau of Minneapolis holds a sign as he signs a petition in support of light-rail transit. Crowtleau was among the crowd at a March 27 rally in the Capitol rotunda.

charge. Gleason said he has been in such a situation in his work as an auditor, where his familiarity and long-standing working relationship with clients gave him an advantage in obtaining contracts over others who would also want to do that work. But he does not consider that to be a conflict.

Stead agreed, but said the transit authority's judgment was that it was a "perceived conflict," which he said is difficult to disprove in any situation.

The bill would address that concern. Under the bill, if a vendor is providing goods or services under a contract to the state and is seek-

Another provision in the bill would prevent a contract from being amended to authorize work that is outside the scope of the work described in the original request for proposal or other solicitation document.

Instead, the state would have to disclose plans for additional work to the other firms who submitted proposals so they are aware and have a chance to do the work.

Krinkie cited three amendments in the Hiawatha project that increased the scope of the project without using the standard bidding process.

Continued on page 21

No ordinary term

House's lone independent garnered attention by leaving the Republican Caucus, while continuing to fight on emotional issues

By CHRIS VETTER

Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna) has always given his work — any work — his full attention and effort.

"I'm all the way into it. All or nothing," he said. An entrepreneur and inventor of the board game Sequence, Reuter, 51, has been intrigued by politics since he served in the Navy during the Vietnam era, and that feeling only increased when he later was a member of the student senate in college.

That interest in politics — his views on limiting government intrusion and protecting small businesses — has culminated in a four-year stint at the House.

"My philosophical approach is capitalism and promoting the entrepreneurial spirit," he said.

His colleagues in the House will remember him for those things. Rep. Greg Davids

(R-Preston), chair of the House Commerce Committee, of which Reuter is a member, said he has served small business during his tenure.

"I think he's been a stalwart for small business issues and free markets," Davids said. "He's a great free-markets legislator."

What some describe as his "independent spirit" prompted Reuter to leave the Republican Caucus in the House last summer and announce that he would not run for re-election. He is now the only independent member of the House.

After making the change, Reuter was assigned to an office in the Capitol, while all other House members have their offices in the State Office Building. The only staff assigned to the newly independent lawmaker was a part-time aide.

Reuter later filed a lawsuit against House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) to obtain the same working conditions and level of staff other members get. That suit remains unresolved, although Reuter did get his way on the location of his office.

Now back in the State Office Building, Reuter's office features a variety of editions of the Sequence board game, which he created in the mid-1970s and has been in production since 1981.

Reuter was first elected to the House in 1996. He had lived in Owatonna for only about a year before he won the seat. Previously, he had run for the Legislature in 1994 as a resident of Eden Prairie.

While he acknowledges his conflict with the Republican Caucus in the House contributed to his decision to not seek re-election, Reuter

also said he believes strongly that a legislator should be able to recognize when it's time to leave the Legislature.

"If I was going to be in my last term and was no longer worried about re-election, I might as well leave the caucus and be free to

vote my conscience," Reuter said.

The Owatonna legislator is still a member of the Republican Party; he recently served as a state delegate to a party convention.

"The Republican Party did not abandon my views and beliefs," he said. "The Republican Caucus didn't stand any longer for the things I stood for."

Reuter said the Republican Caucus gave up too much in order to cut taxes last year.

On the first day of this session, Reuter tried to amend the House rules so House prayers would not be required to be nondenominational. He later sought to throw out high school writing test results because of a question he believed to be offensive.

Reuter and former Rep. Charlie Weaver, now commissioner of public safety, sponsored a bill in 1997 that would have blocked Internet pornography in classrooms. Reuter points to that as a good example of how lawmakers can be effective by working together and not wor-

rying about who gets credit for legislation.

But he is most proud of his 1999 actions that forced the state to re-examine its agreement to buy 6,500 800-megahertz police radios from Motorola. Reuter contends the agreement was reached without an open and fair bidding process.

"We now will have competitive bids and we will have more than one provider," he said. "We turned around the whole system."

Reuter plans to retire in Austin, Texas, where he is building a home. When the session adjourns, he will keep in contact with constituents via e-mail, telephone, and several visits to his district until his term expires.

He said he likes the fact that his new state doesn't have an income tax. Reuter and his wife, Nancy, have family in Texas and also prefer the climate there. His 14-year-old son will join them in the move; his two older daughters will be attending college.

Reuter said he has no regrets during his four years, though he said he wishes his move out of the Republican Caucus could have gone smoother and he hadn't had to sue the speaker to get equal funding for staff.

While Reuter will not personally benefit if he wins the lawsuit, he does believe it could change the way legislators caucus in the future. For instance, if he wins, a dozen legislators could form a "conservative caucus" and obtain funding for their own staff, Reuter contends.

Reuter is still unsure what job he will pursue next. But he said it will likely be in human resources consulting or lobbying — a job he performed before being elected as a legislator.

"I don't see myself going to work for a company 9 to 5, Monday through Friday," he said. "I will also be working diligently to turn Sequence into an interactive Internet game and getting it marketed." 🐜



Rep. Doug Reuter

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Doug Reuter
Independent
District 28A – Owatonna
Terms: 2

Career notes: A sometimes outspoken member who has worked to increase accountability in government and to support small businesses, Reuter left the Republican Caucus in 1999 to become the only independent member of the House.

Continued from page 4

single filers would be \$73, with a maximum amount of \$930.

Individuals would be eligible if they had income tax liability in 1998 or filed a claim for the 1998 property tax rebate.

Unlike last year, this year's rebate would include individuals with social security income in 1998. This year's rebate also differs from last year in that it would allow those taxpayers with a qualified dependent to increase their rebate amount by either \$20 per dependent or the amount the rebate would increase when the dependent's income is added to the taxpayer's income, whichever is greater.

Working family credit

The federal earned income credit provides a wage supplement equal to a percentage of the earnings of low-income individuals. Similarly the state's working family credit is also based on a percentage of earnings.

The bill would increase the percentage of earnings used in calculating the working family credit so that for all claimants the credit would equal at least 25 percent of the federal earned income tax credit.

Insurance premium deduction

The bill would expand the current health insurance deduction for self-employed Minnesotans to include all taxpayers.

The provision would allow taxpayers to deduct health insurance premiums eligible for the itemized deduction for medical expenses but not eligible in determining federal taxable income or used for the long-term care insurance credit.

Health care access fund

The bill would extend through 2002 the Legislature's action of reducing the health care provider tax by 1.5 percent. Under current law, the rate is scheduled to increase to 2 percent next year.

The measure also would provide an additional year exemption for health maintenance organizations and nonprofit health service corporations.

Abrams said the provision in the bill is a "place holder" until a long-term solution can be negotiated. Last year, the House proposed to dedicate the ongoing tobacco settlement funds to replace the provider tax, but that plan did not become law. The 1999 Legislature wound up passing an \$84.5 million transfer from the general fund into the health care access fund, but the governor vetoed that transfer.



House Minority Leader Tom Pugh spoofs the Republican Caucus' lunch bucket theme for the tax bill March 27 by holding up his version of a Republican lunch bucket, which contains lobster and champagne.

K-12 education credit

An increased credit and expanded eligibility would be given for the K-12 education tax credit. Currently families with an income under \$37,500 are allowed to claim a credit up to \$2,000, depending on the number of children. The bill would allow a \$1,000 per child credit for an unlimited number of children.

Tax help for ski hills

Mild winters have caused poor ski seasons for area ski operators. The bill would provide relief to those operators by exempting machinery, equipment, fuel, electricity, and water additives used for snowmaking and snow grooming operations from the sales tax.

Cemetery maintenance expenses

The bill would exempt lawn care and related services used in cemetery maintenance from sales tax. The measure's sponsor Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Walters) quipped that the bill would ensure that people won't continue to face tax obligations when they are dead.

Motor vehicles as gifts

Motor vehicles given as gifts are currently exempt from sales tax only when the transfer is between spouses or between a parent and a child. The bill would expand the gift exemption for all individuals.

A further exemption would be given to nonprofit organizations for the purchase of trucks and vans that are used to transport goods or individuals.

Agricultural assistance

Aid would be provided in an agricultural assistance program similar to one established last year.

Farmers in counties that have been declared by the president as weather-related disaster areas would qualify for assistance equal to \$4 per acre. The maximum payment would be \$5,600.

The eligible counties include Kittson, Marshall, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau.

Property taxes

The bill would compress class rates for all property classes with a rate over 1 percent. The largest reductions would be 0.4 percent cuts for commercial/industrial properties and market rate apartments.

The bill also would reduce the limitation on the amount a property's market value may grow from one year to the next from 8.5 percent to 7 percent. An increase in the rates for the education homestead and education agricultural credits would also be provided.

Abrams said that the bill would reduce agricultural homestead property tax rates by 18 percent and non-homestead agricultural land would receive a 14 percent reduction.

Lawful gambling tax

The bill would reduce the tax on paddlewheels, raffles, and bingo from 9 percent of gross profit to 8.25 percent. Abrams said even with the reduction Minnesota would still have the second highest lawful gambling tax rate in the country. 🐼

Come to the Capitol

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

How to get here

Location

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

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

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

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

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

Parking

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

All-day parking permits may be purchased for \$3.50 from Plant Management on the third floor of the Ford Building. Cash or checks are accepted and correct change is appreciated. For more information, call (651) 297-3993.

Outdoor handicapped parking is available

in Lot O, which is on the northeast side of the Capitol, and in Lot F.

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

There are two handicapped entrances to the Capitol. One is on the northeast side of the building, just off Lot O; the other is a drop-off entrance under the south main steps at the front of the building.

Since parking is limited during legislative ses-

sions, busing may be easier. Freeway express bus service is available. Bus number 94B takes you to the Capitol and the State Office Building. Call the Transit Information Center at (651) 349-7000 for schedule and route information.

What to do

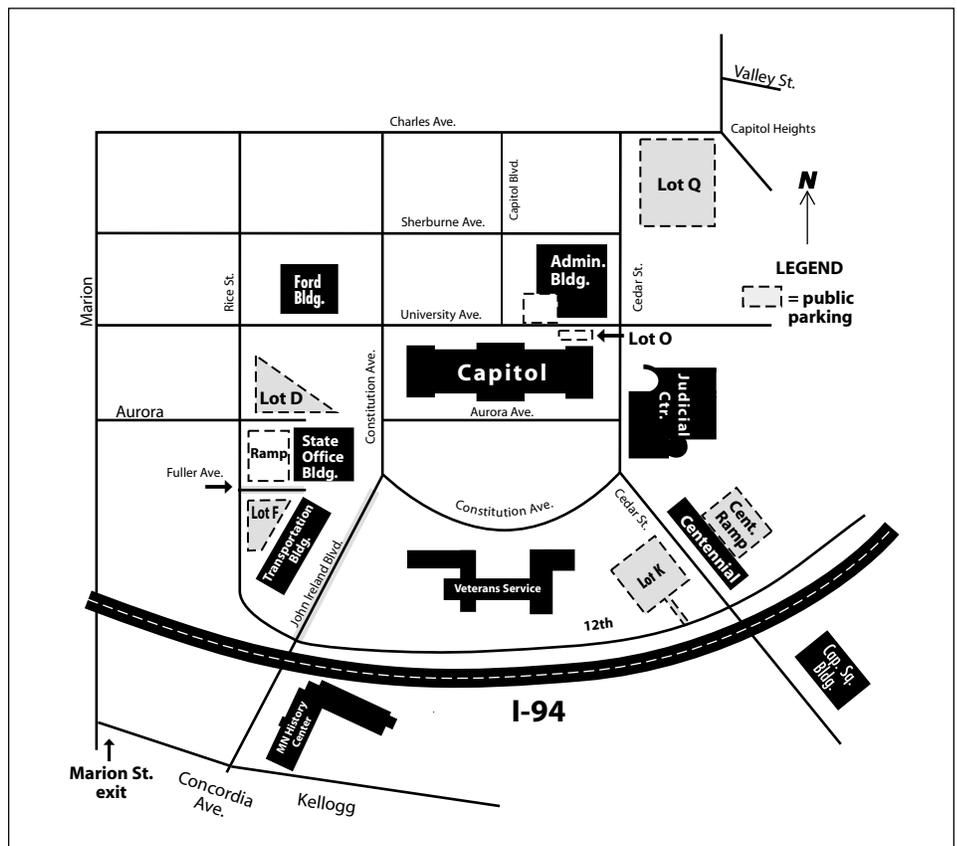
Tours

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

Tour guides lead the 45-minute tours on the hour Mondays through Fridays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (last tour leaves at 4 p.m.); Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (last tour leaves at 3 p.m.); and Sundays between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (last tour leaves at 3 p.m.). The tours are free of charge and begin at the Capitol's information desk at the end of the corridor to the right of the main entrance. Brochures in about 20 foreign languages also are available there.

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

Historical society officials ask that groups of



10 or more call at least two weeks in advance to reserve a tour time.

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

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

For more information about the tours or to reserve a time, call the Capitol Historic Site Program, (651) 296-2881.

Legislative sessions

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

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

The House usually meets at 2:30 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays, and the Senate meets at 11:30 a.m. Mondays and at 9 a.m. Thursdays during the first few weeks. House floor sessions are scheduled for the afternoon because committees meet in the morning and early afternoon. As the session nears the end, however, both bodies may meet several times a day, often into the night.

All House and Senate floor sessions are open to the public. Visitors interested in observing these sessions may call the House Chief Clerk’s Office, (651) 296-2314, or Senate Information, (651) 296-0504, with questions. Spectators may sit in the galleries of either chamber.

Committee meetings

Visitors wanting to attend a committee meeting may call the committee hotlines for pre-recorded messages with the meeting times and agendas for each day: House, (651) 296-9283; Senate, (651) 296-8088. Printed agendas for the week also appear in each issue of the *Session Weekly* and the *Senate Briefly*.

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

Major proposals often have several public

hearings so committee members may listen to all arguments for and against a bill.

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

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

Dining

Most buildings in the Capitol complex have their own cafeterias. The small State Office Building cafeteria is open only when the Legislature is in session. The newly restored Capitol Cafeteria is open year-round. A large, year-round cafeteria is available in the Transportation Building.

Also, there are many restaurants within walking distance. On Rice Street, there is a restaurant located inside the Kelly Inn, the Lagoon Vietnamese Restaurant, White Castle, and El Bravo Mexican Restaurant. On University Avenue, there is McDonald’s, Burger King, Mai Village, and other restaurants. There also are dozens of restaurants only minutes away in downtown St. Paul. Bus rides downtown cost 25 cents. Bus stops are located on Constitution Avenue.

Group visits

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

Rooms for special conferences or speakers can be reserved by calling the State Office Building room scheduler at (651) 296-5408 or the Capitol room scheduler at (651) 296-0866.

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

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

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

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

175 State Office Building
(651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550

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

Most of what this office publishes can be viewed on the Legislature’s World Wide Web page. To connect, direct your web browser to: www.leg.state.mn.us

House Television Services

216C State Capitol
(651) 297-1338

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

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

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.

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.

Senate Information Office

231 State Capitol
(651) 296-0504 or 1-800-234-1112

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

Senate Media Services

B-44 State Capitol
(651) 296-0264

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

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill has passed both the House and Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor, who has several options when considering a bill, can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill;
- or do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium (even-numbered years), a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (Latin for adjournment "without a date certain"). If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes (save pocket vetoes) the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills

passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history—at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

This information is also available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "It's a New Day" link, then click on "The Legislative Log."

Key:
CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
251	2980	2763*	Fishing season modified.	2/16/00	
252	2634	2411*	Northern Itasca hospital board membership requirements modified.	3/1/00	
253	2521	2320*	Lake Edwards township name change.	3/1/00	
254	76	86*	K-12 education technical changes provided.	3/7/00	
255	2067*	2071	Juvenile offenders modifications.	3/7/00	
256	2722*	2502	Kittson County town dissolution authority.	3/7/00	
257	2535*	2291	Shorewood authorized to elect city council members by wards.	3/13/00	
258	3039	2554*	Wadena County truth in taxation process advertisement requirement penalty exemption.	3/13/00	
259	3338*	2907	Scott County officials duties reorganized.	3/14/00	
260	2749*	2464	Revisor's bill.	3/14/00	
261	2642*	2552	Search firms surety bonding requirements modified.	3/14/00	
262	2774	2485*	Carisoprodol schedule IV controlled substance listing effective date delayed.	3/20/00	
263	2680	2465*	Political party treasurers authorized to sign political contribution refund receipt forms.	3/20/00	
264	3232	2692*	Business corporations and limited liability companies shareholder rights modified.	3/20/00	
265	2603	2346*	Permanently disabled hunters permit privileges modified.	3/20/00	
266	2723*	2528	McLeod County office authority extended.	3/23/00	
267	3236*	3236	Vital record certified copy issuance provisions modified.	3/23/00	
268	979*	2059	Landlords authorized to apportion utility payments among units.	3/23/00	
269	1865*	2094	Nursing mothers needs study by the Supreme Court Jury Reform Task Force required.	3/23/00	
270	2815*	2386	Hennepin County District Court fine proceeds distribution modified.	3/23/00	
271	3064	2776*	St. Louis County nursing home renovation approval deadline extended.	3/23/00	
272	3762	3355*	Port authority electronic funds disbursement authorized.	3/23/00	
273	2927*	2685	Metropolitan Inter-County Association group insurance protection authorized.	3/23/00	
274	3766*	3676	Pawnbrokers computerized records transmission format specified.	3/23/00	

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
275	2873*	2516	Anoka County department head time requirements clarified.	3/23/00	
276	3113*	3089	Pharmacies permitted an additional certified technician.	3/24/00	
277	118*	160	State agency commissioners acting service time limited.		3/24/00
278	2505*	2289	Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period.	3/24/00	
279	2502*	3207	C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway designated.	3/24/00	
280	2824*	2578	Collector motor vehicles license plate option.	3/24/00	
281	3156*	2709	I-35 designation as 34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division Highway.	3/24/00	
282	3132*	2890	Security deposit interest rates provided.	3/24/00	
283	2836*	2982	National Guard and organized militia membership eligibility clarified.	3/27/00	
284	3222*	3117	Health-related licensing boards reporting requirements modified.	3/27/00	
285	3332*	3120	Dairy research and promotion council alternative term expiration dates authorized.	3/27/00	
286	3433*	3292	St. Paul Port Authority recreational facilities and purposes authority modified.	3/27/00	
287	3475	2813*	State vehicle identification requirements modified.	3/27/00	
288	3142*	2844	Trunk Highway No. 4 designated as Richard J. Mathiowetz Memorial Highway.	3/28/00	
289	2687	2652*	Electric power generating plant siting act exemptions expanded.	3/28/00	
290	3016	2756*	Hospital districts annexation authority expanded.	3/28/00	
291	3003	3097*	Department of Corrections fugitive apprehension unit created.	3/28/00	
292	3421*	2779	Electric cooperatives' election to be regulated petition and balloting provisions modified.	3/28/00	
293	3053*	2508	Collector vehicles authorized to display a blue light as part of rear brakes.	3/28/00	
294	3196*	2978	Nursing facility employee pension benefit costs treated as PERA contributions.	3/28/00	
295	3375	3161*	Health care purchasing alliances modified.	3/28/00	
296	3188	3253*	Special transportation services medical assistance reimbursement study required.	3/28/00	
297	3281	2691*	State building energy code authority transferred to commissioner of administration.	3/28/00	
298	2909	2365*	Physician assistant supervisory requirement modified.	3/28/00	
299	3370	3330*	Department of Corrections housekeeping bill.	3/28/00	

Continued from page 14

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension would be required to establish a database of registered sex offenders. The data would be private, but would be available to law enforcement and corrections agents.

The bill would allow people convicted of felony sex offenses to change their names, but would make the procedure much more complicated and would require many different people to be notified of the change.

The sex offender piece is just one aspect of the criminal justice information system proposed by the bill. It would also establish a policy group to determine the infrastructure for the overall system.

For example, the bill requires the group to assess state and local law enforcement capability to collect fingerprints and photos electronically, so that data can be placed in a central database. The group would also be required to decide where such technology should be placed around the state.

The bill would provide \$1 million for some local government needs with a requirement for a local match up to 50 percent, as determined by the policy group. 🗿

Continued from page 15

Between July and August, the contract was amended three times, authorizing additional work and making Parsons Brinkerhoff the interim project manager. The additions increased the contract by \$3.4 million, bringing the total contract to \$6.7 million.

Richard Stehr, division engineer for the Department of Transportation, said the Legislature and two governors have told the department to build the light-rail project and have established a tight schedule to complete it. At the time that Parsons Brinkerhoff was awarded the interim project manager contract, Stehr said a search process would have taken too long.

“A six-month search for a consultant would have killed the project,” he said.

Stehr also said that the longer the project takes, the more money it will cost because of inflation. The project is currently estimated to cost \$548 million.

Krinkie said he was “extremely disappointed” with the department because of the difficulty he has had in getting answers to his questions.

“This committee is charged with the oversight of taxpayers’ money,” he said. “Full and open disclosure is only absolutely fair and necessary. If this project can stand up to scrutiny, we will have a better project.”

The bill now moves to the House Rules Committee. 🗿

Monday, March 27

HF4130—Seifert, M. (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Government efficiency and bureaucracy control act adopted, office of environmental assistance abolished, and specified powers and duties transferred to the pollution control agency.

HF4131—Wolf (R)

Commerce

Telecommunications provisions modified and recodified.

Tuesday, March 28

HF4132—Anderson, I. (DFL) Transportation Finance

Tenson Construction, Inc. claims against the state paid.

HF4133—Krinkie (R)

State Government Finance

State contracts conflicts of interest procedures specified, and solicitation documents and contracts modification procedures required.

Thursday, March 30

HF4134—Milbert (DFL) Education Policy

State High School League governance modified.

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

Schedule is subject to change.

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MONDAY, April 3

8:45 a.m.

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

123 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty

Agenda: Calendar for the Day for April 3.

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

15 minutes after session

WAYS & MEANS

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dave Bishop

Agenda: HF4090 (Abrams) Public finance bill. HF3960 (Nornes) Workers' compensation benefits increased, funds transferred, and provisions modified.

2 p.m.

Conference Committee

HF2891/SF3793

Omnibus transportation bill

316 State Capitol

Chrs. Rep. Carol Molnau, Sen. Dean Johnson

3 p.m. or 15 minutes
after the last body adjourns

Conference Committee

HF2888/SF2573

Canoe and boating route marking

authorized on a portion of the Chippewa and other rivers.

500S State Office Building

Chrs. Rep. Doug Peterson, Sen. Charles Berg

One hour after the last body adjourns

Conference Committee

HF2699/SF3021

Omnibus health and human services, agriculture, environment and natural resources, criminal justice, economic development, and state government appropriations bill.

Room to be announced

Chrs. Rep. Kevin Goodno, Sen. Don Samuelson

TUESDAY, April 4

8:45 a.m.

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

123 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty

Agenda: Calendar for the Day for April 4.

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

APRIL 3 - 7, 2000

WEDNESDAY, April 5

8:45 a.m.

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

123 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty

Agenda: Calendar for the Day for April 5.

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

THURSDAY, April 6

8:45 a.m.

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

123 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty

Agenda: Calendar for the Day for April 6.

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

FRIDAY, April 7

8:45 a.m.

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

123 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty

Agenda: Calendar for the Day for April 7.

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

Reflections

Bridges were first built thousands of years ago by throwing a log or a rope across a stream or gorge to get to the other side. Later, Romans and Chinese erected stone arches for continuous passage over an obstacle. Cities and countries today continue to improve the process by bridging a gap for speedier transit or for transporting goods in a short period of time.

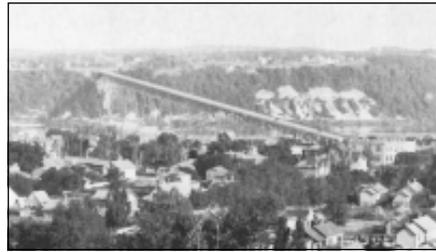
In Minnesota, the Legislature has gotten involved. Though today's hot topic is light-rail transit, more than 100 years ago, lawmakers helped public utilities with funding for bridges and other structures as they began to compete with each other.

Elsewhere, at the design and construction level, competition seemed to drive the building of bigger and longer bridges.

New York's George Washington Bridge, for example, had the longest suspension span in the world — 3,500 feet — in 1931. But San Francisco's 4,200-foot long Golden Gate Bridge took over from 1937 until 1964 when New York's Verrazano Narrows Bridge outdid it by 60 feet.

The new record lasted until 1981, but the Humber River Bridge in England spanned an impressive space of 4,626 feet. England then lost the longest bridge span title to Denmark's 5,328 feet Great Belt East Bridge in 1997.

The competition did not end there. In 1998, Japan's bridge builders outdid them



A 1891 photo showing development occurring on the upper west side around the end of the High Bridge. The photo also gives a good indication of the 4 percent grade of the bridge.

Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

all by erecting the Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge with an incredible expansive space of 6,532 feet between its two towers.

Worldwide bridge building today seems to promote an ongoing competitive spirit. Yet, closer to home, the long-time contest for "Best City" between Minneapolis and St. Paul began about 150 years ago. And bridges were involved in the ongoing match when the challenges all started.

During the 1840's the city of St. Anthony's trade and population grew. So did its competition with St. Paul. When some ambitious leaders from across the river tried to move the territorial capital, for example, they had to be placated with land to the west to build the University of Minnesota.

As the community of Minneapolis grew on the west side of the river, St. Anthony connected it to Nicollet Island in 1855 with a single arch bridge to increase trade. But Minneapolis grew faster, then annexed St. Anthony, as it became St. Paul's newest and more aggressive competition.

In 1857, St. Paul compensated by building the St. Paul Bridge (Wabasha Street Bridge) — the first bridge to completely span the Mississippi. Later, Smith Avenue was constructed about a mile to the west of the bridge as a more direct route to the river.

In 1889, the route was connected by a new 2,270 foot-long High Bridge, to join St. Paul's business center across the Mississippi. The bridge was built expressly for boosting St. Paul's economy, but not without much debate. Funding was secured through the legislative influence of Senator Robert A. Smith, a former St. Paul mayor and House member. St. Paul's competitors cried foul.

Other incidents were often worse. Later, the two cities even accused each other of padding the 1890 census (both did).

Now, over 100 years later, the cities continue to be separate on most public issues, but maybe over the bridge of time, they will solve their differences.

— **LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT**

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 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Reducing welfare rolls

Minnesota welfare caseload, June 1999	40,013
U.S. caseload, June 1999, in millions	2.53
Wisconsin caseload, June 1999	23,251
Minnesota welfare caseload, January 1994	65,621
U.S. caseload, January 1994, in millions	5.053
Wisconsin caseload, January 1994	78,507
Percentage of welfare applicants who were not high school graduates, 1999	35
In 1992	31
Percentage of welfare applicants who were never married, 1999	53
In 1992	44
Minnesota out-of-wedlock births, 1997, as percent	25
In 1982	12
State's projected federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	
fund reserve for 2000-01 biennium, in millions	\$164
Annual amount of TANF funds Minnesota receives, in millions	\$267
State matching dollars required for TANF funds, in millions	\$191
Average Minnesota TANF payment per recipient, 1999	\$8,000
Average nationwide TANF payment per recipient, 1999	\$7,000
Time limit for Minnesota welfare recipients, in months	60
Percentage of state welfare cases where one eligible adult was employed,	
December 1997	28
In December 1998 (after welfare reform)	45
Average number of hours worked per month by welfare recipients,	
December 1997	24
In December 1998	50
Average monthly income per case, December 1997	\$178
In December 1998	\$388
Monthly benefits for an unemployed single parent and two children, 1999	\$783
Estimated benefits under pre-reform system	\$778
Monthly benefits for a single parent working 20 hours per week	
at \$5.15 per hour, with two children, 1999	\$576
Estimated benefits under pre-reform system	\$421
Maximum monthly salary single parent with two children could earn and	
still receive cash assistance, 1999	\$954

Source: *Welfare Reform: Program Evaluation Report*, Office of the Legislative Auditor, January 2000

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

APRIL 7, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 10

In this issue:

MAJOR RULING RELEASED

BUTTERFLY IS NEW STATE SYMBOL

HF4135-HF4146



SESSION Weekly

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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On the cover: Three-year-old Gabbi Woodson of St. Paul clings to a bunch of balloons during a rally April 3 on the Capitol steps to support crisis nurseries in Ramsey and Washington counties.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Court seeks single subject

Taking up an issue that has nagged it since statehood, the Supreme Court issues a ruling that could change the way the Legislature does business

By **NICK HEALY**

A recent Minnesota Supreme Court ruling has many wondering whether the practice of assembling omnibus bills, such as vast measures currently being debated in conference committees, will withstand constitutional challenges.

But the court's action is also significant because the court ruled that only the single provision in question was unconstitutional, rather than striking down the entire law.

That action has raised questions that the judicial branch could be crossing the carefully drawn boundaries between the three branches of state government.

In his dissenting opinion, Justice Alan Page expresses fears the court is putting itself in the position of a "super legislature," approving or rejecting small slices of larger pieces of legislation.

The March 31 ruling struck down a provision in wide-reaching tax legislation passed in 1997. The portion of the law in question established new prevailing-wage requirements on school construction projects.

The measure was challenged on grounds that it did not meet the Minnesota Constitution's requirement that "no law shall embrace more than one subject, which shall be expressed in its title."

While it's not clear what exactly the ramifications of the ruling will be, it seems the court has taken a significant step in its long history of dealing with the scope and character of bills passed by the Legislature.

In his majority opinion, Justice Edward Stringer traces the issue to the days before statehood.

"Early in Minnesota history the potential for mischief in bundling together into one bill disparate legislative provisions was well known," Stringer writes.

Delegates to the Democratic constitutional convention in 1857 first considered a proposal that called for the title to indicate the contents of the bill, but that provision was expanded

to forbid the grouping of unrelated subjects into one bill, a practice known as "logrolling."

The Minnesota Supreme Court first weighed in on the issue in 1858, the year the state was established.

A measure passed by the First Legislature was challenged on grounds that it contained more than one subject, but the court allowed the law to stand.

"We concluded that the single subject requirement was not offended because there was 'no attempt at fraud or the interpolation of matter foreign to the subject expressed in the title,'" Stringer's opinion says.

Thus began a long line of cases that have drawn and redrawn the limits on what is acceptable when it comes to the single-subject test and the bill title requirements.

In 1891, the court issued a major ruling that attempted to clarify the purpose of the "single-subject and title clause" to prevent logrolling.

"We explained, however, that despite these constitutional restrictions, the single subject provision should be interpreted liberally and the restriction would be met if the bill were germane to one general subject," Stringer writes.

The 1891 ruling declared that the single-subject requirement should not prevent the

Legislature from "embracing in one act all matters properly connected with one general subject." And the ruling stated that the term "subject" has "broad and extended meaning" in the constitution.

That ruling also explained that the bill title provision is meant to "prevent fraud or surprise upon the Legislature and the public by prohibiting the inclusion of 'provisions in a bill whose title gives no intimation of the nature of the proposed legislation,'" Stringer says in his description of the 1891 decision.

In 1939, the court issued a ruling that further clarified the requirement that the bill title accurately describe the measure's contents. The court decided that the "generality of the title" was not grounds to invalidate a law and that "the title was never intended to be an index of the law."

While those earlier rulings seemed to provide leeway for the Legislature, more recent cases have moved in another direction.

Stringer's opinion describes a series of rulings in the last two decades that have served to "sound an alarm that we would not hesitate to strike down oversweeping legislation that violates the single-subject and title clause, regardless of the consequences."

In those cases, former Justice Lawrence Yetka emerged as a harsh critic of legislative practices, and he expressed concern that the court had been too lax over the years.

"Now all bounds of reason and restraint seem to have been abandoned," Yetka stated in a concurring opinion on a 1986 case. "... The worm that was merely vexatious in the 19th century has become a monster eating the constitution in the 20th."



'We fully recognize that it is the Legislature's prerogative to establish our state's public policy in the area of prevailing wages and that the legislative process is not bound by rigid textbook rules. Nonetheless, lawmaking must occur within the framework of the constitution.'

—Justice Edward Stringer



'Declaring only the offending provision unconstitutional does nothing to discourage the Legislature from engaging in the conduct.'

—Justice Alan Page



As for the current case, Stringer's opinion seems to argue that the Legislature had been warned by the court but legislative practices were not changed.

The 1997 tax law, which Stringer calls "a prodigious work of legislation," included a provision requiring that the prevailing wage be paid in the construction or remodeling of all educational facilities where project costs exceed \$100,000.

The provision was challenged by a school district, a builders' association, and an electrical contractor on grounds that the law violated both the title requirements and the single-subject clause.

Lower courts found fault with the law because the 800-word title had no clear reference to the wage provision — words like "labor," "wages," and "construction" were nowhere to be found — and because the provision was not "remotely related" to the broad subject of tax reform and tax relief.

In the Supreme Court ruling, Stringer affirms the assessment of the problems with the 1997 bill's title.

"The failure . . . to give even a hint that the prevailing wage amendment was part of the bill leads us to the conclusion that the title did not provide sufficient notice of the amendment to legislators and school districts to meet the constitutional requirement," he writes.

As for the single-subject clause, Stringer lists a series of problems with the prevailing-wage provision. He argues that prevailing-wage laws have historically been considered in labor committees, not tax committees. He also complains that the prevailing-wage provision came from the House, had no Senate companion bill, and was "inserted into a much broader and popular bill with an entirely different legislative theme."

Summing up the court's position on the matter, the ruling says that while the prevailing-wage section "may have a tax impact by affecting construction costs, clearly that is not its purpose and nowhere is consideration of tax relief and reform mentioned in its very short text."

The ruling includes another important aspect that may have far-reaching effects in the future. The court decided that the prevailing-wage provision could be stricken down while the rest of the 1997 law is left in place.

The state had argued that the invalidation of the provision would throw out the entire tax law, but the court rejected that argument. It's unclear what the impact of that decision will be, but it could invite more challenges to portions of omnibus bills.

In his dissent, Page expresses serious

Continued on page 21

Ten-time loser

Perennial candidate's career saw many highs and lows

Sixteen times Ernest Lundeen's name was on the ballot for state or federal office. Sixteen election nights he waited to learn his fate. Such is the life of a perennial candidate.

But Lundeen was not a lifelong also-ran. His political career was a string of failures punctuated by successes of the kind most politicians will never see.

The final tally shows 10 losses and six victories. He ran in every regular and special election for which he was eligible from 1910 to 1936, according to the 1947 book *The Story of Minnesota Politics* by Charles B. Cheney.

Cheney spent half a century writing about politics in Minnesota for newspapers including the *Minneapolis Journal* and the *Minneapolis Tribune*, and he watched Lundeen's unusual career from its relatively inauspicious beginning to its tragic end.

In 1910, Lundeen was elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives from a Minneapolis district, and he won re-election two years later.

With two victories to his credit, Lundeen looked to move up to the U.S. Congress in 1914, but he suffered the first of his many defeats. He rebounded by winning a seat in the U.S. House two years later.

His term in the House was marked by his unpopular 1917 vote against U.S. involvement in World War I. After the vote drew outrage at home, Lundeen stayed in Washington, D.C., for weeks, hoping the situation would cool.

According to Cheney's book, the congressman's eventual return to Minnesota was not announced, and the local reporters found out about it only after a tip from an associate in Washington, D.C.

When Cheney tracked down Lundeen back home, the reporter wryly suggested that it was too bad the congressman did

not publicize his homecoming because there might have been a crowd to meet him at the train station. What Cheney meant was that Lundeen may have been received by a less-than-friendly mob.

Lundeen acted as though his quiet return was simply a product of his modesty.

"Oh, I don't care much for that sort of thing," he told Cheney.

The successes of Lundeen's early career soon gave way to a series of losses. He was dumped from Congress in 1918, losing in the primary. He lost in the primary again when he tried to recover his seat two years later.

He ran for the U.S. Senate in 1922 and in a 1923 special election. He shifted gears and ran for the Minnesota Supreme Court in 1924. Then he

lost another U.S. House campaign in 1926.

Lundeen was the Farmer-Labor candidate for governor in 1928, but he lost in a three-way race won by incumbent Gov. Theodore Christianson, a Republican.

Two more losses followed, coming in a 1929 special election for a U.S. House seat and a 1930 race for the U.S. Senate.

After more than a decade of defeat after defeat, Lundeen managed to win a 1932 campaign for an at-large seat in the U.S. House. A Farmer-Labor ticket headed by gubernatorial candidate Floyd B. Olson was credited with helping Lundeen get back to Congress after a 14-year absence.

The professional candidate's greatest success came four years later. He was selected to be the Farmer-Labor candidate for the U.S. Senate in 1936, and he won.

That meant six years of job security, something Lundeen had never enjoyed. But he would never see the end of that term.

Lundeen died in a 1940 plane crash.

(N. HEALY)



Ernest Lundeen

★ **BUSINESS**

Economic doctrine clarified

The House passed a bill April 4 that would repeal the state's existing economic loss doctrine and replace it with a new provision that proponents say is easier to understand.

The economic loss doctrine sets the boundary for claims, limiting what companies can sue for under contract law and what companies can sue for under traditional tort law.

Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) is sponsoring the bill (HF1267/SF1126*), which would limit commercial parties to legal solutions under the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC). The code provides a shorter statute of limitations time frame than tort law.

"This bill clarifies the law on who can sue and when they can sue," Pawlenty said.

The legislation would apply only to claims by a buyer against a seller. The measure would not apply to claims for injury.

The bill stems from an agreement between several interest groups who met during the past year. During a House Civil Law Committee hearing last month, several legislators were critical of the agreement because they were not invited to take part in the discussions.

"I don't know if that is the way the Legislature is supposed to work," said Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center).

Carruthers spoke against a provision that says a buyer may not bring a common law misrepresentation claim against a seller unless the misrepresentation was made intentionally or recklessly.

"The buyer depends on that representation," Carruthers said. "I don't think anyone should profit from misrepresentation; I don't care if it is intentional or not."

Despite Carruthers' concerns, he urged legislators to vote for the bill.

"This bill is an improvement in readability and understandability," Carruthers said.

Daniel Kleinberger, law professor at the William Mitchell College of Law, told the committee that every state has an economic loss doctrine, with Minnesota's doctrine beginning in 1981.

If a customer is unsatisfied with the product or service, the person can sue in tort, he said.

"As a consumer advocate, (the bill) is at least as good, if not better," Kleinberger said.

The bill is not retroactive and would have no effect on pending litigation, Kleinberger said. The statute repealed under the bill had been passed in a special session in 1998, after concerns arose over a case involving Marvin Windows, a Warroad-based corporate company.

Secretary of state bill

The House passed a bill April 5 that would make slight changes to the state's corporate registration requirements. The vote was 133-1.

Rep. Jim Seifert (R-Woodbury), the sponsor of the measure (HF3066/SF2783*), said the bill is the Minnesota secretary of state's annual housekeeping bill, clarifying and cleaning up laws relating to the state's corporate registration records.

Currently, Minnesota corporations are required to file a registration annually that lists the legal corporate name and address, as well as the name and address of the chief executive officer.

There is no fee for filing the registration as long as the form is filed annually. If a corporation misses filing the form, it loses its good standing with the state. To reinstate corporate good standing requires a \$25 fee. If a corporation fails to file the form for three consecutive years, the state statutorily dissolves the corporation.

The bill would require the secretary of state to mail the form directly to the corporation's registered office address rather than having the Department of Revenue mail out the form in the corporate tax information. If the corporation does not file the form by December 31 of each year, the state would statutorily dissolve the corporation after one missed year rather than three.

The bill also would change registration requirements for non-Minnesota corporations that do business in the state. Currently, those corporations file a registration with a fee based on the taxable income in the state. The minimum filing fee is \$60. The bill would establish a flat filing fee of \$115 for all non-Minnesota corporations filing their annual registrations with the state.

Seifert said the bill would help standardize the registration requirements for the

different types of entities that file with the secretary of state including for-profit, nonprofit, and non-Minnesota corporations, as well as limited liability companies. The registration requirement helps the secretary of state keep its corporate records up to date.

The bill also would provide that the digital signatures of public and local officials on government records are sufficient to meet legal signature requirements.

The bill now goes to the governor.

★ **CRIME**

Katie's Law signed

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a measure known as Katie's Law on April 3. The measure stiffens laws regulating sex offenders and provides start-up money for new criminal justice information systems.

The law will provide \$12 million to implement a statewide criminal justice information system, which officials estimate could cost as much as \$100 million before completion.

One goal of the information system is better tracking of registered sex offenders in the state. It also would integrate probation and arrest information from local law enforcement agencies, so law enforcement officers around the state have access to the most up-to-date information about offenders.

The law will also spend \$5 million to increase the number of probation officers handling sex offender cases. The intent is to reduce the number of cases each officer must handle so they can keep better track of their sex offenders.

Further provisions change who is required to register, adding certain penalties to that list. In addition, it extends the period of registration for many offenses, including a requirement that some offenders register for life.

The law will also authorize the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to establish a Web site where it will post all the names of level 3 registered sex offenders in the state.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) and Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the legislation. Many of its provisions were included as a result of the lobbying efforts of Pam Poirier.

Poirier's 19-year-old daughter Katie was abducted from a Moose Lake convenience

store last May. She is presumed to have been murdered.

Donald Blom, a six-time convicted sex offender, is scheduled to stand trial for the crime this month.

In his statement upon signing the law, Ventura said it takes another step to improve public safety for Minnesota.

He also said he favors spending for the integrated criminal justice system. However, he also noted that there are important facets of the plan still unfinished.

Ventura said the Legislature needs to clarify the role of local governments in the system. He also said the system will not be as effective without a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension building. (The House approved \$28 million in bonding for the project, and the Senate approved the full \$58 million requested.)

He also raised concerns about two provisions of the law — increasing the penalty for failing to register as a sex offender to a felony and doubling the sentences for first-time rape convictions.

While he supports those provisions, he said he does not like the fact that the Legislature provided no funding for them.

Most of the provisions in the law are effective Aug. 1, 2000, and apply to crimes committed after that date. Appropriations in the law are effective July 1, 2000. Remaining provisions, including those for the criminal information system, are effective the day following enactment, or April 4, 2000.

HF2688*/SF2769/CH311

Vehicular homicide bill fails

The House rejected a bill April 4 that would have expanded the definition of criminal vehicular homicide. The vote was 72-61 against the measure.

Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) is the sponsor of the bill (HF2610), which would have made a driver criminally liable if the crash is caused by a trailer that was improperly secured. The bill stipulated that the driver had to know or have reason to know the attachment was faulty.

"I'm simply trying to assure that if they know the equipment is faulty, they are held accountable," she said. "It's blatant disregard and a high standard."

Under the bill, the driver could have been charged with a crime only if someone was killed or suffered great bodily harm due to the trailer and if the driver knew the possible danger existed.

Boudreau said she introduced the bill after a car accident killed three people in her district. She said the driver of the vehicle with a trailer had previously been warned that the

trailer hook-up was faulty. The trailer came loose from the vehicle, hitting another car and killing three people. Boudreau said the driver was charged only with careless driving, which is a misdemeanor.

Several rural legislators objected to the bill, saying they feared a farmer could be found liable for not using safety chains on farm equipment.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) said the bill should have gone through the House transportation committees for more examination of the farm equipment issues.

Many farmers do not use chains, although they are recommended, because older equipment is not equipped with chains. The bill could have had the effect of making chains required, Juhnke said.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) said he feared that well-meaning people would be charged under the bill.

"Are we going to make a whole bunch of criminals out of people who aren't criminals?" Jennings said.

Statute of limitations extended

Domestic abuse victims would have more time to consider filing civil charges against the perpetrator, under a bill the House passed April 5. The vote was 132-0.

The bill (HF47/SF11*) would extend the statute of limitations in domestic abuse cases from two years to six years.

Rep. David Bishop (R-Rochester), who is sponsoring the legislation, said the statute of limitations would begin at the point of the last incident.

"So many times, these domestic abuse wrongs are covered up or delayed," Bishop said. "It doesn't surface for a long time."

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) offered an amendment that would establish a pilot project domestic abuse unit in the Ramsey County attorney's office. The unit would be able to prosecute cases, recognize interests of children in abuse cases, and reduce the exposure of domestic abuse for victims.

The bill now heads back to the Senate.

Sales tax evasion

People who collect motor vehicle sales tax and then fail to send the tax to the state would be guilty of a felony, under a bill the House passed April 4. The vote was 134-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), the bill (HF3303/SF3566*) would create a felony for not submitting vehicle sales tax to the state. The bill states that the person collecting the tax must "willfully" fail to send in the tax.

"This is one of the most important tools we have in stopping fraudulent car sales," Entenza said.

While the House bill creates a felony regardless of the dollar amount involved, the Senate version only creates a felony when the tax involved exceeds \$500. If the tax amount were less than \$500, the crime would be a gross misdemeanor, under the Senate bill.

Entenza said the bill stems from a February state Supreme Court decision, when the court threw out the convictions of Frank Larson, who owns Southwest Leasing, a Mankato company. Larson was convicted in 1997 of collecting \$12,000 in vehicle sales tax that he failed to send to the state.

The state Supreme Court ruled the wrong statute was used in charging Larson with a crime. The court ruling no longer makes it a felony to not send in the vehicle sales tax. Entenza explained that his legislation would simply revert the law to where it was prior to the court decision.

The state will collect about \$526 million in vehicle sales tax in 2001, according to the non-partisan House Research Department. It is

PREVENTION RALLY



Margaret Johnson, right, sits with her 6-month-old daughter Iyanna Woodson as her 6-year-old son Anthony Johnson stands with his grandmother Toni Johnson during a rally on the Capitol steps to raise awareness for Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month April 4.

unknown what amount of sales tax is not collected.

The bill now heads back to the Senate.

Serving court orders

A bill that aims to ease the process of serving court orders passed the House on April 4. The vote was 131-2.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji) is sponsoring the bill (HF1067/SF551*), which would allow police officers more leeway to serve court orders to people. The bill creates a short form notification, which officers could serve to people at any time.

For instance, if an officer pulls over a car for speeding, and the officer learns that a court is trying to contact that person to serve court orders, the officer could serve notification then and there, under the bill.

“To me, it made perfect sense,” Fuller said. “If there is something to be served to them, (the law enforcement officer) can serve it.”

An officer could serve paperwork at any time, including Sundays or legal holidays, the bill states.

Though the bill pertains to any court order, it was specifically written to deal with protection orders.

The notification form would include the respondent’s and petitioner’s name, the county that served the order, the name of the judge, and the date of a hearing.

The short order form would direct the recipient to report to the sheriff’s office or courthouse to pick up the full copy of service.

In addition, the short form would have the same weight as the full service, in case the recipient did not go to the courthouse and pick up the full service.

The officer could detain the person as long as necessary in order to fill out and serve the person with the short form, the bill states.

“It gives law enforcement the better tools they need to perform their duties,” Fuller said.

The bill goes to the Senate.

Threatening school officials

Any person who threatens to inflict bodily harm on a school official would be guilty of a misdemeanor, under a bill the House passed April 5. The vote was 127-3.

A second offense would lead to a gross misdemeanor.

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland) is sponsoring the bill (HF3465), which would amend the current terroristic threat statute.

If a person makes threats to a school official and knows the words or actions cause terror, the person would be guilty.

“It doesn’t just protect teachers,” Larsen

said. “I’m doing this a lot for prevention. I’m trying to help these kids when their anger is shown.”

Larsen said the bill came from a community justice coordinator in her district, who gave an example of a 14-year-old boy who threatened to beat up his teacher. The threat did not fall under current fifth-degree assault or terroristic threat statutes, Larsen explained. She believes this bill will fill the hole in the law where there is no protection for teachers.

The bill includes all teachers, administrators, or employees at a school, including public and private institutions.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

Domestic violence prevention

The House passed a bill April 3 that would establish an office of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention. The vote was 133-0.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) is sponsoring a bill (HF3331) that creates the office and establishes an interagency task force on domestic abuse and sexual assault prevention.

The bill is a “road map” for putting together the task force, Howes said. The task force would be required to include representatives from the departments of Corrections, Health, Human Services, Economic Security, and Children, Families and Learning. The task force also would include a county attorney, city attorney, and a judge.

The director of domestic violence would serve as chair of the task force.

The bill outlines the duties of the director of the new office, which include advocating victims’ rights, increasing education and awareness, supporting litigation, initiating policy changes, and building partnerships with law enforcement and the courts.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

Check fraud cases

There would be new penalties for crimes involving check fraud, under a bill the House passed April 4. The vote was 134-0.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) is sponsoring the bill (HF2751/SF3455*), which would create a misdemeanor offense when someone falsely tells their bank or other financial institution the items are missing or stolen.

“This is not going after people who mistakenly overdraft their accounts,” Stanek said. “This is for people who intentionally and criminally defraud banks and businesses by writing out a number of bad checks.”

The bill also would provide that a person could be charged for possessing, receiving, or

transferring a bad check if he or she knows or has reason to know the check being passed or received is stolen or counterfeit.

Bob Johnson, Anoka County attorney, told the House Civil Law Committee last month that the bill is geared to stop “the tremendous growth in bad checks.” The bill was proposed by a coalition of law enforcement officials, county attorneys, and private businesses, Stanek said.

The bill now heads to the governor’s desk.

★ EDUCATION

Sharing student information

The House passed a bill April 5 that would authorize schools and juvenile justice officials to share information about a student on probation. The vote was 127-6.

The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights), said the measure would amend the provision of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act by allowing certain data about a student to be disclosed to the system in order to serve the student or protect staff or fellow students.

The bill (HF2833) would allow a juvenile court disposition order to be shared with certain school officials, law enforcement, and specified others when a juvenile has been found to be delinquent for certain violations of criminal law.

It would require that the order be sent to a district’s superintendent and then transmitted to the student’s principal for placement in the student’s education record.

Data that could be disclosed about students on probation would include any information about controlled substance use, possession of weapons, assaults or threatening behavior, or thefts, vandalisms or other property damage.

A student’s principal, under the bill, would be permitted to notify an employee in direct contact with the student if that individual needs the data to work with the student appropriately, to avoid being vulnerable, or to protect others from vulnerability.

The bill now moves to the Senate.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Environment funding amendment

A proposed constitutional amendment to dedicate three-sixteenths of one percent of the state sales tax to fund natural resource needs in the state would go before the voters in a bill forwarded by the House Taxes Committee March 31.

The committee sent the bill (HF3426) to the

House Ways and Means Committee without recommendation.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), the bill's sponsor, said that under the bill, voters would consider the amendment on the 2000 general election ballot. If approved it would dedicate 45 percent of the proceeds to a newly created account in the state game and fish fund, and the other 55 percent would fund various purposes including spending on state parks, trail grants, and support of various zoos in the state.

Holsten said the new funds would enhance revenues already appropriated by the Legislature. The Department of Revenue estimates that the measure would generate around \$62 million in 2001 and more than \$228 million in the next biennium.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) asked Holsten why dedicating funds for natural resources was more important than dedicating funds for education, property tax or income tax relief, or other worthy state-funded causes.

Holsten replied that the state's commitment in areas such as education would remain in place even if the voters approved the new fund. He said that a long-term solution to fund the state's natural resources has to be addressed.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) said she agreed with Holsten, although she said she was not sure the bill was the best way to address the problem. She said that the state's tourism industry depends on the reputation and well-being of the state's natural resources.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair, said that the bill's financial implications suggest it should have been heard by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee. He said that committee determines the amount and priority for funding the state's natural resources.

★ FAMILY

Marriage license discount

Couples could reduce the fee for a marriage license if they obtain premarital education under a bill passed by the House April 5. The vote was 97-35.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson), would provide a reduced fee for marriage licenses for couples who receive at least 12 hours of premarital education from a qualified person.

A qualified person would include a clergy member, a person authorized by law to perform marriages, or a marriage and family therapist.

The education would include teaching about the seriousness of marriage, conflict management skills, and the desirability of

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS



Members of the University of Minnesota Women's Gopher Hockey Team receive a standing ovation from members in the House chamber April 6, after lawmakers passed a resolution honoring the team. The team became the national champions of women's college hockey March 25 by winning the American Women's College Hockey Alliance tournament. It was the first ever national championship for women's athletics at the U of M.

obtaining counseling if the marriage falls into difficulty later on.

The marriage license fee for those who completed premarital education would be lowered to \$25 under the bill (HF2229/SF884*). In addition, the bill would raise all other marriage license fees from \$70 to \$75.

The bill also changes distribution of the money from marriage license fees. Current law allocates \$50 to the state general fund, while leaving \$15 in the county where the license is obtained and giving \$5 to other projects. The bill increases the amount to the general fund from \$50 to \$55.

The measure now goes to the Senate.

Involuntary commitment

Parents will have more control in admitting mentally ill children to hospitals under a law Gov. Jesse Ventura signed April 3.

The law will add mental illness to current law on involuntary admission and treatment. The law currently allows parents to admit a child age 16 or 17 to a hospital if the child is mentally retarded or chemically dependent.

The previous law allowed parents to admit children to hospitals for a mental illness up to age 16. The law will now extend that provision to age 18. Even if the 16- or 17-year-old child refuses treatment, the parents will be able to admit the child to a hospital.

The law also will require hospital officials to inform the patient that a family member

has made an inquiry about the patient's health. The patient would then have to authorize the release of any information.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) and Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the legislation. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3107/SF2634*/CH316

★ GAMBLING

Gambling fraud penalties

Tampering with gambling devices or claiming a gambling prize through fraud or use of counterfeited equipment will now be a felony, under a law Gov. Jesse Ventura signed April 3.

The law will establish felonies if the dollar amount involved in the gambling fraud exceeds \$2,500. The maximum penalty for a felony will be three years in prison and a \$6,000 fine.

A person could be charged with a misdemeanor when the dollar amount involved is \$500 or less or a gross misdemeanor when the value is between \$500 and \$2,500.

The law will make it illegal to knowingly claim a gambling prize using altered or counterfeited equipment. It will also make it illegal to claim a prize through fraud, deceit or misrepresentation.

Tampering with gambling equipment in an attempt to influence the outcome of the game also will be illegal under the law.

Gambling officials say the law is necessary to curb the growth of cheating and fraud.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) and Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan) sponsored the bill. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3023/SF2701*/CH318

★ GAME & FISH

Law allows lighted lures

A new law signed April 3 will allow anglers to use lighted fishing lures.

While the lures are used in neighboring states, current state law allows the manufacture and sale of lighted lures but does not allow anglers to use them in Minnesota waters.

The new law, effective Aug. 1, 2000, contains a provision mandating that batteries used in lighted fishing lures cannot contain mercury. That portion was added due to concerns the batteries could be swallowed by fish or lost in the water.

Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley) and Sen. Pat Pariseau (R-Farmington) sponsored the legislation.

HF3352/SF3586*/CH308

★ GOVERNMENT

Turning over state property

Ownership of a piece of state property that previously housed a juvenile correctional facility was turned over to the city of Sauk Centre under a new law signed April 4 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria), House sponsor of the measure, said the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Sauk Centre was closed in July 1999 and has been vacant since then.

Effective April 5, 2000, the local officials can use the property for economic development or for city or county government purposes, which Cassell said will be a vehicle to create jobs.

If the state had not turned the land over to the city, the state Department of Administration estimated that it would have spent \$200,000 per year in minimal maintenance to the vacant facility.

It was established in 1911 as a facility for delinquent girls, but became coeducational in 1967.

Under state law, when an agency vacates a piece of property, the state Department of Administration offers the property to other state agencies or departments that might want to use the property. But in this case, no other agency expressed interest, Cassell said.

Cassell added that the land originally was purchased by the city and given to the state in

the early 1900s to be used as a correctional facility. The city also extended water and sewer lines to the buildings and has continued to maintain that system.

Sen. Cal Larson (R-Fergus Falls) was the Senate sponsor of the measure.

HF2819/SF2444*/CH326

★ HEALTH

Abortion consent revisited

The House revisited "right-to-know" abortion legislation April 5 and passed a less-restrictive version of a bill intended to

temporarily delay a doctor's procedure. The vote was 89-44.

The bill (HF3652/SF3387*) would require a woman considering an abortion to wait at least 24 hours before undergoing the procedure. And the measure would require that the woman be given information about risks and alternatives at least 24 hours before the procedure is scheduled.

The proposal, sponsored by Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), is similar to earlier language proposed by Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) calling for a woman to give her informed consent prior to an abortion.

That provision was included in the larger

Play ball

Legislators break from regular duties to honor Minnesota's boys of summer

Sporting a Minnesota Twins jersey and cap April 3, Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm) looked ready for the season to begin. Though it was still only 10:30 a.m., Tomassoni's thoughts were on the Twins season opener at the Metrodome later in the evening.

Tomassoni offered a resolution to honor the Minnesota Twins and the team's 40-year history in the state, including World Series titles in 1987 and 1991. The team won the American League pennant in 1965 and won division titles in 1969 and 1970.

"This resolution is about the great memories the Minnesota Twins have given us," Tomassoni said. "It's America's game. Baseball is our beloved national pastime."

The resolution passed on a 132-0 vote.

Hall-of-Famer Harmon Killebrew and former all-star Kirby Puckett played spectator as the House passed the resolution.

They also received a rousing ovation from House members.

Tomassoni told a story about meeting Killebrew as a child, when the legendary home run hitter emerged from the Twins dugout and signed autographs and shook hands with several children. Tomassoni spoke warmly about that memory, and thanked Killebrew for his friendliness toward fans.

The resolution dubs baseball as "a game woven so deeply into our lives that it provides common ground for people of all ages." The resolution also recognizes baseball as "wholesome, family entertainment."

Discussion of the resolution concluded with Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) singing "Take Me Out To The Ballgame."

About 43,000 people attended the Twins opener. The Twins lost 7-0.

(C. VETTER)



Former Minnesota Twins slugger Harmon Killebrew uses Speaker Steve Sviggum's gavel to show the swing that hit 573 homeruns in his career. Kirby Puckett also joined Killebrew on the House floor to receive a proclamation commemorating the Twins on the 40-year anniversary of major league baseball in the state.

state government appropriations bill (HF2699), currently in conference committee.

That spending bill was passed by the House in March. During recent conference committee discussions, House members suggested possibly taking policy items out of the bill to avoid constitutional challenges.

There are several differences between the Boudreau “right-to-know” bill and the Goodno version the House passed most recently.

The Goodno bill would waive the 24-hour waiting period for cases when a woman’s life or health may put in danger by delaying the procedure.

It also would modify language pertaining to a woman’s right to sue if an abortion were performed without following the consent procedures, and would strike the requirement that the name of the doctor performing the procedure be included with the information given to the patient.

Under the bill, a woman would need to receive by mail, phone, Internet, or in person information about prenatal care, child support, adoption, and other material about pregnancy and community support services.

The bill goes to the Senate.

Deregulating hotdish

The House passed a bill April 4 that would ease health regulations regarding food served at community potluck events. The vote was 131-0.

The idea behind the bill originated when Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar), attending a DFL bean feed at the American Legion Hall in Willmar, was told health regulations prevented outsiders from bringing prepared food into community potlucks.

According to Aggie Leitheiser, assistant commissioner of the state’s Health Protection Bureau, such restrictions exist to prevent outbreaks of food-borne disease. Over the past four years, Leitheiser said, 16 percent of the confirmed food-borne disease outbreaks in the state were traced to privately prepared food.

So, following health regulations to the letter, organizers of the event in Willmar politely rejected Juhnke’s beans, asking him to return them to his car.

After the experience, Juhnke said he felt all people should be allowed to attend community potlucks and share their food without being subject to health inspection.

His bill (HF2707/SF3348*) would allow any person attending a potluck event, not just members of the organization sponsoring the event, to bring individually prepared food for consumption. It also would allow an organi-

zation sponsoring potluck events to advertise the events and permit people who are not members of the organization to attend the event and eat the food.

A successful amendment to the bill deleted language that would have required signs at a potluck event stating that the food was not prepared in a licensed kitchen and is not subject to health department regulation.

The bill now returns to the Senate.

Prompt claim payment

The House approved a bill April 3 that would establish prompt payment requirements applicable to health plan companies for clean claims for services rendered by health care providers and care facilities. The vote was 131-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park), the bill (HF2643/SF2767*) also would apply to third-party administrators, but would not pertain to services provided by pharmacists.

A “clean claim” is defined as a claim that has no defect or impropriety, including any lack of required documentation or any circumstance that prevents timely payment.

The bill would require that health plan companies and third-party administrators pay or deny a clean claim within 30 days of receipt of the claim. Claims not paid in that time would be subject to an interest payment of 1.5 percent of the claim per month, under the bill.

The company providing the health plan or the third-party administrator would be responsible for paying the interest under the bill — not the insured party.

In addition, late claim payments would not be subject to an interest payment if the payment were delayed to review potentially fraudulent or abusive billing practices, however.

Furthermore, the commissioner of the Department of Health would be prohibited from assessing a financial administrative penalty against a health plan company that violates the language contained in the bill.

The bill now moves to the governor’s desk.

Registration for therapists

The House passed a bill April 4 that would codify in statute the rules governing occupational therapists and therapists’ assistants. The vote was 130-3.

Occupational therapists are currently licensed through the state Department of Health. The bill would merely place into state law the rules employed by the department to govern those therapists and assistants.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack), who is sponsoring the measure (HF947/SF1038*),

said the bill would add the option of registration for therapists but would not prohibit individuals who are not registered from practicing as an occupational therapist or assistant.

The bill also would specify educational and examination requirements for registration as an occupational therapist.

The sections of the bill governing registration would apply only to applicants for registration, therapists who are registered, people who use protected titles, and therapists who say they are registered, Howes said.

The bill also makes provisions for renewing registration, as well as temporary and equivalent registration for occupational therapists.

The bill now moves to the governor’s desk.

Organ donation checkoff

Motorists would have the option to give money to an organization that increases public awareness of organ donations, under a bill the House passed April 5. The vote was 121-11.

Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) said she wants to disseminate more information about organ donations. Luther, who had an emergency liver transplant in February 1998, is sponsoring the bill (HF2635/SF2737*) to raise money for public awareness of donations.

The bill would create a \$1 checkoff on driver’s license applications. Money raised from the checkoff would go to an organ procurement organization, which would make pamphlets and purchase equipment, such as a mobile unit, to increase awareness of the donation program.

“It’s an innovative approach to solve this crisis,” Luther said earlier this session.

Approximately 1,160 Minnesotans are currently on an organ donor waiting list, according to Susan Gunderson, executive director for LifeSource.

Luther wants the checkoff placed on driver’s license forms because people are already choosing whether they want to be an organ donor at that time.

During floor discussion, Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) offered an amendment that would make it illegal to sell, purchase, or perform research on human fetal tissue that was obtained after an abortion. The amendment passed 96-35.

Luther said she would be happy if the bill could generate \$250,000 a year. The bill would require the organization that is awarded the money to make a report to the Legislature in 2002 on receipts and expenditures.

The bill now goes to a House-Senate conference committee.

Prescription drug cards

People will be prohibited from selling, marketing, promoting, and distributing any card offering discounts for prescription drugs that fails to meet certain requirements, under a law signed March 31 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The measure will allow an individual or the state attorney general to sue to stop any such act and obtain damages any deception may have caused.

The measure will protect consumers from promised discounts that are either confusing or not backed by insurance policies.

Discounts that are deceptive or that are not authorized by contract with the pharmacies listed on the card, will be in violation of the new law, and people issuing or distributing the cards will be subject to prosecution.

Also, discount cards will have to prominently state that discounts offered are not being offered through any insurance policy.

The new law will not apply, however, to vision care, glasses, or contact lenses provided by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Discounts promised under contract with the state of Minnesota, or a consumer discount card issued by a store for use at that particular store will also be allowed.

Furthermore, a card administered by a health insurer, nonprofit health service plan corporation, or health maintenance organization (HMO) will be exempt from complying with card requirements put forth by the law.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) sponsored the legislation. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2883/SF2579*/CH303

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Designing state buildings

The House passed a bill April 4 that would allow representatives of colleges, universities, and state agencies to vote on the design of state buildings. The vote was 120-10.

Contracts for designing state buildings are awarded through the state Designer Selection Board.

Under current law, the agency or school that will be using a new building appoints a non-voting member to the board, which consists of five voting members. The board looks at design plans from competing firms and decides which firm will receive the contract.

The members of the current board represent the state Department of Administration, the Consulting Engineers Council of Minnesota (with input from other professional engineering societies in the state), the Minnesota Society of Architects, and the Minnesota Board of the Arts.

PRAYING FOR A WINNER



John Gordon, Minnesota Twins radio broadcaster, asks members to join hands as he gives the invocation on April 3, opening day for the 2000 Twins season.

The bill (HF3195/SF3701*) would increase the board to seven voting members, which would include a voting member from the organization that will be using the building. If, for example, a building were being designed for the University of Minnesota, the university would have a vote on the final design of the building.

“This gives the user agency a real voice and real responsibility (on the board),” said Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), sponsor of the bill.

The bill also would make one of the board members represent the American Institute of Architects, instead of the Minnesota Society of Architects. Also, the board would include a representative of the Associated General Contractors and two citizen members.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

House votes to override

The House voted April 4 to override a governor’s veto of a bill that would assure the continued operation of the Ah-Gwah-Ching center, a nursing facility in Walker.

The Ah-Gwah-Ching center serves residents whose aggressive or difficult-to-manage behavioral needs cannot be met in their home community. The vote to override was 125-5.

Gov. Jesse Ventura had vetoed the measure a day earlier, citing that the bill was “unnecessary” because law currently exists prohibiting

the commissioner of the Department of Human Services from closing the facility without the Legislature’s approval.

The bill (HF2809), sponsored by Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack), was passed by the House March 15 and sent to the Senate, where it was passed and forwarded to the governor to sign.

In addition to language in the bill calling for the center to remain open, the bill would clarify the admissions criteria of the facility and require that the center promote emergency admittance and geriatric rapid assessment stabilization programs.

The Senate has not yet reconsidered the bill. To complete the override of the governor’s veto, the Senate would need to re-pass the bill by a two-thirds majority.

The 1999 Legislature successfully overrode a veto, the first time that had happened in 17 years.

Nursing home closure

The House passed a bill April 4 that would establish a process for closing nursing facilities. The bill would also allow savings from a closed facility to be reallocated through special rate adjustments and interim payments. The vote was 131-4.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), sponsor of the measure (HF3537/SF3198*), said the bill would allow one or more nursing facilities owned or operated by any nonprofit corporation controlling more than 22 nursing facilities in the state to submit closure plans to the commissioner of the Department of Human Services.

Under the bill, a closure plan would need to include the projected costs and savings of closure, a timetable for closure, and a proposed relocation plan for residents.

A facility’s plan would also need to include information on the facilities in line to receive a special rate adjustment as a result of the closure and documentation that such facilities have accepted liability for recovering overpayments to facilities designated to be closed.

If the bill were to become law, the commissioner would first need to obtain certification from the commissioner of the Department of Health that each plan satisfies requirements related to notice of closure and relocation of residents before being allowed to approve the plan.

The bill would require that a determination of the plan itself be made within 60 days of its submittal.

The bill now moves to the governor’s desk.

★ INSURANCE

Assisting Holocaust survivors

The House passed a bill April 4 that would assist Holocaust survivors and their heirs in collecting insurance claims. The vote was 133-1.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), sponsor of the bill (HF3756/SF3423*), said that similar to today, many families that lived prior to World War II planned for the future by purchasing life insurance. But many of those people have had difficulty in settling insurance claims.

Abrams said that often life insurance claims require a death certificate, which for Holocaust victims is not available. Under the bill, the Department of Commerce would be permitted to establish a registry of records of Holocaust-related insurance policies and claims.

Currently there is an international commission working to establish a registry and recover insurance proceeds from policies issued during the 1930s and 1940s.

Abrams said that there are over 200 Holocaust survivors in the state.

The bill also would require insurance companies to provide the data necessary to assist Holocaust victims and their beneficiaries.

Abrams said the data in the registry that would be established by the bill would be cooperatively exchanged with the registry that serves other states.

He said the measure would encourage insurance companies that do business in the state and that did business in Europe before World War II to settle the insurance claims. The bill would permit the Department of Commerce to suspend an insurer's authority to do business in Minnesota if they fail to comply.

The bill now goes to the governor.

★ LAW

Disqualifying a judge

A bill that outlines the procedure to disqualify a judge from sitting on a case passed the House on April 4. The vote was 99-33.

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) is sponsoring a bill (HF3517/SF2742*) that explains how a judge would be removed from a particular case.

"It prevents disqualification of a magistrate," Biernat said. "It streamlines the process so there is not a lot of motions by attorneys."

Under the bill, when a person involved in a court case is notified of a court date and the name of the judge, the person would have up to 10 days to reject the judge for any reason. The person would have one free

"disqualification" of a judge. To disqualify a second judge, the person must prove the judge has bias in the case.

However, once the first hearing has taken place, even if it is within the 10-day period, the person cannot ask for the judge to be removed from the case.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) spoke against the bill, saying he is worried that the backlog of cases judges have will only become worse.

The bill goes to the Senate.

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Lake improvement districts

Property owners would have a greater say in the establishment and management of lake improvement districts, under a measure the House passed April 5 on a 70-60 vote.

Lake improvement districts are established as a unit of government to provide a method to address issues and concerns on a more local level.

Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake), sponsor of the bill (HF3260/SF2968*), said that currently there are 14 such districts in the state.

Under current law, lake improvement districts can conduct projects for water conservation and improvement, regulate water surface use, and provide and finance services. Districts also are allowed to acquire, construct, and operate dams or other water level control structures.

A county board, or county boards acting jointly, may initiate the establishment of a district. A petition to the county board signed by at least 26 percent of the proposed district's property owners may also initiate the process.

Olson said his bill would allow property owners to petition their county board, no matter how the proposed district is initiated, for a referendum before the district is established. That petition would also require signatures from at least 26 percent of the property owners within the proposed district.

Under the bill, after the initial appointment of district board members by the county board, all subsequent district board members would be elected by the property owners of the district at the district's annual meeting.

The bill also calls for the county board to seek other sources of funding for improvement district projects before imposing service charges, special assessments, or property tax levies on property owners.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) expressed concern with the election portion of the bill. He said the bill would establish a precedent of allowing property owners, rather than residents, to vote in an election.

The bill now goes to the governor.

★ RECREATION

Law sets fine for studs

The governor signed a measure April 4 that adds a civil penalty for using metal traction devices, or studs, on snowmobiles.

The new law was necessary because a civil penalty was inadvertently left out of a 1999 law that required people to purchase a sticker for their snowmobiles if they intend to use studs.

The 1999 measure contains criminal penalties for people who drive a snowmobile with studs on paved state trails.

The new law, effective April 5, 2000, establishes civil penalties for people who use snowmobile studs but do not purchase a sticker.

For the first offense, the penalty is capped at \$50. The fine for a second offense is up to \$300, and for third and subsequent offenses the fine is up to \$600.

Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine) and Sen. Linda Runbeck (R-Circle Pines) sponsored the legislation.

HF3555/SF3283*/CH324

★ TRANSPORTATION

Left lane driving restricted

Drivers in the left lane on state highways would be directed to move to the right lane when they are not passing, under a bill the House passed April 5. The vote was 80-50.

The bill (HF3091/SF2484*), sponsored by Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), would allow the placement of signs along highways reminding drivers to move to the right lane after passing.

"This bill is aimed at people who park in the left-hand lane and never move over," Tomassoni said. "We're just trying to get people to be more courteous."

The bill would require the placement of signs every 50 miles along interstate highways, reminding drivers to move to the right lane after they have passed a car. The signs would say, "Move to the right after passing." Tomassoni said the signs are the key part of the bill he wants.

The left lane should be reserved for passing, avoiding accidents, entering or exiting the interstate, or when a person is directed by law enforcement or construction sites, Tomassoni contends.

Current law provides for a petty misdemeanor for drivers who travel in the left lane below the rate of speed of other vehicles on the road. The bill also would carry the petty misdemeanor charge.

Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) spoke against the bill, saying it is unnecessary.

"This is going to be a primary offense," Dehler said. "We don't need laws to tell us to drive with common sense."

Tomassoni said he does not think police would use this measure for primary offenses.

"I'm confident that our officers won't be stopping people who are driving in the left-hand lane when there is no one in the right-hand lane," he said.

Sen. Dick Day (R-Owatonna) is sponsoring the Senate version, which includes a 25 mph maximum speed in school zones. That provision is not in the House bill.

The differences will likely be resolved in a conference committee.

Weight restrictions relaxed

Heavier vehicles such as public utility or electric cooperative trucks would be exempt from springtime weight restrictions under a bill the House passed April 4. The vote was 115-15.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) is sponsoring the bill (HF3274/SF2785*), which would allow the vehicles to travel on roads that usually have weight restrictions for eight weeks in the spring.

Public utility vehicles need to be able to travel on side roads when emergencies occur, Workman said.

"For them to come onto your street and restore your power, they are technically breaking the law," Workman said during a House Transportation Policy Committee meeting in February. "That's ridiculous."

This bill provides for emergency use of the road, and not general transportation for larger vehicles, Workman said. Exempted vehicles under this bill must not exceed 20,000 pounds per axle.

The bill also would allow recycling trucks to travel on the restricted roads. Workman said the way the law is written now, recycling companies would be required to buy two smaller trucks and employ twice as many workers to pick up recycling during the eight-week stretch to avoid breaking road restrictions.

"It is a complete impossibility to do that," Workman said.

He noted that school buses, which are heavier than recycling trucks, travel on restricted roads 10 times a week, while a recycling truck makes that route once a week at most.

Reps. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) and Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) then offered successful amendments to exempt trucks containing raw sewage or milk.

The Senate version, sponsored by Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing), does not include those exemptions.

Glen Engstrom, manager of Minnesota

Road Research for the state Department of Transportation, explained that the eight-week restriction is enforced when the ice thaws and roads become particularly soft. Transportation officials decide the beginning date of the restriction based on several weather factors. The starting date changes each year. Road restrictions are generally placed on state and county highways or city streets.

By starting the weight restrictions on time, the department saves \$10 million annually in road replacement costs, Engstrom said.

The bill now heads to a House-Senate conference committee.

State immunity from liability

A bill that would make the state immune from civil lawsuits involving recreational motor vehicle accidents that occur in a highway right-of-way passed the House on April 5. The vote was 79-53.

The measure, sponsored by Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), would exempt the state from liability when accidents or injuries occur involving snowmobiles or other off-road recreational vehicles.

"This bill would require a warning," Holberg said. "The warnings would have to be reasonable."

The sports vehicles — such as snowmobiles and all-terrain vehicles — are supposed to drive on the side of the ditch opposite the roadway, not at the bottom or the side closest to the highway.

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska) spoke in favor of the bill, saying the immunity protection would be the same language under the law as for state parks.

Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park) spoke against the bill, saying the state should be responsible for the land it owns.

"This is poor public policy," Johnson said. "We have made our ditches public trails."

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) also had concerns about the measure.

"Snowmobilers better know this before they hit the trail next season," Hasskamp said.

The bill (HF3613/SF3307*) now heads to the governor's desk.

Newspaper's stance questioned

A *Star Tribune* official appeared before the House Transportation Finance Committee on March 30 to defend the newspaper's editorial stance on the proposed Hiawatha Corridor light-rail transit project.

Critics of the light-rail project have pointed out that the newspaper has changed its editorial position from criticism of the project to support in recent months.

Frank Parisi, senior vice president at the *Star Tribune*, said the newspaper's view toward light rail has evolved over the past couple of years. However, the paper's switch to support light rail is not based on possible gains the company could receive from a station located near its downtown Minneapolis headquarters, Parisi said.

"We have never made an editorial decision based on the company's bottom line," Parisi told the committee. "The *Star Tribune* editorial page is not for sale."

The current light-rail proposal in the Hiawatha Corridor would include tracks along Fifth Street in Minneapolis. The tracks would cross one of the *Star Tribune's* parking lots, requiring the newspaper to be compensated. A preliminary survey places the value of the lot at \$10 million.

Parisi said the newspaper has not verified how much the property is actually worth.

However, Parisi said the paper would not benefit from selling the block to make way for the light-rail project. The 249 parking spots on the block are a necessity for *Star Tribune* employees, Parisi said.

"Anyone who claims that loss of this block will benefit the Star Tribune Company is completely out of touch with reality," Parisi said.

Two legislators, Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) and Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington) left the meeting shortly after it began, saying they refused to question a newspaper on the merits of its editorials.

"The very fact that we are diving into a newspaper's views and judgments . . . not only is it unprecedented, I think it is an outrage," Larson said.

Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake) said the paper is entitled to its opinion. He questioned the proposed location of the line when several reports indicated that Fifth Street would be a poor route.

"What concerns me is the implication that proponents of the light-rail project placed the station near the *Star Tribune* to garner political support," Vandever said.

David Strom, legislative director for the Taxpayers League of Minnesota, testified that the newspaper supports the project because of possible benefits to the company.

"The *Star Tribune* not only supported the plan, but pushed for subsidies along the line," Strom said. "It questions the journalistic ethics for not revealing (land ownership) on the editorial page."

Action on feedlot rules

Bill would settle dispute between Pollution Control Agency and farmers regarding changes to rules governing feedlots

By **MIKE DE LARCO**

The House passed a bill March 30 that would ease a set of new feedlot rules proposed in December by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The vote was 80-49.

The bill's passage followed weeks of public testimony opposing new rules for the permit process for animal feedlots. The agency's rules are now before an administrative law judge and an opinion on proposed changes is expected later this month.

The measure the House passed addresses changes to the plan that farmers requested to happen before any support could be given to a revision of the agency's 20-year-old feedlot guidelines.

If it becomes law, the measure would settle the matter, making the judge's ruling unnecessary.

"Something needed to be done to address the concerns brought forward by farmers in my district and producers all over the state."

Farmers are concerned that new requirements will drive small feedlots out of business. In addition, cattle producers oppose having their pastures regulated under feedlot rules, Kuisle said.

Furthermore, counties would see a greater responsibility for enforcement shifted in their direction under new agency rules, a task many counties consider to be overly time consuming and burdensome.

Last month, the Pollution Control Agency took some of the concerns expressed by farmers to heart and suggested it would consider making amendments to the most controversial sections of the proposed feedlot rules.

Kuisle said his bill (HF3692) would give spe-

in Minnesota would be exempt from making lot upgrades viewed as necessary by the agency to protect the environment under Kuisle's bill.

Gary Pulford, feedlot manager for the agency, said approximately half of the state's 40,000 feedlots are in compliance with the agency's current rules. Of the other half, about 8,000 are reported to have waste run-off problems. The status of the remaining lots, Pulford said, is unknown.

The agency has proposed a 10-year window for small farmers to cut down on environmental problems. The most prevalent violation the agency is focusing on involves the flow of animal waste from lots into rivers and streams. Another is air pollution.

Pollution problems caused by livestock odor was a concern of many who voted against Kuisle's bill. HF3692 would exempt animal feedlots from state ambient air quality standards for up to seven days after animal manure is removed from lot storage facilities. And by allowing feedlots to grow in size, air pollution could potentially increase, said Rep. Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda).

"This bill expands the numbers of animals and decreases the oversight without considering the problems that that's going to cause," Winter said.

Kuisle responded to concerns by saying that while livestock odor is a problem at some sites, limiting feedlot expansion isn't the answer.

In the meantime, the agency's new plan would put limits on hydrogen sulfide gas found in manure and require that manure spills on roads be treated as serious problems. Sloppy handling of manure could result in fines if revised rules, as they stand now, go into effect.

The agency's new rules would not apply, however, to feedlots with fewer than 400 animal units if HF3692 were to become law. In addition, a feedlot operator with fewer than 500 animal units could not be forced to dish out more than \$3,000 to address agency requests for lot upgrades unless offered a significant cost match under the bill.

There are some similarities in the bill to modifications the agency considered making in March. Some provisions, however, differ greatly. Language in the bill and the proposed agency changes are far apart on a turn-around time for permits to be issued and an exemption of rules for smaller producers.

"Both sides may have to give a little," Kuisle said.

The bill now moves to the Senate. 



Air pollution from manure pools, like this one in Isanti County, would be regulated under provisions of a feedlot bill passed March 30 by the House.

In January and February, hundreds of farmers in Minnesota expressed frustration that the rules drafted by the MPCA were too strict and could hurt small producers.

"The proposed rule changes coming out of the MPCA were far too restrictive," said the bill sponsor, Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester).

cific instruction to the agency on how the rules should be amended before their final adoption.

Under the bill, state livestock operations would be allowed to grow, and regulations by the MPCA would be reduced. More time would be given to producers to make changes.

Officials estimate that eight out of 10 feedlots

A compromise to build

House and Senate bonding bills differ by \$232 million, with major divides related to higher education, environment, and state building projects

BY JON FURE

A House and Senate conference committee is working to reach a compromise on a bonding bill, which would pay for repairs to state buildings and new construction projects, mainly through the sale of state bonds.

The House and Senate versions of the bill (HF4078*/SF3811) each would spend more than the \$499.7 million that is proposed under Gov. Jesse Ventura's capital budget plan. That figure includes money that would be spent by canceling appropriations to capital projects from previous years.

Under the House and Senate bills, bonding would total \$532 million and \$763.6 million respectively.

The House bill would use more revenue from user-financed bonds than the governor's plan — \$76.9 million compared to the governor's proposed \$33.9 million.

The Senate bill would use \$82.8 million from user-financed bonds, and it would spend more money than the other proposals in general obligation bonding and direct spending from the general fund. Also, the Senate bill would cancel smaller amounts of money from old projects than the other two proposals.

In general obligation bonding, the House bill and the governor's plan each would use about \$400 million, but the Senate bill would use about \$665.6 million.

Some lawmakers have been critical of proposals to borrow money by selling bonds due to the \$1.8 billion projected budget surplus. When the bill was debated on the House floor, Rep. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley) said borrowing money and paying interest on the bonds would be like a person using a credit card instead of cash.

But Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud), sponsor of the House bill, said that the capital projects such as state buildings are used for many years, so it is appropriate to spread the costs over a period of time, instead of using tax dollars that were paid by people and organizations in the current biennium.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) added that Minnesota is one of only a few states that has a AAA bond rating, which delivers bonds at the most attractive interest rates, due to its fiscal policies in previous years. The state has limited the amount of money it spends on interest payments on bonds, or debt service, to a maximum of 3 percent of the total revenue in a biennium.



The Art Building on the University of Minnesota's West Bank would be replaced by a \$21 million facility under the Senate bonding bill. The House bill would provide only \$2 million for design of a new building.

Also, Bishop said the state's payments are amortized so that 40 percent of the overall cost is paid within five years and 70 percent is paid within 10 years, which helps reduce the amount of money that the state spends on interest.

Under those guidelines, Bishop said the state could authorize \$970 million in bonds this

year and still be on solid financial ground.

The conference committee has had some preliminary meetings, but so far no major compromise has been reached regarding the amounts of money that should be spent or borrowed.

Here are some highlights of the projects in the House and Senate proposals.

U of M facilities

Overall spending for higher education would be \$169.9 million under the House bill and \$296.9 million under the Senate bill, compared to \$118.3 million under the governor's plan.

All three proposals would spend \$35 million on a Molecular Cellular Biology building at the University of Minnesota.

The Senate bill would spend \$21 million for a new Art Building, which would receive \$2 million for design costs under the House bill.

But the House bill would not fund a \$10 million Microbial and Plant Genomics building at the U of M campus in St. Paul, which would be funded under the Senate bill and the governor's plan.

The House and Senate would fund other projects at U of M campuses in St. Paul, Crookston, and Morris that would not receive funding under the governor's plan.

The Senate bill would fully fund the \$16 million request for maintenance and repair

Continued on page 23

A plan for parenting

Bill would give divorcing parents the option to work out their own custody agreements rather than fighting it out in court

BY CHRIS VETTER

A bill that would allow divorced parents to create parenting agreements passed the House March 30. The measure received approval by a 116-12 vote.

The measure, sponsored by Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), would allow divorced couples to make agreements on splitting parenting time. Currently, parenting agreements are neither specifically forbidden nor al-

lowed in state law.

"This bill would allow parents to reinsert their own plan," he said. "Why choose one parent over another parent when you have two good parents?"

Parenting plans could specify anything from where a child lives during the day to which parent can teach religious philosophy or which parent picks up the child from soccer practice. Child support would be a separate issue not included in parenting plans, he added.

Dawkins, a family lawyer, said he has worked on the issue for several years. He introduced a similar bill in 1997, which did not pass either the House or Senate. However, a Parental Cooperation Task Force to study parenting agreements was established as part of the omnibus judiciary law in 1998.

He said his current bill (HF3311/SF3169*) incorporates many of the task force's recommendations.

Parenting plans would encourage mediation and reduce lengthy custody battles and further litigation, Dawkins said.

"Our current law has a winner-take-all mentality to it," Dawkins said. "And I think that has a wrong angle to it."

Under both the Senate and House bills, a parenting plan could be formed if both parents agree to it. However, the House bill would allow the court to require mediation if only one parent agrees. That provision is not in the Senate bill.

During the mediation, each parent would work with the mediator to negotiate the terms of the parenting plan. Both parents would be bound by the decision reached at mediation.

Dawkins said the judge should have the au-

thority to require parenting plans to get the two sides talking. Without the judge's authority, "we're back to the current law," he said.

The House bill would not allow judges to require a parenting plan if there are previous allegations of domestic abuse.

William Howard, judge with the Fourth Judicial District, supports the Senate bill because it applies only to couples that submit to parenting plans.

"It gives them the option to do it," Howard said. "But don't force people to do it. (The Senate version) is a permissive bill."

Howard said parenting plans would allow a whole spectrum of relationships.

"This clears up the murkiness of the court to submit to parent plans," he said.

A Minnesota Supreme Court ruling from September 1999, *Frauenschuh vs. Giese*, made some parent agreements invalid, Dawkins said.

In the case, the couple was allowed to establish a custody agreement based on a different standard from the one typically applied by the court to such cases. The Supreme Court ruled that the couple should not have been allowed, by the lower court, to use a different standard, and thereby ruled their agreement invalid.

Dawkins contends that couples should be given the freedom, with proper legal representation, to reach any custody agreement they prefer, subject to approval of the court, presuming it is in the best interest of the child.

"That threw out all these cases where two good lawyers and two good parents decided what is best for children," he said.

The House bill has a retroactive effective date of Sept. 1, 1999, to re-instate parenting plans invalidated by the court's decision.

Suzanne Born, family lawyer and member of the task force, disagreed. Born said the ruling threw out a specific parenting plan, but did not eliminate all previous agreements.

According to the task force summary, at least 20 states currently allow parenting plan agreements.

Washington County has developed a written plan format, which could become a model for other counties, said Mindy Mitnick, a child psychologist at the Uptown Mental Health Center. The packet asks parents to decide which adult is responsible for doctor visits, physical custody of the child, or dividing holidays.

"What we have now is specific forms, so counties don't have to keep starting over from scratch," Mitnick said.

All references to "visitation" in statute would be eliminated under the bill. Visitation would be replaced by the phrase "parenting time," which is defined as the time a parent spends with a child regardless of the custodial designation of the child.

"It always bothered me, the word 'visitor,'" Dawkins said. "You both have parenting time."

Born agreed, saying she is happy with the word change.

"Visitation is a very offensive word to parents who

have been involved with their kids their whole life," Born said.

The bill also would allow the non-custodial parent to object when the custodial parent chooses to move out of Minnesota. The bill would require a hearing be held to discuss the issue. If the court determines the move is not in the best interest of the child, the court must forbid the move from occurring, according to the bill.

The bill now moves to a House-Senate conference committee. 

"Why choose one parent over another parent when you have two good parents?"

—Rep. Andy Dawkins

A legislative lesson

Fourth-grade students combine school projects into real-life civics lesson and successfully campaign for 13th state symbol

By JON FURE

It all started as a school project about monarch butterflies. But when Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake) visited OH Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi to explain how a bill becomes a law to fourth-graders there, the students had a brilliant idea — why not put the two projects together?

What they ended up with is a new law, making the monarch the official state butterfly.

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed the law March 31, making the state butterfly the 13th state symbol.

The students brought the idea to Mares, who sponsored the bill. Mares had been asked to visit the school last November, and he said the students wanted to participate in the law-making process.

They were studying the monarch butterfly through a program called “Monarchs in the

Classroom,” which Mares said is the among the largest education programs in the country. The program is administered through the University of Minnesota, and more than 20,000 students participate statewide.

Mares said those students learn about science, conservation, and the ecosystem by studying the monarch’s life cycle and migratory flight to and from Minnesota each year. They use computer technology to follow the monarch’s flight to central Mexico, so they also learn about geography.

While establishing a new state symbol may not seem as important as some other types of legislation, Mares said the monarch is an appropriate choice for the state butterfly for several reasons.

“A lot of people have an early introduction to the magical world of nature through the monarch, and as we get older it becomes a thread that takes us through science to beauty and aesthetics,” Mares said.

Birchwood resident Randy LaFoy, whose daughter attends the school, said it helped the students — and their parents — learn first-hand about how a bill becomes law. He said about 60 students attended House and Senate committees and wrote letters to various lawmakers, and several students made public presentations. The students also met the governor and several lawmakers.

“It was a great lesson in civics, and what a great country that allows fourth graders to get involved and make a difference,” LaFoy said.

LaFoy added that many people tend to be more familiar with other aspects of law, such as police officers or the court system. The students enjoyed the experience at the Legislature because it brought that part of the lawmaking process to life, LaFoy said.

A similar bill (HF3508) that was proposed this year would make the timber wolf the official state mammal, but that bill has not advanced through the committee process in either the House or Senate.

The last state symbol to be established was the blueberry muffin in 1988, which was proposed by third-grade students from Carlton, a small town near Duluth. The students felt that the choice was appropriate because blueberries are plentiful in northern Minnesota, and farmers throughout the state produce other ingredients needed to make the muffins.

Other state symbols are the state flag and state seal, state tree (red or Norway pine), state song (“Hail! Minnesota”), state bird (loon), state fish (walleye), state mushroom (morel), state drink (milk), state grain (wild rice), state flower (lady slipper), and state gemstone (Lake Superior agate).

Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the measure in the Senate. The law is effective Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2588/SF2326*/CH306 



Rep. Harry Mares, center, along with fourth-grade students and teachers from OH Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi testify in front of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee earlier this session in support of a bill that would designate the Monarch butterfly as the official state butterfly. Gov. Jesse Ventura signed the bill into law March 31.

A challenge ahead

A former speaker of the House is leaving to take a top post with the Ramsey County attorney

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

When Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) came to the Legislature in 1986, he brought his criminal justice background in an effort to change the system.

"I felt that the criminal justice system needed more accountability, especially concerning drunk driving and violent crime," Carruthers said. "I feel we've made some good progress."

Now, 14 years later, the former speaker of the House will take that knowledge back into the justice system as he leaves the Legislature for a job with the Ramsey County Attorney's Office.

"I won't have to stay up until three in the morning debating on the floor," he said with a smile.

Carruthers said being a member of the House has been very rewarding for him, especially his work with individual constituents to promote legislation.

He said he decided during his last term, when he was speaker and the DFL Caucus had a majority, that he would not seek an 8th term.

When he looks up from his desk, pictures of his sons — 11-year-old Alex and 8-year-old Rory — greet his eyes. They often accompany him to the Capitol.

Family played a big role in his decision to leave the House. Carruthers said he is ready for a more regular, normal life.

"It's a very intense job," he said. "It's exciting and satisfying. I have young kids. I'd like to have a little bit more sane lifestyle, a little more predictable."

Carruthers grew up in St. Anthony and attended the University of Minnesota, where he obtained a degree in political science and later attended law school. He received his law degree in 1979 and worked for a number of different firms.

In 1983, Carruthers was appointed to the Metropolitan Council. He served there for three-and-a-half years, until his election to the House of Representatives.

His two goals as a legislator were to change the criminal justice system and institute more openness in government.



During his first few years in the House, Carruthers served on committees dealing with judiciary, taxes, and financial institutions. In 1990, he sponsored a law clarifying the provisions of the state's no-fault insurance law. And by 1992, he had sponsored the omnibus drunken-driving and data practices laws.

He also sponsored laws providing due process for police officers in dispute situations and further clarifying the implied consent provisions for drunken driving arrests.

In 1993, he sponsored legislation restricting violent criminals' ability to be licensed foster parents. He also supported the provision that instituted zero-tolerance alcohol provisions for people younger than 21.

Later that year, Carruthers was elected as House Majority Leader, after Rep. Irv Anderson (DFL-Int'l Falls) became speaker of the House.

Carruthers served in that role for three years, until he was selected to replace Anderson in the speakership.

At the time, Carruthers' supporters said he would bring more openness to the House and

would strive for more cooperation between the DFL and Republican caucuses.

The DFL lost control of the House after the 1998 election, and Rep. Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), assumed the role of speaker.

Looking back now, Carruthers said the most important lesson he learned was to get along with people and work with them. He said the House is not about partisanship, but it's about making the best decisions for constituents.

"It doesn't matter what party you are or what part of the state you're from," Carruthers said. "Everyone has something to contribute."

"It's easier and quicker for a few people to make the decision. But I don't think it makes for better laws."

Carruthers said it's important to get as many people and points of view involved as possible. He said he worries that the Legislature is becoming too partisan at the expense of the average citizen and his or her concerns.

"Minnesota has a very open legislative system," Carruthers said. "Average people can make suggestions and see them actually get accomplished. But the House tends to be too partisan in my view. Satisfaction is working hard to solve a problem in society."

Carruthers, who has been a city prosecutor in Hennepin County for 20 years, will serve as chief of the prosecution division for the Ramsey County attorney, when he begins his job. He will supervise the prosecution of juvenile and adult criminal cases.

Though the job will likely put Carruthers in the courtroom, he'll spend most of his time developing prosecution policies and working with the prosecutors in the office.

"It's very exciting," Carruthers said. "I'm looking forward to it." 

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Phil Carruthers

DFL

District 47B – Brooklyn Center

Terms: 7

Career notes: After serving as majority leader, Carruthers was elected speaker of the House in 1997. He led the House during years that were marked by passage of property tax rebates and rejection of public financing for a baseball stadium. Throughout his career, Carruthers has specialized in legislation related to civil and criminal law.

Health care pioneer

Greenfield known for persevering to make revolutionary MinnesotaCare program become law

By DAVID MAEDA

When Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls) was elected 22 years ago, one of the issues he ran on was ensuring that the state's health care system took care of all Minnesotans.

For Greenfield, 58, who was active in the civil rights and anti-war efforts in the 1960s, it was just another policy issue for the under-represented in need of political reform.

"I've always believed that everybody should be treated equally," said Greenfield, who still has a hint of a New York accent in his voice, betraying a Brooklyn upbringing.

Greenfield's political activism brought him to Minnesota to work. That activism ultimately led him to seek and win election to the House in 1978.

Perhaps the legislative achievement he will best be remembered for, and the one he still points most proudly to, is being one of the so-called "gang of seven" legislators who in 1992 helped establish MinnesotaCare, the state's health care system working toward health care access for all Minnesotans.

Greenfield was then serving as chair of the House Health and Human Services Finance Division. He worked with members from both parties and former Gov. Arne Carlson to pass the legislation that expanded the state's health coverage of the uninsured from children to all residents who did not have access to employer-supported coverage.

The group gained its nickname through tenacity in addressing the concerns raised by officials from the insurance and health care industries, among others, in the state's effort to become the first to achieve health care access to all.

The gang of seven also included DFLers Sens. Linda Berglin and Pat Piper and former Rep. Paul Ogren, and former Republican Sen. Duane Benson and Reps. Dave Gruenes and Brad Stanius.

Greenfield said Minnesota has one of the lowest uninsured rates of any state in the coun-



try — a tribute to how progressive and strong the state's system continues to be.

Since the MinnesotaCare program's inception, the rate of uninsured in the state has dropped from 6.1 percent to 5.2 percent. The national rate is around 16 percent.

Greenfield said he is confident the state will remain a leader in health care access because the state's citizens believe it is important to subsidize care for all.

With a degree in physics from Purdue University and graduate work in philosophy of science at the University of Minnesota, he said his scientific background uniquely prepared him for his legislative work and led to his interest and involvement in health care issues.

Greenfield said the scientific method values hard data over anecdote. But with the abundance of data presented in crafting legislation, he said he learned that often the use

of a personal story can be more effective in swaying legislators.

Yet in the final analysis, he said, his roots in science were useful in helping him form objective decisions.

He said that he felt fortunate to be at the leading edge of many of the causes he fought for because of the liberal nature of the area he represents, which includes parts of the West Bank, Powderhorn Park, and Seward neighborhoods in Minneapolis.

Ironically, it is Greenfield's devotion to the health care arena that has led to his decision not to seek re-election to the House.

"My interests keep narrowing," he said. "As a member you have to maintain a broad perspective."

Greenfield said that although he isn't quite sure what he will do next, he is pursuing several opportunities that will allow him to continue his commitment to health care related issues, including universal health care, from a different angle.

He said he will miss being part of the legislative process and working with many of his colleagues. And he is proud of playing a part in helping to maintain and improve the state's programs for people with disabilities, community mental health services, and expanding home health care for senior citizens.

"Many of the most exciting things I'll ever do will have been done here in this chamber," Greenfield said. 🐼

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Lee Greenfield
DFL

District 62A – Minneapolis

Terms: 11

Career notes: Greenfield made his name working on issues related to health and human services, and he was instrumental in the creation of MinnesotaCare, the state's health insurance program for low-income residents.

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill has passed both the House and Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor, who has several options when considering a bill, can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill;
- or do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium (even-numbered years), a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (Latin for adjournment "without a date certain"). If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes (save pocket vetoes) the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills

passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history — at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

This information is also available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "It's a New Day" link, then click on "The Legislative Log."

Key:
CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
Res. 4	4060	2348*	Resolution for release of Americans held in North Korea, China, Russia and Vietnam.	4/3/00	
300	3219	2903*	Omnibus gambling bill.	3/31/00	
301	1333	2193*	Wood sales contracts regulated.	3/31/00	
302	2785	2821*	Charitable organization annual report filing requirements modified.	3/31/00	
303	2883	2579*	Prescription drug discounts regulated.	3/31/00	
304	2675	2569*	Vicarious liability insurance coverage for punitive and exemplary damages authorized.	3/31/00	
305	3399	3145*	Minnetonka qualified newspaper designation priority variance.	3/31/00	
306	2588	2326*	Monarch designated as the state butterfly.	3/31/00	
307	3209*	2699	Health care cost containment major commitment expenditure report requirements modified.	4/3/00	
308	3352	3586*	Lighted fishing lures authorized.	4/3/00	
309	2719*	2436	Rental automobile insurance coverage regulated.	4/3/00	
310	2809*	2631	Ah-Gwah-Ching nursing center admissions criteria clarified.		4/3/00
311	2688*	2769	Omnibus crime prevention and judiciary finance bill.	4/3/00	
312	3226	2896*	Nursing home resident assistants authorized and survey process procedure developed.	4/3/00	
313	2994	2748*	Ambulance service and EMT requirements modified.	4/3/00	
314	3212	2734*	Home care and personal care provider transportation expense reimbursement studied.	4/3/00	
315	3048	2868*	New medical assistance case-mix system based on federal minimum data set transition time lines.	4/3/00	
316	3107	2634*	Civil commitment relative notification provided and minor voluntary treatment consent provisions modified.	4/3/00	
317	3306	3549*	Residential hospice program requirements modified.	4/3/00	
318	3023	2701*	Lawful gambling fraud defined and criminal penalties imposed.	4/3/00	
319	3365	2941*	Vulnerable adult neglect and medical error provisions modified.	4/3/00	
320	3220	2510*	Real property recording and redemption and common interest ownership provisions modified.	4/4/00	
321	3596	3369*	Special environmental purpose districts pilot projects.	4/4/00	
322	3310	3055*	Health plan contract stacking regulated and remedy provided.	4/4/00	

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
323	3290	2894*	Occupational safety and health discrimination complaint communications classified as privileged.	4/4/00	
324	3555	3283*	Snowmobile metal traction device sticker requirement civil enforcement provided.	4/4/00	
325	1590*	1952	Warrant authority of alcohol and gambling agents clarified.	4/4/00	
326	2819	2444*	Stearns County land conveyance authorized.	4/4/00	
327	3103	3005*	Human services licensing provisions modified.	4/4/00	
328	3152	2905*	Local government units purchase provisions modified.	4/4/00	
329	3169*	3167	Dakota County personnel board of appeals provisions modified.	4/4/00	
330	2670*	2566	Mental retardation community-based waived services and family support grants provisions modified.	4/4/00	
331	3868	3260*	Aquatic farm licensing requirements modified.	4/4/00	
332	4076	2653*	Internet state agency grant information required and uniform application developed.	4/4/00	
333	2940*	2735	Dry cleaner environmental response and reimbursement law modified.	4/4/00	
334	2936	2511*	Public and private property entry authorized for the purposes of examinations and surveys.	4/4/00	
335	3327	2676*	Local government authorization to petition to amend or repeal rules sunset modified.	4/6/00	
336	3571	2828*	Gambling regulated, activities prohibited, and shipment of gambling devices regulated.	4/6/00	
337	2559	2546*	Inland water sunken logs recovery and historical artifacts ownership provided.	4/6/00	
338	3342	3025*	Foster care providers medical equipment operation competency required.	4/6/00	
339	3134*	2857	Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission authority to enter specified state lands limited.	4/6/00	
340	3122*	2901	Medical Assistance, General Assistance, MinnesotaCare, and other health care program provisions modified.	4/6/00	
341	3510*	3378	Taking two deer authorization extended in specified counties.	4/6/00	
342	2656*	3441	Auto glass repair and replacement regulated, and rebates and incentives limited.	4/6/00	
343	3806	3554*	Nonprofit organization re-employment compensation provisions modified.	4/6/00	
344	465	624*	Firefighter training and education board created.	4/6/00	

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Continued from page 4

reservations about the court’s decision to sever the disputed provision from the law as a whole. “[T]he court has taken on the role of a super legislature, deciding which provisions of [the law] will be given effect by picking and choosing between the law’s various provisions, even though all of its provisions are unconstitutional,” Page writes. “Under Article IV, Section 17 (of the constitution), this court is

not vested with the power to determine that certain provisions of an enactment will become law and that others will not. The court’s only power is to declare the entire law either constitutional or unconstitutional.”

Page also complains that allowing the rest of the 1997 law to stand means the ruling will not discourage the Legislature from improper bundling of unrelated provisions.

“Given the possibility that the law may not

be challenged at all or if challenged, may be held constitutional, there is no downside to enacting such legislation if the worst position the Legislature will be in if the law violates the constitution is the same position it would have been in had the offending provision not been enacted,” Page writes. 

Monday, April 3

**HF4135—Peterson (DFL)
Crime Prevention**

Law enforcement expanded notice to school chemical abuse pre-assessment teams provided for probable cause student underage drinking and driving violations.

Tuesday, April 4

**HF4136—Hackbarth (R)
Crime Prevention**

Death penalty imposed in first degree murder cases involving criminal sexual conduct, automatic appellate review provided, and statutory and administrative framework provided.

Wednesday, April 5

**HF4137—Jennings (DFL)
Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**

Legislature size modified, biennial legislative sessions provided and length reduced, joint House and Senate fiscal committees required, and constitutional amendment proposed.

**HF4138—Marko (DFL)
Commerce**

Cottage Grove authorized to issue an on-sale liquor license to the Cottage Grove Economic Development Authority for River Oaks Golf Course.

**HF4139—McCollum (DFL)
Crime Prevention**

Killing or harming service animals provided criminal penalties, and restitution required.

**HF4140—Seifert, M. (R)
Taxes**

Re-employment insurance taxable wages definition modified.

**HF4141—Peterson (DFL)
Agriculture Policy**

Rural revitalization fund established for economic development purposes.

**HF4142—Seifert, M. (R)
Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**

Public service messages by candidates for state office prohibited.

**HF4143—Seifert, J. (R)
Rules & Legislative Administration**

Revisor's bill correcting miscellaneous oversights, inconsistencies, ambiguities, unintended results, and technical errors.

Thursday, April 6

**HF4144—Abeler (R)
Taxes**

Commuter rail construction materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

**HF4145—Murphy (DFL)
Commerce**

Public utilities required to notify property owners prior to tree trimming or removal, and penalties imposed.

**HF4146—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention**

Challenge incarceration program of fender participation county attorney notification provided, and phase 1 participation for one-half of prison term required.

Reflections



Gov. Harold E. Stassen

The present governor is not the first to advocate for government reform. In 1939, Harold E. Stassen became governor; he made some sweeping

changes by propagating progressive labor relations, by signing civil service legislation into law, and by implementing a major program for state government reorganization.

At age 31, Stassen was the youngest person ever to be elected to such a position. The "boy wonder" governor had his eyes on public office years before — about the time he graduated from Humboldt High School in St. Paul at age 15.

Because of his age, he had to wait a year before he entered the University of Minnesota. Here, he became so involved in activities that he hired a fraternity brother to be his personal secretary. He also laid the groundwork for the Young Republican League.

By 1929, Stassen graduated from the university's law school, passed the bar, opened a law office, and was elected to public office as county attorney — all in one year.

In his race for governor, Stassen out-campaigned the conservative candidates of

the Republican old guard with help from his Young Republican "upstarts." Included was Warren A. Burger, the future chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

Stassen was a political prodigy. The little-known county attorney overwhelmingly beat the popular Farmer-Labor incumbent, Gov. Elmer Benson, by 291,000 votes.

At the height of World War II, he won election to a third term, even though he said he would resign and go on Naval duty "where I belong." On Wednesday, April 21, 1943, when the legislative session adjourned *sine die*, Gov. Stassen signed bills until midnight, then resigned the next day to serve in the U.S. Navy. He was assigned to Admiral Bill Halsey as his chief of staff with the Pacific Fleet.

Stassen was a vocal proponent of peace among nations, international disarmament, and for mediating disagreements among countries. His visionary concepts were made known before President Franklin D. Roosevelt proposed a united organization of nations. In 1945, Roosevelt assigned him to lead a United States delegation in San Francisco for creating a United Nations Charter.

His wife, Esther, also played a key role by noting that the Russian wives suggested

an emissary be sent to speak directly with Stalin to counteract the stubbornness of his delegation. The Russians relented and the Charter was completed. Stassen was one of its eight signatories.

The Minnesota statesman was never elected to public office after he resigned as governor. But for many years, he either filed or ran a campaign — 10 times for U.S. president, and in races for U.S. senator and congressman.

Many said he was like the fictional character, Don Quixote, out "fighting windmills." But the compassionate attorney from West St. Paul often stated that he campaigned many times so that his beliefs could be heard.

Stassen's amazing and full life will reach 93 years at his birthday on April 13. His dedication to end war and his international arbitration for making the world a better place may be equated to a quote on the Isaiah Wall in New York's Tudor City, across the street from the United Nations Secretariat:

They shall beat their swords into plowshares,

And their spears into pruning hooks.

Nation shall not lift up sword against nation.

Neither shall they learn war any more.

— LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

Photo from *The Story of Minnesota's Past* by Rhoda R. Gilman

MONDAY, April 10

8:45 a.m.

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

123 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty

Agenda: Calendar for the Day for April 10.

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

1 p.m.

Conference Committee

HF3800/SF3801

Omnibus education bill

200 State Office Building

Chrs. Rep. Alice Seagren, Sen. Larry Pogemiller

Conference Committee

HF4127/SF2657

Omnibus tax bill

15 State Capitol

Chrs. Rep. Ron Abrams, Sen. Doug Johnson

2 p.m.

Conference Committee

SF2870

Omnibus banking bill

Room to be announced

Chrs. Rep. Greg Davids, Sen. James Metzen

TUESDAY, April 11

8:30 a.m.

Conference Committee

SF3581

Omnibus liquor bill

224 State Capitol

Chrs. Rep. Erik Paulsen, Sen. Sam Solon

WEDNESDAY, April 12 - FRIDAY, April 14

No meetings have been announced.

Continued from page 15

projects on all U of M campuses, which would receive \$9 million in the proposals from the House and the governor.

The Senate bill also would spend \$3 million for the law school and \$8 million for sports and music performance buildings in Duluth.

Total bonding for the U of M would be about \$66.7 million in the House bill and \$122.7 in the Senate bill.

MnSCU construction

Projects in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system would receive \$174.2 million under the Senate bill, compared to \$103.2 million in the House bill.

Anoka-Hennepin Technical College would receive \$14.7 million under the Senate bill compared to \$12.5 million under the House bill for roof repairs; improvements to the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system; and other necessary work.

Initially, the MnSCU board decided to close the campus because it couldn't afford to make the necessary repairs. Ventura's plan did not recommend funding the repairs. The House and Senate proposals would keep the campus open.

The House and Senate bills each would provide \$6.9 million for construction of athletic and academic facilities at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The money would be part of the Taylor Center project, which benefited from a \$9.2 million donation from

Minnesota Timberwolves owner and Mankato businessman Glen Taylor.

The Senate bill would spend \$49 million for maintenance and repair projects throughout the MnSCU system, which would receive \$30 million under the House bill and the governor's plan. MnSCU requested \$100 million for maintenance and repair, and officials said at least \$56 million would be needed to prevent the system's \$500 million maintenance backlog from growing even larger.

State buildings

The House bill would spend a total of \$48.5 million for building and maintenance projects for the state-owned buildings that are used by state agencies and departments. The Senate bill would spend \$85.2 million for those projects.

The Senate bill would fund the \$58 million proposal for a new building for the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The House bill would spend only \$28 million to build a laboratory facility.

The House bill would include \$150,000 for a World War II memorial on Capitol grounds, a project that was line-item vetoed by Ventura in 1999. The project would not be funded under the Senate bill or the governor's plan.

Environment and agriculture

The House bill would spend about \$82.7 million for projects related to agriculture, environment, and natural resources. The Senate bill would spend \$147.8 in those areas.

Wastewater system improvements would receive \$32.6 million under the House bill and \$47.2 million under the Senate plan. The money would provide matching grants to communities through the Public Facilities Authority, which is part of the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

The Board of Water and Soil Resources would receive \$20 million for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program under the House and Senate bills. The program is matched by federal funds, and it establishes conservation easements on agriculture land along the Minnesota River, which reduces soil erosion into the river, helps control flooding, and establishes wildlife habitat.

A total of \$140 million in federal matching funds is available through September 2002.

Transportation improvements

House and Senate bonding proposals for transportation are not comparable because most of the Senate's transportation bonding is included in its omnibus transportation finance bill rather than a bonding measure.

The House bill would spend \$44 million for repairs to bridges throughout the state, \$5 million for Rail Service Improvement Loans, \$10.4 million for a Department of Transportation headquarters in St. Cloud, \$8.7 million for an addition to the Detroit Lakes headquarters, and \$1.6 million for a Moorhead Truck Station. 

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Health and family

Births in Minnesota, 1998	65,207
In the United States, 1998, in millions	3.9
In Minnesota, 1997	64,491
In Minnesota, 1940	52,915
Births to married mothers, 1998	48,449
Births to mothers younger than 15, 1998	90
To mothers age 15 to 17	1,850
To mothers older than 45	77
To mothers age 25 to 29	19,354
Births where mother received no pre-natal care, 1998	115
Average number of first births occurring daily, 1998	70
Percentage of 1998 births to African American mothers, 1998	6
To Asian American mothers	5
To American Indian mothers	2
Deaths statewide, 1998	37,152
In 1997	36,878
Violent deaths, 1998	2,379
Number of counties where deaths outnumber births, 1998	19
Deaths attributed to heart disease (most of any cause), 1998	9,372
Deaths attributed to cancer	8,963
Deaths caused by motor vehicle accidents or falls	1,741
Suicides statewide, 1998	463
Percentage increase from 1997	10
Marriages statewide, 1998	32,218
In 1997	32,598
In 1940	27,419
Marriages in Hennepin County (most of any county), 1998	8,689
In Traverse County (least of any county), 1998	15
Divorces and annulments statewide, 1998	15,165
In 1997	15,568
In 1940	2,957
Number of counties where divorces outnumber marriages	1
Number of divorces where both spouses were age 35 to 39 (most of any age group)	1,255

Source: 1998 Minnesota Health Statistics, Minnesota Center for Health Statistics, Department of Health, January 2000.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For general information, call:
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SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

APRIL 14, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 11

In this issue:

WOLF BILL PASSES &

THE HISTORY OF FIREARMS LAWS

HF4147-HF4153

SESSION Weekly

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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On the cover: Sunlight streams through the windows in the Capitol dome.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Wolf plan passes

Wolf management compromise moves through House, despite sharp criticism, and awaits action by the Senate and governor.

By JON FURE

Since 1974, the gray wolf, or timber wolf, has been protected under the federal Endangered Species Act. The House passed a bill April 11 that would remove some of those protections. The vote was 78-53.

The increasing number of wolves in the state, especially in northern Minnesota, has caused state and federal officials to consider removing the wolf from the list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

Under the bill (HF1415), a state plan for managing the wolf population would be established, which is required before the wolf can be removed from that list.

Wisconsin, and Michigan in the lower 48 states. The species also inhabits Canadian provinces and parts of Alaska.

Under the bill produced by a House-Senate conference committee, a person could shoot a wolf in defense of a human life. Guard animals could be used to repel or destroy wolves to protect livestock, domestic animals, or pets.

People could “harass” a wolf that they actu-



The wolf management plan passed by the House would allow the killing of wolves that threaten livestock or human life. Shown here is one of the wolves at that International Wolf Center in Ely on the prowl. The center promotes public education about the wolf and the predator’s behavior.

Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus), sponsor of the bill, said the plan reflects a compromise of many different groups and that no group is completely happy with the bill.

Farmers who have had livestock killed by wolves would favor more leniency in hunting or trapping wolves, whereas some other groups say those proposals under the bill are too lenient.

The gray wolf lives primarily in Minnesota,

ally see within 500 yards of people, buildings, livestock, or domestic animals to discourage wolves from getting too close to homes or farms.

But the bill would make it illegal to lure, track, or search for a wolf with the intent of injuring or harassing the animal.

Any incident where a wolf is killed would have to be reported within 48 hours to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) or

a University of Minnesota extension agent.

The bill would also modify current law that allows the state Department of Agriculture to compensate a livestock owner for an animal that is destroyed by a wolf, if the claim is validated by a conservation officer or extension agent. Under the bill, the current maximum of \$750 per animal would be removed, and the compensation amount would be based on “fair market value.”

No hunting season for wolves would be allowed for five years after the wolf is removed from the list. But the bill would allow the commissioner of the DNR to prescribe open seasons after five years and restrictions for taking wolves after receiving comments from the public.

The bill would prohibit a person from releasing a wolf-dog hybrid. A person would need a permit from the DNR to release a captive gray wolf.

Those provisions would apply to the entire state.

For other provisions, the bill would divide the state into two zones.

Zone A would be the northeast corner of the state, which would start from the northern part of Pine County and would include parts of several counties up to the Canadian border. Zone A also would include much of the northern part of the state, including parts of counties near the state’s western border (Roseau, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, and Polk counties).

In Zone B, which would cover all of the remaining parts of the state, including the Twin Cities area, all of the southern and western parts of the state, and parts of central Minnesota, the commissioner of the DNR could establish an area where a person who is certified as a predator controller could trap and kill wolves.

Trapping would not be allowed in Zone A, which would provide the wolf with more protection in forest areas, its primary habitat area.

The area for trapping would be limited to a one-mile radius of a site where a wolf attack has been verified in Zone B. The controller could trap wolves in that area for only 60 days.

Violating the laws related to killing wolves would be a gross misdemeanor, under the bill.

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), who sat on the House and Senate conference committee that adopted the compromise, said she has received complaints about the different requirements for Zone B.

Other parts of the bill state that a person may shoot a gray wolf “when the gray wolf is



A map of the two proposed wolf management zones. Zone A is shaded darker.

posing an immediate threat” to people or livestock, for example. But that specific phrase is not used in provisions related to Zone B.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said that the bill should include the “immediate threat” language for Zone B, otherwise the bill would allow someone to go into a den and kill wolf pups.

But Finseth disagreed, saying that Kahn’s example would still be against the law.

“You can’t just go out and arbitrarily take a wolf,” Finseth said. “If you go into a den and club the pups, you would be breaking the law and you would be prosecuted.”

Finseth also said that the federal government’s plan for the recovery of the wolf population states that Zone B is “not suitable for wolves and should be eliminated by any legal means.” The bill would provide more protection for wolves than that federal plan, he said.

“Only 10 percent of the wolf population is in this zone, and according to the federal plan, those wolves shouldn’t be there,” he said.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) said that the practices that led to the near-extinction of wolves were poisoning, shooting wolves from small airplanes, and destroying dens with dynamite — all of which would still be illegal under the bill.

In 1997, the state’s Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR), funded a project for a citizen’s roundtable to develop recommendations for a wolf management plan. The roundtable included people with various interests, such as livestock producers, residents from different parts of the state, and representatives of conservation groups like the Sierra Club and the Isaak Walton League.

The original version of the bill was introduced in the 1999 Legislative Session. The Senate sponsor is Sen. Gary Laidig (R-Stillwater).

Each chamber amended the bill, and it was approved by the House in 1999, but it was not passed by the full Senate until earlier this year.

A House and Senate conference committee further modified the bill. The bill now goes to the Senate, where it could be passed or returned to the conference committee. 🐾



Famous family

The Lindberghs left their mark in Minnesota and elsewhere

In April 1922, Charles Lindbergh took his first airplane ride. Just five years later, he would make the first trans-Atlantic solo flight from New York to Paris and become Minnesota’s aviation hero.

News accounts of the famous flight portrayed Lindbergh as a bit of a naive farmboy from the Midwest.

But the 25-year-old from Little Falls was not the first Lindbergh to make a mark in the world. In fact, he descended from a long line of political activists, among them a U.S. congressman.

Lindbergh’s father, Charles A. Lindbergh, Sr., was elected to Congress in 1906. Young Charles spent many winters in Washington, D.C., and would return home for the mild, pleasant summers of central Minnesota.

Nevertheless, those days out East prepared him for the limelight, while his Minnesota home and the political roots of his Swedish-American ancestors kept him grounded, despite his high-flying aspirations.

Lindbergh’s grandfather Ola Mansson, who took the name August Lindbergh when he immigrated to the United States, was elected to one of the houses of Swedish parliament in 1847. He represented the farmers in his district for 11 years.

Historical accounts say Mansson was rather progressive for the times, advocating government investment in transportation infrastructure, fewer trade restrictions, and increased rights in Sweden for Jews and women.

Accounts also tout his gift for public speaking, quick wit, and ability to think on his feet.

The family came to Minnesota by ship, rail, and then steamboat in 1860. They settled near Melrose and farmed.

August Lindbergh would again serve in public office as clerk of the Melrose school district for 21 years, town clerk for Melrose for 18 years, a justice of the peace for 16 years, and postmaster for 10 years.

It was in that environment that Charles Augustus Lindbergh, the aviator’s father, was raised. Though interest in his studies was questionable in his younger years, “C.A.” attended law school at the University of Michigan.

He obtained his law degree in 1883. C.A. Lindbergh returned to Minnesota and set up his law practice in Little Falls, then a growing community of about 5,000 people.

He married a local woman, Mary LaFond, who died two years after their marriage. C.A. Lindbergh remarried Evangeline Land, who had also attended the University of Michigan, receiving a degree in chemistry. Such an achievement was rare for women of the times.

Young Charles was born in 1902 and grew up on the farm just outside of town. While the boy laid in the cornfields day-dreaming of flight, his father was making a name for himself politically.

C.A. Lindbergh associated himself with the emerging progressive wing of the Republican Party, which at the time was pushing for more government regulation of banking and business.

He served five terms in Congress, from 1907 to 1917. During that time, he also wrote three books on the banking industry and the economy.

He was probably best known for his opposition to U.S. involvement in World War I. He disagreed with allowing financial interests to drive U.S. war policy. And his political success would falter because of these views.

In 1918, C.A. Lindbergh ran for the Republican Party nomination for governor against incumbent J.A.A. Burnquist. He was endorsed by the Nonpartisan League, a group comprised primarily of farmers pushing for certain reforms. The group supported candidates for office regardless of party affiliation.

During the primary campaign, Burnquist and others used Lindbergh’s progressive and anti-war stances against him, calling him a German sympathizer and socialist.

As a result, rallies often turned violent, including one in Martin County in south-central Minnesota, where Lindbergh was actually thrown in jail.

He was defeated in the primary. He unsuccessfully ran for U.S. Senate in 1923 and was in the midst of another gubernatorial bid in 1924 when he died — three years before his son’s historic flight.

(M. KIBIGER)

★ **AGRICULTURE**

Feedlot rules revisited

The House passed an amended version of a bill April 13 that would ease a set of new feedlot rules developed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA). The vote was 72-58.

The measure (HF3692*/SF3443) takes into account public testimony opposing new rules for permitting animal feedlots. It would give specific instructions to the agency on how the rules should be amended before their final adoption.

The bill also would prohibit the PCA from imposing additional conditions as part of a feedlot permit after the proposed rules are finally adopted. The measure is sponsored by Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester).

State livestock operations would be allowed to grow, and regulation by the agency would be limited, under the bill.

Agency officials want farmers to prevent the flow of animal waste from lots into rivers and streams. The agency is also concerned about air pollution caused by feedlots.

Currently, the PCA's new plan would put limits on hydrogen sulfide gas found in manure and require that manure spills on roads be treated as serious problems. Sloppy handling of manure could result in fines if revised agency rules, as they stand now, go into effect.

The commissioner of the Department of Agriculture would be required under the bill to work with the University of Minnesota to develop educational and training programs addressing manure applicator concerns, including water quality protection and the development of manure management plans.

If violations are found, the bill would require that they be brought up to par in a timely manner.

A feedlot operator with less than 300 animal units, however, would not be required by the bill to spend more than \$3,000 to upgrade a lot unless cost-share money totaling at least 75 percent of the cost is available.

Livestock production facilities would be exempt by the bill from state ambient air quality standards while manure is being removed from the site, and up to seven days following the transfer.

The bill also would require the PCA to remove several provisions from its proposed rules and allow the agency to submit a report

to the commissioner of the Department of Finance if it is unable to accomplish timely response to feedlot permit applications.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

★ **BUSINESS**

Sales of funeral services

The House passed a bill April 6 that would regulate solicitation and sale of funeral goods. The vote was 130-0.

The bill (HF2713/SF2686*), sponsored by Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope), would prohibit solicitation at a hospital, gravesite, nursing home, or wake without the solicitor having been specifically requested to do so.

It also would prohibit an individual from peddling goods and services to any person whose death is impending, or to a individual responsible for funeral arrangements of a deceased person within 10 days of that individual's death. Again, however, such acts would be permitted, under the bill, if either the deceased or a relative had made arrangements to discuss funeral and burial plans before the death.

In cases when the deceased handled his or her own arrangements in advance, the bill would require that the funeral provider

produce a copy of agreement documents and give the copy to the person who is in charge of the remains. A copy of the arrangements would be required to change hands no later than 24 hours after first contact between the provider and the individual controlling the remains.

Provisions that would establish requirements for such funeral arrangements and allow someone making advance burial arrangements to cancel those plans are also contained in the bill.

Rest's bill now goes to a House-Senate conference committee.

Language pertaining to a potential financial impact of the measure was incorporated into the omnibus state government spending bill (HF2699) in March. The provision would appropriate \$90,000 in fiscal year 2001 for the purpose of responding to public complaints about funeral goods and services solicitation.

Economic loss doctrine replaced

The state's existing economic loss doctrine will be repealed and replaced by a new provision, under a law signed April 11 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law will limit commercial parties to legal solutions under the Uniform Commercial Code. The code provides a shorter statute of limitations.

A TEST OF WILLS



House conferees Reps. Bob Ness, left, and Tony Kielkucki debate with Senate conferees, Sens. Larry Pogemiller and Linda Sheid, over differences in Profile of Learning measures during the April 10 conference committee discussions of the omnibus education bill.

“This bill clarifies the law on who can sue and when they can sue,” said Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), who sponsored the legislation in the House.

The law will apply to claims where a buyer is dissatisfied with a seller’s product, usually when the product is damaged, but no injuries have occurred, Pawlenty said. If an injury occurred, a person could sue under tort laws, Pawlenty said.

The law is the result of an agreement between several interest groups that met during the past year to hammer out the compromise. The provision is seen as an improvement to the previous law, which passed during a special session in 1998. That legislation was prompted by concerns over a case involving Marvin Windows, a Warroad-based company.

The bill is not retroactive, and would have no effect on pending litigation. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

HF1267/SF1126*/CH358

★ CONSUMERS

Auto glass rebate limit

Auto glass rebates will be limited to \$35 and insurance companies will no longer be required to pay “any reasonable cost” for glass replacement, under a law signed April 6 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law will require insurance companies to pay an average cost for windshield replacement.

“Windshield costs are out of control in this state,” said House sponsor Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville) during earlier debate on the House floor. “Hopefully, this will bring prices back to a reasonable range.”

The average cost will be determined by an annual study, funded voluntarily through insurance and glass companies. If the companies don’t voluntarily contribute, they will have violated the law and the Legislature will revisit the issue next year, Wolf said.

The Department of Commerce will coordinate the study. The study is likely to cost \$35,000 a year, he said. There is expected to be no cost to the state.

The law has support from glass and insurance companies and the Department of Commerce, Wolf said.

According to an insurance company study last year, Minnesota’s auto glass replacement costs are 69 percent higher than the national average and are the highest in the nation. Many Minnesota auto glass dealers offer boxes of steaks, rebates of \$200 to customers, or other costly incentives to lure customers.

VE-TOWED



Jason Bosley, driver for Chief’s Towing, leans against his truck during a demonstration held April 13 by towing companies who oppose a bill that would have allowed people to retrieve personal property from their car after it was towed. The bill aimed to clarify existing law which states that a lien can be obtained against vehicles (not the property inside) whose owners have not paid fees for towing and storage. It was vetoed April 13 by the governor.

Wolf said the most important part of the law is it will no longer require insurance companies to pay “all reasonable costs” for window replacement. The state Court of Appeals ruled earlier this year that “reasonable costs” included any freebies or incentives offered by glass companies.

Wolf acknowledged that not all problems related to auto glass costs are solved with this legislation. He still has concerns about insurance companies steering consumers to certain glassmakers, even though consumers can legally obtain glass from any firm. Wolf said he hopes the new law will allow commerce officials more time to focus on steering issues.

Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the Senate version.

The \$35 maximum rebate provision took effect April 7, while the average-cost provisions and mandated study will take effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2656*/SF3441/CH342

★ CRIME

Felony DWI advances

A bill that would increase penalties for repeated drinking and driving offenses passed the House on April 12. The vote was 115-17.

The bill (HF2995/SF2677*) would make it a felony for a person to accumulate four drinking and driving convictions in a 10-year span.

Violators would face up to seven years in prison and a \$14,000 fine. The minimum penalty would be 180 days in jail.

The felony DWI measure was attached to an otherwise noncontroversial bill created to clarify and reorganize existing DWI statutes. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji).

Backed by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), the felony DWI measures were already passed by the House as part of a massive omnibus government spending bill now tied up in a House-Senate conference committee.

Concerned about constitutional challenges, legislators are pulling policy provisions out of that omnibus bill (HF2699) and attaching them to other legislative vehicles.

Stanek said his DWI plan is necessary because the current law — a gross misdemeanor for repeat offenders, whether they have committed two or 12 offenses — does not deter chronic drunken drivers.

“Drunken driving ruins lives and tears families apart,” Stanek said.

Last year, 273 Minnesotans died in alcohol-related vehicle accidents, he added.

Several legislators spoke against the felony DWI amendment, saying there is no funding mechanism in place to pay for potentially higher prison and jail costs.

“I’m opposed to this amendment for the simple reason we don’t pay for it,” said Rep. Rob Leighton (DFL-Austin).

“Be honest and be up-front on what the costs are,” said Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey).

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) noted that one report said the bill would add 1,100 people to Minnesota jails and prisons, based

on the number of drunken driving offenders with four or more offenses last year. Mahoney said the state may have to build another prison to house only DWI offenders.

Stanek said there is some funding for the measure in the omnibus state government appropriations bill, where the felony DWI measures had been approved earlier.

Under Stanek's plan, once a person is found guilty of a felony DWI offense, that person would always be classified as a felon on further DWI charges, regardless of the time passed between offenses, Stanek said.

A felony DWI charge would be dubbed a first-degree offense, under the bill. The bill classifies second-, third-, and fourth-degree drunken driving charges based on aggravated factors involved in the offense. A second-degree offense would have two factors; a third-degree DWI would have one additional factor.

The factors would include prior impaired-driving offenses in the past 15 years, an alcohol concentration higher than 0.20 at the time of the offense, and driving impaired with children under age 16 in the vehicle.

The bill now returns to the Senate.

Penalties for false IDs

A bill that would increase penalties for minors who attempt to use false identification cards to purchase alcohol passed the House on April 10. The vote was 84-48.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), would increase the penalty on a second offense for fraudulently attempting to purchase alcohol from a misdemeanor to a gross misdemeanor.

The bill (HF2655/SF2845*) also would allow the alcohol distributor — from a liquor store clerk to a bouncer at a nightclub — to confiscate identification cards that appear to be false.

"The intent is to create a meaningful deterrent to using false IDs," Leppik said. "To many people, it is worth the risk because the consequences are few."

Leppik's plan would require the confiscated license to be turned over to the police or to the card owner within 48 hours. The Senate bill would require confiscated identification to be given directly to the police within 24 hours.

The Senate bill also includes a provision on truancy that is not in the House version.

Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) said the bill is necessary because of the increased access to false identification cards available on the Internet.

Dehler offered a successful amendment that would reduce the penalty for clerks who sell tobacco to minors if the clerk accidentally misreads the identification presented. The

penalty, currently a gross misdemeanor, would become a petty misdemeanor on the first two offenses.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) then offered an amendment that would lower the penalty for clerks who sell alcohol to underage people when the clerk similarly misreads an identification card. The penalty would be reduced from a gross misdemeanor to a misdemeanor. That amendment passed 68-64.

A gross misdemeanor conviction carries a maximum penalty of one year imprisonment and a \$3,000 fine. A misdemeanor conviction carries a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and a \$700 fine.

The bill now heads to a House-Senate conference committee.

Fleeing the police

A person who fails to halt a car when signaled by police to stop could be charged with fleeing an officer, under a bill the House passed on April 10. The vote was 128-1.

The definition of a law enforcement official also would include an agent at a federally recognized American Indian reservation, under the bill.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) is sponsoring the bill (HF3825/SF3338*), which would add language to the definition of fleeing an officer in a vehicle. Refusal to stop a car would be added to the definition of fleeing, which already states that a person is fleeing if the driver increases speed or extinguishes the headlights.

Under the bill, tribal police forces would not be forced to carry unlimited annual liability insurance. Currently, cities in Minnesota have unlimited annual insurance through the League of Minnesota Cities, Smith said. The force must have insurance with an annual cap of three times the amount of a single occurrence, which is \$3 million, Smith said.

The bill comes from a court case where the judge dismissed a drunken driving case because the tribal force that arrested the driver did not have the unlimited annual liability insurance required by statute, Smith said.

"Let them arrest drunk drivers and not let (the drivers) get off because the officers don't have enough insurance," Smith said during floor debate.

The bill now heads to the governor's desk.

Protecting kids from pimps

Penalties would expand laws targeting people who solicit teens to become prostitutes, under a bill the House passed April 12. The vote was 131-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), the bill (HF2830) aims to curb

solicitors, commonly called pimps, from enticing young children, both boys and girls, into prostitution.

Current law makes it a felony to solicit a person under age 16 to become a prostitute. The maximum penalty is 20 years in prison. The bill would raise the age portion, making it a 20-year felony to solicit anyone under age 18.

"It didn't make sense to have pimps have more severe sentences for soliciting teens under age 15 than when they are under age 18," Clark said.

Clark explained that the bill stems from seeing the rise in teenage prostitution in her neighborhood. She noted that the average age a child enters prostitution is 14.

"Pimps are there, soliciting particularly young girls," Clark said.

Increasing the age from 16 to 18 means more pimps will go to prison, Clark said. Currently, a pimp who solicits a 16- or 17-year-old person into prostitution only receives presumptive probation, she said.

"They don't even go to jail now," Clark said.

Many prostitutes do not testify against the pimps now because they are fearful that person will be back on the street quickly.

"They are scared to report it," Clark said.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

Falsely reporting stolen checks

Falsely claiming that blank checks or debit cards have been stolen will be a misdemeanor under a law Gov. Jesse Ventura signed April 10.

The law, sponsored in the House by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), will create a misdemeanor when someone falsely tells his or her financial institution the items are missing or stolen.

"This is not going after people who mistakenly overdraft their accounts," Stanek said recently. "This is for people who intentionally and criminally defraud banks and businesses by writing out a number of bad checks."

There is no cost to the bill, he added.

The law would cover scenarios where individuals write several bad checks and then report to the bank that those checks were stolen.

Sen. Dave Johnson (DFL-Bloomington) sponsored the legislation in the Senate. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2751/SF3455*/CH354

Treating sex offenders

Predatory sex offenders may wind up back in correctional facilities instead of staying in treatment programs, under a law signed April 11 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The measure, sponsored in the House by Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), will send

offenders back to prison if they refuse to participate in treatment.

"The taxpayers assume that when they go to a treatment facility, they are trying to get better," Holberg said. "That's not necessarily the case."

The law creates an incentive for offenders to participate, she said, because they will otherwise head to a less attractive prison setting.

The sex offender will no longer be able to plead his or her case to a special review board, under the law.

The cost of keeping an offender in treatment is three times the cost of correctional facilities, Holberg said.

"If they can't make progress, why should we, as taxpayers, continue to support their treatment costs?" Holberg said.

Predatory sex offenders have committed aggravated and repeated offenses, as well as sex offenses while committing such crimes as murder, manslaughter, or robbery.

About 15 predatory offenders are committed each year in the state, and none have ever been released, Holberg said. The law requires a study examining sex offender policy and management.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version.

The law is effective April 12, 2000.
HF3457/SF2858*/CH359

★ ENVIRONMENT

Permission for mosquito spraying

A new law signed April 6 by Gov. Jesse Ventura will require the Metropolitan Mosquito Control District to get the approval of the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources before spraying state lands.

State law already allowed a landowner to refuse to allow Mosquito Control to spray his or her land with insecticides. Effective April 7, 2000, the new law gives the DNR that same right with regard to state parks, wildlife management areas, or other publicly owned lands.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee, sponsored the measure because Mosquito Control sprayed chemicals at Fort Snelling State Park in July 1999 despite objections from the department.

Ozment said the DNR should have jurisdiction over the decision to spray chemicals in wildlife management areas because the department has the expertise in the chemicals' effects on vegetation, water quality, wildlife habitat, and related issues.

He also said that current law gives the Department of Health authority over the DNR or land owners to authorize spraying for

PICTURE PERFECT



John Schooners, legislative coordinator for Minnesota Outdoors Heritage Alliance from Shakopee, videotapes an April 12 rally in the Capitol rotunda as House Speaker Steve Sviggum addresses the group. The event was organized to gather support for a proposed constitutional amendment to dedicate part of the state sales tax to increase funding for the environment and state parks.

mosquitoes that are known to carry diseases.

The Senate sponsor of the measure was Sen. Bob Lessard (DFL-Int'l Falls).
HF3134*/SF2857/CH339

Underwater lumber recovery

Logs that have been submerged on lake and river bottoms can be salvaged under a new law that was signed April 6 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Effective April 7, 2000, the new law will allow a person or company wanting to salvage logs from underwater to apply for a lease through the state Department of Natural Resources.

The fee for a lease will be \$500 for Minnesota residents and \$2,500 for those who live outside the state. Terms of a lease are negotiable.

Logs can be salvaged only if they are submerged at depths of 20 feet or more. A lease will require that precautions be taken to avoid disturbing the bottom of the lake or river.

Also, the person or company with a lease will have to notify the Minnesota Historical Society if they find a historical artifact, such as a sled that was used to carry logs across a frozen lake.

The state also will receive 25 percent of the money from the sale of the logs, based on the weighted average selling price.

Some of the proceeds from the leases will go to the state's general fund, and some will go to the game and fish fund. If the lake or river is on school trust fund lands, the money

will go into the permanent school fund.

The measure was sponsored by Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora).

HF2559/SF2546*/CH337

★ GAMBLING

Card counting devices prohibited

Gamblers are prohibited from using devices that can count cards or analyze strategy under a law signed April 6 by Gov. Jesse Ventura. Usage of such devices is now considered a felony.

Sponsored in the House by Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City), the law, effective April 7, 2000, establishes several new felonies.

Attempting to open or enter a device to remove money, chips, or tokens will bring a felony charge.

Similarly, someone who intentionally uses counterfeit chips or tokens also could be charged with a felony, and an employee of the gambling licensee who cheats, as defined by the law, could be charged with a felony.

"There are professional cheats that travel across the state using these devices," Osskopp said.

The law was needed because a card club will open this month at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, Osskopp said.

"There is nothing in law to regulate it," he said.

Indian casinos are exempt from this law

because the state does not have jurisdiction to enforce the measure. The law is modeled after gambling laws in Nevada and New Jersey, Osskopp added.

The law also makes it a felony to manufacture, sell, or distribute cards, tokens, or dice used to violate these gambling provisions. Another portion of the law makes it a felony to instruct someone else to violate the law.

The law also expands the list of places where charitable gambling halls can legally make contributions. The amendment would allow gambling facilities to contribute to community arts organizations.

Currently, contributions can be made to public and private educational institutions, scholarships, churches, natural resources projects, such as trail upgrades or recreational and community facilities.

Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the Senate version.

HF3571/SF2828*/CH336

★ GAME & FISH

Lifetime licenses

Lifetime licenses for hunting and fishing will be available under a new law signed April 6.

Under the measure, sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) and Sen. Bob Lessard (DFL-Int'l Falls), people who want to hunt and fish will have the option to buy either a lifetime license or the traditional annual license.

The licenses are scheduled to be available March 1, 2001, for Minnesota residents and March 1, 2002, for non-residents.

Fees for lifetime licenses are based on four groups: ages 3 and under, ages 4 to 15, ages 16 to 50, and ages 51 and older.

Lifetime fishing licenses for Minnesota residents in those age groups will cost \$227, \$300, \$383, and \$203 respectively. People who purchase that license will still need to purchase annual stamps if they want to fish for salmon or trout. Lifetime fishing licenses will also be available for non-residents at higher prices.

Lifetime small-game hunting licenses for residents will cost \$217, \$290, \$363, and \$213 for the same age groups. Those will also be available to non-residents at a higher price.

Lifetime deer hunting licenses for residents will cost \$337, \$450, \$573, and \$383 respectively.

The law also will allow lifetime sporting licenses for residents that would cover fishing and small-game hunting. Such licenses will cost \$357, \$480, \$613, and \$413 respectively.

Lifetime deer hunting or sporting licenses will not be available for non-residents.

Revenue from the licenses will establish a

lifetime fish and wildlife trust fund. Money in that fund will be invested by the state Board of Investment, and it will pay for projects that currently are funded by revenue from annual hunting and fishing licenses.

Other provisions of the bill make permanent a law that was set to be repealed this year.

That law allows people in five Minnesota counties to obtain two deer hunting licenses — one license to use a firearm and one to use a bow and arrow — and to take one deer with each license. The five counties are Kittson, Lake of the Woods, Marshall, Pennington, and Roseau.

The law took effect April 7, 2000.

HF3510*/SF3378/CH341

Angling for a fee hike

Hunting and fishing license fees would see across-the-board increases, under a bill the House passed April 13. The vote was 87-44.

Revenue from licenses and from fines that are generated by enforcement of state laws goes into the state's game and fish fund. That fund also contains money from the federal government, which is allotted according to the size of the state and the number of people who buy hunting and fishing licenses.

License fee increases would vary, but the primary increase is \$3 per license.

Fiscal analysts project that the game and fish fund will face a deficit in fiscal year 2003 because revenues are not increasing at the same rate as expenses.

The bill (HF3046), sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), would help resolve that problem.

The bill would require the license fee increases to be effective only with a matching appropriation from the state's general fund. Holsten said that only makes sense because the game and fish fund pays for projects that provide a general benefit to all state residents, not just to those who hunt and fish.

Those projects include improving water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams; stocking fish and enhancing aquatic vegetation; and increasing public water access.

The game and fish fund pays for some of the Department of Natural Resources' administrative costs. The bill would effectively replace part of the game and fish fund's allocation to the administrative costs with the general fund appropriation.

Under Holsten's proposal, \$2 of revenue from the fee increase would be matched by \$1 from the general fund. The fee increases are projected to raise about \$3.1 million in revenue for the 2002-03 biennium, and the general fund match would be slightly more than \$1.5 million.

The bill would also prohibit the DNR from using the extra money to increase its permanent staff levels in the divisions of fish and enforcement beyond their 1994 levels.

Also under the bill, \$500,000 from the general fund would go toward the DNR's walleye stocking program.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

★ GOVERNMENT

Bleacher safety changes

A bill that would modify safety requirements for bleachers, such as those at sports facilities or local parks, is on its way to the governor's desk.

The House passed the bill (HF2846/SF3272*) April 11. The vote was 93-39.

New safety requirements for bleachers were signed into law last year, but Gov. Jesse Ventura line-item vetoed \$100,000 that would have helped communities and school districts pay the costs of complying with the new standards.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), sponsor of the bill, said he is concerned about bleacher safety but that the 1999 law will force schools and other organizations to pay for costly upgrades. This bill, he said, would ease the financial burden of those who have to comply with the 1999 law.

That law requires bleachers to have gaps between seats, floorboards, and guardrails that do not exceed 4 inches. The previous standard was 9 inches. Bleachers that do not meet the 4-inch requirement and are taller than 30 inches need to be replaced or safety nets must be installed by Jan. 1, 2001, under the law.

Bradley's bill would make those requirements apply only to bleachers that are at least 55 inches tall, which he said would exempt common bleachers that are only about five tiers high. The bill also would extend the time of compliance to Jan. 1, 2002.

The bill had earlier been modified by the House so that the requirements would apply to bleachers taller than 30 inches. But a House-Senate conference committee removed that provision.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound), sponsor of the 1999 law, said the House should send the bill back to the conference committee in hopes of upholding the 30-inch standard. But the House voted to accept the conference committee report.

Smith had sponsored the 1999 measure in response to a fatal accident. Six-year-old Toby Lee of Mound died in January 1999 after falling from a set of bleachers while attending a hockey game at a Hutchinson arena. Smith said Toby fell through a 13-inch gap in those bleachers.

Bradley said his version of the bill still would require the worst sets of bleachers to be fixed. He also said that no accidents have been reported where someone has fallen through a 9-inch gap.

Alternative bidding process

The state would be able to purchase some items through a "reverse auction" process under a bill that is on its way to the governor's desk.

The House passed the bill (HF3495/SF2972*) April 12. The vote was 129-2.

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township), sponsor of the bill, said vendors would compete to sell office supplies or other such items that the state currently buys through a bidding process.

The term "reverse auction" refers to a process where sellers compete to offer the lowest price, instead of a normal auction where buyers compete to offer the highest price.

Under the bill, the state would request proposals for a purchase, and each vendor would submit an open proposal via the Internet. Vendors could then adjust their proposals to compete with each other to offer the lowest price.

The process would not be used for construction projects or other types of purchases that are regulated by other laws.

Typically, the state uses the traditional bidding process, which involves receiving closed bids from a number of vendors and picking the lowest one.

When the bill was heard in the House

Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee, Anderson said the open process has been used successfully in other states to purchase large quantities of salt for roads, aluminum for license plates, or other types of purchases.

★ HEALTH

Training for care providers

Foster and respite care providers will have to meet training standards to care for children dependent on certain medical devices to live, under a law signed April 6 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law is an attempt to decrease the chance that a child left in the company of a foster care provider could suffer harm due to a provider's inexperience or lack of training with special equipment critical to the life and care of the child.

Care providers will be required to have training or experience with a child's medical equipment before being allowed to care for the child.

Agencies that place children in homes, even if it's only on a temporary basis, will be required to ensure that the care provider has the necessary training before being entrusted with the child's care.

The legislation was brought forward with the help of Sharon Morrissey and husband Don Baierl of St. Paul, whose infant daughter died in 1997 because a care provider didn't know precisely how to operate the child's health equipment.

The Department of Human Services will be required to develop the training form. Officials expect little, if any, fiscal impact to the department.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) and Sen. Sandra Pappas (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the measure, which is effective Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3342/SF3025*/CH338

Prompt payment of claims

Health insurance companies will be required to promptly pay clean claims by health care providers and facilities under a law signed April 10 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Third-party administrators also will be subject to payment requirements, but the new law will not pertain to services provided by pharmacists.

A "clean claim" is defined as a claim that has no defect or impropriety, including any lack of required documentation or any circumstance that prevents timely payment.

Health plan companies and third-party administrators will be required to pay or deny a clean claim within 30 days of receiving the claim. Claims not paid in that time will be subject to an interest payment of 1.5 percent of the claim per month.

The company providing the health plan or the third-party administrator would be responsible for paying the interest — not the insured party.

Late claim payments will not be subject to an interest payment if the payment is delayed so that the company can review potentially fraudulent or abusive billing practices, however.

Furthermore, the commissioner of the Department of Health will be prohibited from assessing a financial administrative penalty against a health plan company that violates the law.

The new law takes effect Jan. 1, 2001.

Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the legislation.

HF2643/SF2767*/CH349

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Protection for newborns

A bill that would provide a "safe place" for desperate mothers to leave unwanted newborns now awaits Gov. Jesse Ventura's consideration.

The bill, returned from conference committee and passed by the House April 12, would allow a mother (or a person of her consent) to leave an unharmed newborn at a hospital emergency room up to 72 hours following the child's birth without facing prosecution.

The hospital would be required to accept

BONDING TESTIMONY



JoAnn Frost, *right*, listens as her daughter Kim, who has cerebral palsy, testifies before the conference committee considering the House and Senate bonding provisions in favor of bonding for the Specialty Care Unit at Gillette Children's Hospital in St. Paul. Kim is a cheerleader at Roosevelt Middle School in Blaine and waved her pom-pom as she told committee members that she would try out and hopes to be a cheerleader at Blaine High School.

the child and notify a local welfare agency within 24 hours of the departure of the person delivering the baby.

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), sponsor of the bill (HF2945/SF2615*), said allowing a person to leave a child at a place where it will not be harmed without the fear of being prosecuted has the potential to save lives.

Under current Minnesota law, a mother who willfully neglects a newborn when considered to be reasonably able to care for the infant can be charged with a gross misdemeanor.

This measure would allow the individual delivering the unwanted newborn to exit the building without providing identification. The hospital would be allowed to ask questions about the medical history of the mother or newborn, but the person leaving the baby would not be required to provide any information.

A newborn left behind would be considered an abandoned child. According to the bill, the child must not have any obvious injuries or illness in order for the hospital to accept it.

A hospital or employee of the hospital receiving the child would be considered immune from any civil liability that could potentially result, under the bill, if the act of receiving the newborn is done in good faith.

Furthermore, a social service agency taking custody of the child would not be required to later reunite the child with its parents or search for relatives of the child as a placement option.

Paying for audiology services

A law amending state medical assistance reimbursement requirements for audiology and related services was signed April 10 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law will require that the state reimburse speech-language pathology and audiology services provided by a person issued a temporary registration at the same rate as services performed by a registered pathologist or audiologist.

To receive the same reimbursement rate, temporarily licensed professionals will have to undergo the appropriate supervision and monitoring requirements provided in existing state law.

A speech-language pathologist is a professional who is licensed by the state, and qualified by training and experience, to diagnose and treat speech and language problems.

Audiologists are trained professionals who specialize in working with individuals with hearing problems. Audiologists identify, treat, and help prevent hearing loss for people of all ages.

The new law will take effect Aug. 1, 2000. Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) and Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the legislation. HF2477/SF2499*/CH347

★ **LAW**

No public defenders for youths

Public defenders will not be appointed to child protection cases if the juvenile is younger than 10, under a law Gov. Jesse Ventura signed April 10.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) was House sponsor of the measure, which creates a uniform system statewide that dictates when a public defender should be brought in to represent a child. A juvenile age 10 or older can obtain a public defender, but not a child under age 10.

“Infants don’t need separate legal council, and it’s a waste of money,” Bishop said. “Some attorneys are being hired to represent a 2-year-old. That doesn’t need to be done.”

The law originates from the state Board of Public Defenders. In a recent letter, State Public Defender John Stuart explained that the law pertains only to child protection or services cases, not to juvenile delinquency cases.

Stuart said some courts never appoint attorneys unless the child is at least 12 years old, while other courts always appoint a lawyer for young children.

“The age of 10 was chosen as the cutoff because children under the age of 10 cannot be charged with juvenile delinquency, but may be dealt with in a children in need of protection or services proceeding,” Stuart wrote.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3119/SF2725*/CH357

Legal actions against brewers

The House approved a bill April 10 that would clarify existing law regarding legal actions between beer brewers and wholesalers.

The bill (HF1947/SF1618*) would allow wholesalers to sue a brewer who is violating the state laws regarding that industry in either state or federal court.

The measure passed on a 128-0 vote.

The bill would give wholesalers the right to a trial by jury against brewers, and it would provide that the right to bring action may not be waived except at the time the suit is filed.

The state’s beer brewers and wholesalers laws include provisions prohibiting brewers from inducing or coercing wholesalers into accepting delivery of any alcoholic beverage

or any other commodity which wasn’t ordered by the wholesaler.

The laws also establish the right of free association between all brewers and wholesalers. Brewers cannot collaborate to fix somehow artificially elevated prices.

The measure, sponsored by Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris), now goes to the governor.

★ **SAFETY**

Paintball gun measure fails

The House defeated a bill that would have prohibited a person from selling or renting a paintball gun to a person under the age of 18 without written consent from a parent or legal guardian. The bill failed on a 72-57 vote.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), sponsor of the bill (HF3041/SF2417*), described it as a “parent’s right to know” measure.

“Parents have the right to know when their children are going out to buy or rent one of these paintball guns,” she said.

Leppik cited a study by ophthalmologists showing that the guns are the leading cause of eye injuries to boys under the age of 18.

The bill also would have prohibited the discharge or possession of a paintball gun on or



Rep. Peggy Leppik holds a paintball gun during April 11 floor debate about a bill that would have regulated sales of such guns to minors. The bill was defeated.

in public school grounds and buildings.

Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley) called the measure a “note from mom bill.” Gerlach said that the bill was unnecessary because the paintball gun industry is already beginning to regulate itself by requiring users to wear facial protection and to sign consent forms.

Rep. Steve Dehler (R-St. Joseph) said that many children’s activities, from playing sports to playing on playground equipment, can be dangerous, too, and safety should remain a matter of parental concern, not a legislative responsibility.

Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington) said the bill offered a reasonable solution to a problem. He said that despite wearing facial protection he had been injured on the top of the head while participating in a paintball gun game.

Leppik said the bill would clarify the state’s current laws regarding whether retailers can sell the paintball guns to minors without parental consent. She said the bill would have established a law for paintball guns similar to current laws regulating BB guns.

The measure had already passed the Senate.

Protection from bloodborne diseases

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law April 10 aimed at reducing occupational exposures to bloodborne diseases through sharps injuries.

The law will require employers to comply with federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations on bloodborne pathogens.

It will also require that employers review written exposure control plans annually and document in the plan consideration of appropriate engineering controls that are designed to eliminate or minimize exposure.

Sharps are needles and other medical devices used in testing. They are often used to draw blood and therefore carry the most risk for exposure to diseases carried through the blood.

The new law will require that a company establish a safety committee to make recommendations for using the best methods to limit injury. The law also requires that a person representing employees most likely to use or encounter a device creating exposure to bloodborne pathogens will be appointed to the committee.

Finally, an employer will be required to establish internal procedures to document the route of exposure and circumstances under which an exposure incident took place. The law spells out how information must be documented, as well. It should include the procedure being performed when the incident took

place and the protective equipment or clothing used at the time of the exposure incident.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) and Sen. Linda Higgins (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the legislation. The law takes effect June 10, 2000.

HF2639/SF2397*/CH351

Help in identifying bicycles

Identifying stolen bicycles would be made easier under a measure the House passed April 10. The vote was 68-64.

The proposal (HF2489), sponsored by Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), would allow municipalities selling impounded bicycles to require purchasers to register the bikes with the state Department of Public Safety or with a deputy registrar appointed by the department.

Currently, owners can voluntarily register their bicycles with the state to help prevent theft and increase chances of recovery when a bike is stolen. The registration also assists in accident victim identification.

The cost to register a bicycle is \$9 for a three-year period with a \$1 filing fee.

According to the department, over \$1.5 million dollars worth of bicycles are stolen each year in the state.

The bill awaits action on the Senate floor.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Left-lane bill passed

Drivers in the left lane would be asked to move to the right when possible but would not be required to change lanes, under a conference committee bill that won final passage April 13 in the House. The vote was 95-33.

The bill (HF3091/SF2484*) now heads to the governor’s desk.

Sponsored by Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), the bill would require the placement of signs every 50 miles along freeways reminding drivers to move to the right lane after passing.

“This bill is aimed at people who park in the left-hand lane and never move over,” Tomassoni said. “We’re just trying to get people to be more courteous.”

Tomassoni said the revised language — which asks drivers to move to the right “to the extent it is practical” rather than requiring a move — eliminates legislators’ concerns about making the action a crime.

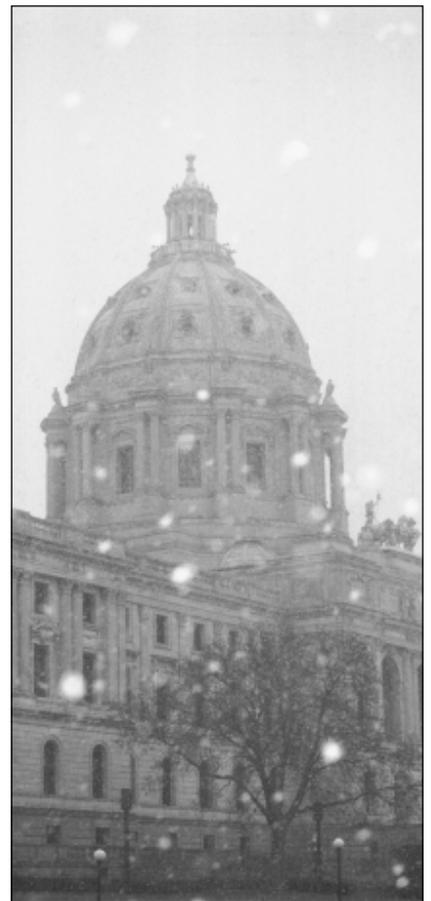
Originally, the bill included a petty misdemeanor penalty for people who would not move to the right lane. In addition, the earlier version of the bill also made a violation of the law a primary offense, meaning law enforcement could stop a driver for not moving to the right lane.

Tomassoni has said throughout the session that his goal was to obtain signs asking people to move out of the left lane and that he was not pushing for the petty misdemeanor language.

The signs would state, “Move to the right after passing.” The signs would not state, “It’s the law,” which was called for in previous versions of the bill.

Senate Minority Leader Dick Day (R-Owatonna) is sponsoring the Senate version.

SNOW DAY



A brief but heavy snowfall with temperatures in the 30s shattered visions of spring April 12, but one day later the snow had disappeared and temperatures approached 60 degrees.

Mandatory minimums

State laws set minimum penalties for a list of crimes, some of them strange and seemingly outdated

By CHRIS VETTER

If a company wants to manufacture soda pop in Minnesota, it better obtain a license from the state. If it gets caught manufacturing soft drinks without the permit, the owners face a minimum sentence of a \$25 fine or 30 days in jail.

Or, if you perform chiropractics without a license, beware the consequences. Don't even use terms or letters that describe yourself as a doctor of chiropractics. The minimum penalty for this gross misdemeanor is \$1,000 or 30 days in jail.

Minnesota has a wide range of mandatory minimum sentences in its statutes, for offenses from drinking and driving to illegal drug possession.

Minnesotans may know about minimum sentences for gun crimes, criminal sexual conduct offenses, or other violent crimes, but few

For instance, one law says that no attorney or anyone working for the attorney can solicit a person to hire the attorney. The mandatory minimum penalty is \$50. The law took effect in 1929 and was only altered once to make language gender neutral.

The law is meant to deter attorneys from catching people at vulnerable moments, according to annotated Minnesota statutes.

"The practice of 'ambulance chasing' is a violation of ethics of legal profession, branding those who indulge in it with professional infamy," the document states.

Until 1995, Minnesota had a law that prohibited working on the Sabbath. The minimum fine was \$1.

A law, passed in 1923 regarding traveling carnivals, states that the event must not contain lewd or obscene material or feature any gambling concessions. The mandatory penalty is a minimum of \$50

conservation laws faces a minimum penalty of a \$10 fine or 10 days in jail.

State law forbids secret societies, and a violation carries a mandatory \$2 fine.

One mandatory penalty involving banking not only sets up the minimum fine of \$700 or a year in jail — it explicitly requires the jail time to be served in the Stillwater prison.

In more recent times, the Minnesota Legislature has passed laws with mandatory minimum sentences for a variety of criminal offenses.

If a person is convicted of certain drug or gun crimes, the judge must impose the minimum sentence, whether it is 60 days in jail or five years in prison. The judge has no leeway in determining the *minimum* jail time in these cases.

Minnesota began to push for more mandatory minimum penalties for violent crime about 1980, when the Legislature approved minimum sentences for persons who commit crimes with guns, according to the House Research report.

Nationally, drug offenders are the hardest hit under mandatory minimum laws, according to a legislative report. A mid-1990s study shows that 90 percent of the defendants sentenced under statutes with mandatory minimum provisions were convicted for drug offenses.

Critics of mandatory sentences say such provisions lock up too many low-level offenders and do not catch major drug traffickers. Another concern is "sentencing cliffs," which occur when a small dispute in the facts of a case leads to a large difference in sentences.

For instance, a drug offender who had the minimum amount of drugs in possession to reach a felony-level crime faces the mandatory minimum penalty. If that person had slightly less of a substance in his or her possession, there would be no mandatory sentence.

Other experts say that mandatory minimum penalties do not deter crime.

"The weight of the evidence clearly shows that enactment of mandatory penalties has either no demonstrable marginal deterrent effects or short-term effects that rapidly waste away," wrote University of Minnesota law professor Michael Tonry in a criminal justice journal.

Proponents of the mandatory minimums say it is better to have certain people, such as repeat sex offenders, sent to prison for a long time. 🐼



Judge R. Joseph Quinn presides over a hearing in Anoka County District Court.

may realize the history of mandatory penalties stretches across the 20th century.

Many of the mandatory penalties predate the 1963 criminal code that implemented maximum penalties, according to a report from the non-partisan House Research Department.

State law books contain a variety of mandatory minimum penalties, some of them now appearing strange and outdated.

or 30 days in the workhouse.

That law has not been altered since its passage 77 years ago.

Some of the state's mandatory sentences pertain to food handling. One law says a fine of \$50 or 60 days in jail will be imposed on a person selling veal from calves that were less than four weeks old.

A person violating the state's wildflower

Gunfight at the Capitol

Firearms laws have become a frequent subject of legislative debate in recent years

By **BRENDA VAN DYCK**

It wasn't until the last 25 years that Minnesota began creating laws to control guns. Most laws that govern gun possession and use are federal laws.

Up until 1975, the only laws regulating firearms in Minnesota were those dealing with the safe use of firearms for hunting; other regulations existed in local ordinance.

But in 1975, the Minnesota Legislature took its first major stab at gun control. The Legislature passed a bill that regulated the possession of handguns and required people to obtain a permit to carry a handgun in a public place.

The law prohibited certain people from possessing handguns, including: people under 18, except if they have had firearms training or are supervised while using a gun; people convicted of a violent crime, unless 10 years have passed since the expiration of sentence; and people who have drug, alcohol, or mental problems.

To carry a handgun, eligible people have to apply for a permit with their local chief of police or county sheriff, who must then check for criminal records, histories, or warrant information. Applicants must prove they have a personal safety or occupational hazard in order to carry a handgun. Carrying a handgun without this permit is a gross misdemeanor.

Under the law, handguns can be transported in a motor vehicle, snowmobile, or boat only if they are unloaded and stored in a closed and fastened case.

The 1975 law also outlawed the sale and manufacture of Saturday night specials, cheap guns made of material having a melting point of less than 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The melting point is an indication of the "flimsiness" of the gun — the lower the melting point, the cheaper the gun.

The Legislature acted again in 1977 when it passed a law that imposed a seven-day waiting period on the purchase of handguns from federally licensed dealers. During that seven-

day period, law enforcement officials check the applicant's background for any conditions that prohibit a person from possessing a handgun under the 1975 law.

The background check is good for one year, so people can buy more than one gun after the initial application has been approved. The law excludes unlicensed dealers and antique gun collectors. More importantly, it excludes "private transfers," that is, sales by people who don't trade in guns for a living.

The Legislature also passed a law prohibiting the possession, ownership, and operation of short-barreled shotguns (i.e., "sawed-off" shotguns), except by the military, law enforcement, or prison officials. The law also excludes those possessing these shotguns as collectors' items.

In 1985, the Legislature passed the Uniform Handgun Control Law, which took away local governments' authority to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state laws.

Earlier in the decade, both the Minneapolis and St. Paul city councils had passed ordinances that required people to obtain permits to carry loaded, concealed weapons in those cities. Local ordinances also regulated the transportation of firearms and required liability insurance.

Those in favor of the law complained that strict local ordinances meant they could be breaking the law when they came to Minneapolis or St. Paul, but were in compliance with state law when they left the city limits.

Legislative gun debate in 1988 centered on a proposed "right to bear arms" state constitutional amendment.



Handguns that were seized by law enforcement agencies at the Firearms Lab.

The amendment, backed by the National Rifle Association, among others, would have asked voters to amend the constitution by adding these words: "The right of a citizen to keep and bear arms for the defense and security of the person, family or home, or for lawful hunting, recreation or marksmanship training shall not be abridged."

At the time, 42 states, through their constitutions, guaranteed their citizens' right to bear arms. The gun lobby said the amendment was necessary to prevent the Legislature from banning gun ownership in the future.

The proposed amendment was narrowly defeated in the Senate Judiciary and the House Rules committees. Legislators expressed concern about the amendment's effect on the state's existing gun laws.

Opponents of the amendment said the proposal was not necessary because no one was proposing to ban gun ownership. They warned that it could be used in court to challenge the state's existing restrictions on the purchase and carrying of guns.

In 1989, legislators tried, and failed, to ban military-style assault weapons. Bills were introduced in the House and Senate that would have prohibited the sale and ownership, possession or operation of semi-automatic military assault weapons. Law enforcement officials and antique collectors would have been exempt. The law also would have



re displayed at the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension on a wall in the

required existing owners of assault weapons to register.

The legislation was prompted by the January 1989 murder of five children in Stockton, Calif., who were shot by a man who had purchased an AK-47 assault rifle in Oregon. Similar legislation had been introduced in U.S. Congress at the time, as well.

Until 1975, the only laws regulating firearms in Minnesota were those dealing with the safe use of firearms for hunting; other regulations existed in local ordinance.

The Minnesota Senate Judiciary Committee passed the Senate's version of the bill, but the House Judiciary Committee voted to study the issue rather than pass the House's version of the bill, thereby killing it for the remainder of the year.

The Legislature took up gun control issues again in 1993. Numerous provisions were considered, and many of those provisions became law.

Under the 1993 measure, people wanting to buy military-style assault weapons have to undergo background checks and a seven-day waiting period, the same as what's required

for handgun purchases. This provision was enacted instead of a provision to ban military-style assault weapons. The final bill also included a ban on conversion kits that would make semi-automatic weapons fire like machine guns.

The law made it a crime to carry a rifle or shotgun in a public place. It is also a crime to keep a loaded weapon in a place where children would have access to it.

The Legislature made it a felony to bring a gun to school or on a school bus. Students bringing guns to school will lose their driver's license privileges until age 18.

In addition, teachers and school officials were given immunity from civil and criminal liability if they intervene with armed students to protect others from harm.

St. Paul and Minneapolis sought to reverse the 1985 uniform gun control law and gain back the authority to enact gun control ordinances tougher than state laws.

One bill introduced in 1993 would have allowed cities in the seven-county metropolitan area to control assault weapons, large ammunition clips, the possession of guns by

minors, and the possession of loaded weapons in public places.

Gun advocates were against this effort because they said it would make gun control laws in the state too complicated with individual cities having different ordinances from state law. They pushed for uniformity in gun control laws. Instead of enacting this provision, the Legislature gave cities the authority to regulate the location of gun shops through zoning.

Legislators tried again to ban assault weapons in 1994. Targeting trouble with guns in urban areas, Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls)

sponsored a bill that would have banned the guns in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Spear's bill also required metropolitan gun dealers, under federal jurisdiction, to be licensed by the state.

During a Senate debate, Spear removed the ban on assault weapons in order to win approval for state licensing of Twin Cities gun dealers. But he removed the bill from consideration after a "right to bear arms" amendment was added to it.

The 1994 Legislature did approve a number of provisions aimed at federally licensed gun dealers and at private sales of guns, which had been exempt from background check requirements.

Under the law, felony penalties are doubled for those supplying guns to minors or to anyone whom the gun dealers know will use the gun to commit a crime. It became a gross misdemeanor to provide a handgun or assault weapon to anyone the supplier knows is ineligible to receive one.

Gun suppliers can be held criminally and civilly liable for gun crimes committed by those ineligible to own firearms. And for private, unlicensed dealers, it is a gross misdemeanor for the seller if an ineligible buyer uses the firearm in a crime within a year of obtaining it from the dealer.

In 1996, the Legislature passed a law that would require stalkers and those violating protection orders to surrender their handguns for three years. In addition, if such offenders use a gun while violating a protection order or stalking, they can be barred from owning a gun for the rest of their lives. (The same prohibition applies to those convicted of domestic abuse under a law enacted in 1992.)

The 1996 Legislature also toughened penalties for gun law violations, including penalties for felons illegally possessing firearms. Under those regulations, an adult who negligently stores a loaded firearm that winds up in the hands of someone under 18 is guilty of a gross misdemeanor.

A provision to make it easier for Minnesotans to obtain a permit to carry a concealed weapon was dropped in conference committee that year. Similar measures have been introduced in subsequent years, but have never made it into law.

Brenda van Dyck is the editor/publications manager for the nonpartisan House Research Department.

Head of the class

14-year public education supporter leaves House for a more private life, but will remain active in local school and community issues

By MIKE DE LARCO

Known by her House colleagues as a passionate supporter of public education, Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park) has carried out duties as a legislator with an ear for public well-being and an eye for what is fair and sensible.

Soon, however, Johnson will embark on a new chapter in her life. Having chosen not to run for re-election in the fall, she will bid the House farewell at the end of session following 14 years of attending to the needs and concerns of her constituents.

Johnson said recently that she'll miss the excitement "Capitol life" provides, but quickly affirmed that her decision to step down is met with no regrets.

"I just feel it's the right time for me to leave; it's a time to embark on a new stretch of my life," she said.

Aside from her work on education, Johnson will be remembered for her successful push to exempt newer-model vehicles from state emissions testing in 1995. The idea for the bill, Johnson said, surfaced out of discussion with a

few constituents who disputed the need for the testing on new cars.

In 1999, the Legislature took Johnson's measure a step further and voted to do away with the emissions program altogether, citing problems of cost effectiveness.

Johnson's hard work in pushing for changes in emissions testing, say her colleagues, perhaps best exemplifies the thorough approach she's taken to issues before her.

"I think the Legislature will definitely miss her," said Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm). "Alice, time and again, has been able to bring the common sense aspect of law-making into focus."

Johnson, 59, first took office in 1987, and it didn't take long for her to settle in. She had served as both a legislative assistant for 13 years and a member of the Spring Lake Park City Council before her election to the House.

"I probably was the most informed freshman elected that year," Johnson said with a grin.

The knowledge she brought to the position became quite valuable to others new to the Legisla-

ture, most notably former Rep. Richard Jefferson. Johnson and Jefferson became fast friends and eventually married last year.

"Richard had been my best friend during our time together in the Legislature and

shortly after his wife passed away we started to look at each other in a new light," Johnson said.

Johnson's work at the Legislature always kept her busy, leaving some to marvel how she had any free time for herself. She served as chair of the Sales and Income Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee in 1997 and 1998 and was chair of the House K-12 Education Finance Division in 1995 and 1996.

In addition, Johnson studied at Harvard University when not in session to pursue a master's degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government. After years of study, she obtained her degree in 1996.

Johnson's strong push in the House to better public education left some believing early on that Johnson, at one point, had to have been a classroom teacher. Not so, Johnson says.

"I do, however, believe that education is where the state's future lies," she said.

Tomassoni said it was a pleasure to serve with Johnson on the education finance panel.

"Her sense of humor will also be missed," he said.

Between them, Jefferson and Johnson have nine children. Johnson said community and family activities keep them very busy. She plans to take a year off before taking on any new job.

In addition, she won't quit going to local school board meetings and other community activities in Spring Lake Park, which she has actively attended for many years.

Johnson offered this advice to future legislators: "Don't be afraid to ask questions and raise issues. Chances are that someone else shares your concern." 🐼



STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Alice Johnson

DFL

District 48B – Spring Lake Park

Terms: 7

Career notes: A leader on education issues, Johnson served as chair of the K-12 Finance Division in 1995 and 1996. She later spent two years as chair of the Sales and Income Tax Division.

Taking the next step

After five terms, Orfield leaves House to run for Senate seat

BY JON FURE

Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) may be leaving the House this session after serving 10 years, but he's not leaving the political arena. Orfield will be running for the Senate seat that is held by Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls), who is retiring.

Though he's moving on, Orfield, 38, said it has been a privilege to serve in the House, and running for the Senate would be a new challenge.

"The House is a very open and democratic institution," he said. "Everyone gets to speak, and you learn about different people in the state. It teaches you about the basic elements of human nature with a lot of adrenaline. You get a lot of experience about life in a big hurry."

Orfield is an adjunct professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, where he teaches students about criminal procedure and legislative process. He also works with the Metropolitan Area Research Corporation.

Before he was elected to the House in 1990, Orfield had worked for one of his mentors, former Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser.

Orfield said he was also influenced by members of his own family. When he was growing up, his older brothers and sisters were active in the civil rights movement, and many family discussions revolved around those kinds of issues.



"We talked more about public issues than politics around the dinner table," he said.

Orfield has lived in southwest Minneapolis most of his life, and many of his siblings, parents, and other extended family members still live in that area. He said he is the fourth generation of his family to live in the district, and his son is the fifth.

The only times he has lived outside of Minneapolis were when he earned his law degree from the University of Chicago and when he studied American history at Princeton University.

Orfield said his biggest accomplishments in the House have been related to regional government issues, such as affordable housing and land-use planning. He and other lawmakers from the Minneapolis and St. Paul and inner-ring suburbs formed a coalition, which he said improved the school-equity formula and helped

pass many bills regarding affordable housing and tax sharing.

His book, *Metropolitics*, published in 1997, advocates widespread use of such coalitions, saying it's the only way to properly conduct

regional and urban planning. The book suggests such coalitions help make the region more prosperous and stable.

The book, which is just one of many regional planning concepts Orfield advocates, led to an appearance on the television program "Nightline" that same year.

Orfield sponsored the Metropolitan Reorganization Act of 1994, which brought the Metropolitan Transit Commission, the Regional Transit Board, and the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Council. He also helped develop the Livable Communities Act of 1995, which is designed to avoid having poverty and crime concentrated in certain areas.

"It's a question of fairness between cities and older suburbs versus newer suburbs," he said. "And most cities agree — really only the most affluent suburbs are opposed to affordable housing and tax sharing.

"An argument can be made that it's in everyone's best interest, but I haven't persuaded everyone yet," he said.

Also in 1997, Orfield sponsored a bill that would have made Met Council board members elected instead of appointed, but it was vetoed by Gov. Arne Carlson. 🐼

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Myron Orfield
DFL
District 60B – Minneapolis
Terms: 5

Career notes: Orfield's chief accomplishments in the House have been related to regional government issues, such as affordable housing and land-use planning.

2000 Minnesota House Membership by Seniority

14th term

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

13th term

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

12th term

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

11th term

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

10th term

Clark, Karen (DFL)

9th term

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

8th term

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

7th term

Carruthers, Phil (DFL)
Dawkins, Andy (DFL)
Dorn, John (DFL)
Johnson, Alice M. (DFL)
Milbert, Bob (DFL)
Pelowski Jr., Gene (DFL)
Rukavina, Tom (DFL)
Trimble, Steve (DFL)
Wagenius, Jean (DFL)
Winter, Ted (DFL)

6th term

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

5th term

Davids, Gregory M. (R)
Erhardt, Ron (R)

Goodno, Kevin (R)
Krinkie, Philip (R)
Leppik, Peggy (R)
Mariani, Carlos (DFL)
Orfield, Myron (DFL)
Peterson, Doug (DFL)
Smith, Steve (R)
Wejcman, Linda (DFL)

4th term

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

3rd term

Anderson, Bruce (R)
Bakk, Thomas (Tom) (DFL)
Boudreau, Lynda (R)
Bradley, Fran (R)
Broecker, Sherry (R)
Daggett, Roxann (R)
Entenza, Matt (DFL)
Gunther, Bob (R)
Haas, Bill (R)
Harder, Elaine (R)
Knoblach, Jim (R)
Larsen, Peg (R)
Leighton, Rob (DFL)
Mares, Harry (R)
Marko, Sharon (DFL)
McElroy, Dan (R)
Mulder, Richard (R)
Osskopp, Mike (R)
Paulsen, Erik (R)
Rostberg, Jim (R)
Schumacher, Leslie J. (DFL)

Stanek, Rich (R)
Swenson, Howard (R)
Sykora, Barb (R)
Tuma, John (R)

2nd term

Biernat, Len (DFL)
Chaudhary, Satveer (DFL)
Clark, James T. (R)
Erickson, Sondra (R)
Folliard, Betty (DFL)
Hackbarth, Tom (R)*
Hilty, Bill (DFL)
Juhnke, Al (DFL)
Kielkucki, Tony (R)
Koskinen, Luanne (DFL)
Kubly, Gary W. (DFL)
Kuisle, William (R)
Mullery, Joe (DFL)
Nornes, Bud (R)
Otremba, Mary Ellen (DFL)
Paymar, Michael (DFL)
Reuter, Doug (Ind.)
Rifenberg, Michelle (R)
Seifert, Marty (R)
Stang, Doug (R)
Tingelstad, Kathy (R)
Vandevier, Ray (R)
Westfall, Robert L. (Bob) (R)
Westrom, Torrey (R)

1st term

Abeler, Jim (R)
Buesgens, Mark (R)
Cassell, George (R)
Dorman, Dan (R)
Fuller, Doug (R)
Gerlach, Chris (R)
Gleason, Mark S. (DFL)
Gray, Gregory (DFL)
Haake, Barb (R)
Holberg, Mary Liz (R)
Howes, Larry (R)
Kelliher, Margaret Anderson (DFL)
Larson, Dan (DFL)
Lenczewski, Ann (DFL)
Mahoney, Tim (DFL)
Seifert, Jim (R)
Skoe, Rod (DFL)
Storm, Julie (R)
Swapinski, Dale (DFL)
Westerberg, Andrew (R)
Wilkin, Tim (R)

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

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Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill has passed both the House and Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor, who has several options when considering a bill, can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill;
- or do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium (even-numbered years), a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (Latin for adjournment "without a date certain"). If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes (save pocket vetoes) the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills

passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history—at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

This information is also available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "It's a New Day" link, then click on "The Legislative Log."

Key:
CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
345	2803*	3119	Court reporters allowed to organize under the Public Employment Labor Relations Act.	4/10/00	
346	2969	2803*	Certified public accountant licensing requirements modified.	4/10/00	
347	3477	2499*	Speech language pathology and audiology services medical assistance clarified.	4/10/00	
348	2761	3379*	Omnibus tax-forfeited land bill.	4/10/00	
349	2643	2767*	Health plan companies and third party administrators clean health or home care services claims.	4/10/00	
350	2974	3203*	Insurance uniform accounting principles codification.	4/10/00	
351	2639	2397*	Employees bloodborne pathogens exposure reduction procedures.	4/10/00	
352	3584	3354*	Manufactured homes limited dealer license requirements clarified.	4/10/00	
353	3052	2850*	Itasca County medical assistance prepayment demonstration project participation extended.	4/10/00	
354	2751	3455*	Stolen or fraudulent checks provisions modifications.	4/10/00	
355	3347	2989*	Administrative law and workers' compensation judges conduct regulated.	4/10/00	
356	3795	3478*	Rochester firefighter probationary period rules modified.	4/10/00	
357	3119	2725*	Public defenders and court-appointed counsel minors juvenile court representation restriction.	4/10/00	
358	1267	1126*	Civil actions economic loss doctrine clarification.	4/11/00	
359	3457	2858*	Civilly committed sexual psychopaths or sexually dangerous persons transfer procedure.	4/11/00	
360	3202	2789*	Coroner compensation provisions clarified.	4/11/00	
361	947	1038*	Occupational therapist and assistant licensing requirements established.	4/11/00	
362	3208	2723*	Trust and probate provisions modified.	4/11/00	
363	3626	3428*	Psychologist supervisory and disciplinary requirements modified.	4/11/00	
364	3537	3198*	Nursing facilities closure plans and savings reallocation process established.	4/11/00	
365	3952	3533*	Claims against the state payments provided.	4/11/00	
366	3303	3566*	Criminal penalty for failure to remit motor vehicle sales taxes.	4/13/00	
367	3756	3423*	Holocaust Victims Insurance Relief Act established.	4/13/00	
368	3331*	2980	Prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault interagency task force created.	4/13/00	

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
369	1326*	1130	Community social services limited liability provided.	4/13/00	
370	3576*	3361	Solid waste and wastewater treatment facilities reporting requirements modified.	4/13/00	
371	3109*	3699	Uniform electronic transactions act adopted.	4/13/00	
372	3517	2742*	Expedited child support hearing notice to remove filing period modified	4/13/00	
373	3613	3307*	Recreational vehicles personal injury claims.	4/13/00	
374	2807	2514*	Yellow perch limit rulemaking authority restricted.	4/13/00	
375	2613	2949*	Big Woods heritage forest established.	4/13/00	
376	3520	3290*	Environmental response and liability agreement grants provided.	4/13/00	
377	3950	3154*	Criminal and juvenile justice database access authorized for criminal defense purposes.	4/13/00	
378	2707	3348*	Organization sponsored potluck event requirements modified.	4/13/00	
379	3903	2987*	Cooperative income financing and distribution provisions modified.	4/13/00	
380	2822	2547*	Capitol area site selected for installation of Minnesota firefighters memorial.	4/13/00	
381	2888*	2573	Canoe and boating route marking authorized on a portion of the Chippewa River.	4/13/00	
382	1493	83*	Wetland regulation simplified and consolidated.	4/13/00	
383	262	76*	DWI motor vehicle forfeiture proceedings requirements modified.		4/13/00
384	3195	3701*	State designer selection board membership modified.	4/13/00	
385	3174	3195*	Dairy product adulteration penalties modified.	4/13/00	
386	3082	3150*	Higher education facilities bonding authority increased.	4/13/00	
387	2981	2848*	Public Employment Labor Relations Act supervisory or confidential employees list expanded.	4/13/00	
388	3566	3291*	Towed motor vehicles lien provisions clarified.		4/13/00
389	562	619*	Collection agencies regulated.	4/13/00	



Digital ballots

States tinker with voting on the Internet

The continuing decline in voter turnout nationwide has caused some state officials to look at ways to make voting more convenient. With the proliferation of the Internet into our everyday culture, the day of online voting may be just around the corner.

Indeed with a presidential election looming in the fall, several states — including, Alaska, Arizona, California, and Washington — have taken the first election-related steps down the super information highway.

Last month, Arizona Democrats were allowed to cast their ballots via the Internet. Voters were given the choice of voting online for a four-day period prior to the state's primary. Voters could also cast their ballots via mail or in the traditional polling place.

Close to 40,000 of the total 87,000 ballots cast were done via the Internet. Voter participation for the primary was up from 12,844 in the 1996 primary.

In January, Alaskan voters could cast their ballots online in the state's non-binding presidential straw poll. Only 35 out of a total of 4,000 votes cast came over the Internet.

The use of digital signatures and other technological identification measures are helping ease concerns over the security of online voting.

In order to vote online, Arizona voters had to pre-register. All registered voters were then mailed a certificate by the secretary of state with a personal identification number.

Upon going to a Web site to cast their ballots voters were prompted for that identification number along other personal authentication information which compared the voter information with the secretary of state's records.

Non-security related issues might be more troublesome to address. The Voting Integrity Project, based out of Arlington, Virginia, filed a lawsuit prior to the Arizona primary seeking to stop the use of Internet voting arguing that it discriminated against low income and minority voters with less access to the Internet than more affluent voters. A judge failed to stop the election but the case is still before the court.

(D. MAEDA)

Tuesday, April 11

HF4147—Sviggum (R)
Rules & Legislative Administration
Unicameral legislature provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF4148—Lenczewski (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Lower Minnesota River Basin Watershed protection and improvement studied, and money appropriated.

Wednesday, April 12

HF4149—Gleason (DFL)
Rules & Legislative Administration
Equality of rights for men and women provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

Thursday, April 13

HF4150—Seifert, M. (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Beverage container deposit program studied.

HF4151—Dempsey (R)
Taxes
Utility generation personal property tax refund, new utility personal property tax exemption, and local optional fees authorized; and rate adjustments required.

HF4152—Peterson (DFL)
Commerce
Energy independence task force created, alternative and renewable energy sources developed to reach specified goals, and annual reports required.

HF4153—Abeler (R)
Taxes
County fair sales tax retention by county agricultural societies authorized for facilities improvements.



Unintended consequences

Fuel additive used to reduce air pollution poses threat to water resources

This year the Minnesota Legislature became one of many to consider banning the use of the oxygenating additive methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) in gasoline.

MTBE, which is an oxygenate added to fuel in many states, is intended to help the environment by lowering pollution emissions into the air. But research shows the additive is responsible for several ground and water contaminations, including municipal wells as nearby as Alvard and Ida Grove, Iowa.

Minnesota's legislators are not alone in their concern over the effects of MTBE usage in gasoline. Recent developments in other states are driving a national reconsideration of using MTBE as an oxygenate in fuel.

California Gov. Gray Davis issued an executive order in March 1999 to phase out

MTBE from the California gasoline supply by December 31, 2002. His decision was supported by a state-funded research project by the University of California that indicated that the air pollution benefits of using MTBE could be obtained in other ways.

Twenty-three states have established regulatory guidelines or standards for MTBE contamination in groundwater or drinking water.

Experts say eight ounces of the additive can contaminate five million gallons of drinking water. Spillage from a car accident could threaten an entire aquifer.

More than 40 percent of the U.S. population lives in areas where MTBE is used. At current growth rates of MTBE use, this figure could be as high as 80 percent within a few years.

About 10 billion pounds of MTBE are produced annually, making MTBE one of the largest volume chemicals produced in the United States. MTBE is produced from isobutylene, a byproduct in the gasoline refining process, and methanol, a byproduct of natural gas refining.

Water contaminated by MTBE has a bitter taste and detectable odor. Research has shown it causes tumors in rats.

Minnesota requires all gasoline sold in the state to contain an oxygenate. Ethanol is the oxygenate used here, and MTBE is not in gasoline sold in the state.

Many want to pass a law to keep it that way. A bill (HF3292/SF2946*) now being discussed by a House-Senate conference committee would ban the additive in Minnesota.

(M. DE LARCO)

MONDAY, April 17

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

1 p.m.

TENTATIVE

Conference Committee

HF4127/SF2657

Omnibus tax bill

15 State Capitol

Chrs. Rep. Ron Abrams, Sen. Doug Johnson

2 p.m.

Conference Committee

HF3505/SF3092

Commerce Department Enforcement Bill; managing general agents, securities broker-dealers, investment advisors, contractor recovery

fund, collection agencies, and notarial act provisions modified.
500N State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Greg Davids, Sen. Edward Oliver

TUESDAY, April 18

2 p.m.

COMMERCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF3492 (Entenza) Telecommunications consumer privacy act adopted.

Other bills to be announced.

WEDNESDAY, April 19 - FRIDAY, April 21

No meetings have been announced.

Reflections

April 14 marks the night 135 years ago, when Lincoln was shot while enjoying a play in the Washington, D.C., Ford's Theater. He died the next morning, April 15, 1865, at 7:22 a.m.

But Minnesota's many connections to Abraham Lincoln likely are unknown by many of the state's residents.

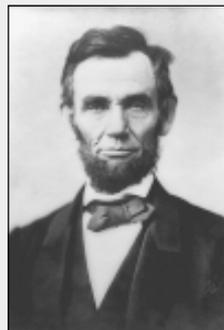
One of the last individuals to have a personal conversation with him was his secretarial assistant, Edward D. Neill, the founder of Macalester College, St. Paul's public schools, and a founding member of the Minnesota Historical Society.

On the morning of April 14, Mrs. Lincoln asked Neill if complimentary tickets had been received from the theater. They had not, so he sent a messenger to get box seats for that evening's performance. Later, Neill spoke to the president about some routine military officer's commission.

Earlier, Neill observed the president meeting with Gen. Ulysses S. Grant and the cabinet to hear Grant's description of Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox, five days sooner.

Almost to the hour of Lincoln's death four years before, on April 15, 1861, Minnesota's Aaron Greenwald and six others from Anoka were the first in the nation to volunteer for the Union Army. They were part of the 1,000 men offered by Gov. Alexander Ramsey to Lincoln for the fight against the southern states.

When Lincoln made his Gettysburg



Address at the dedication of the cemetery in November 1863, he spoke for the thousands who died there — including 232 of 262 members of the First Minnesota Volunteer Regiment — “that these dead shall not have died in vain.”

The regiment's entire color guard was lost. The U.S. flag they carried now hangs in the Capitol rotunda, tattered and torn. Next to it is the original broken staff, attached by a leather strap to a broken pole that carried the Confederate flag.

During Lincoln's time in public office in Illinois and Washington, he had many contacts with Minnesota. Among them was John W. North, who helped to organize the state's Republican Party. North also constructed the American House in Northfield — Carlton College's first building. Lincoln also knew Minnesota's ninth governor, L. J. Hubbard, and others.

The Italian nobleman, Frances Vivaldi,

was appointed as the U.S. consul in Argentina and Brazil. Vivaldi lived in Long Prairie, became a priest, got married, deserted his wife, and became a priest again.

Another Minnesotan, Gen. James Shields was a U.S. senator. Originally from Illinois, he once challenged Lincoln to a duel for some little-known reason. Their plan to fight with battle sabers was aborted. Shields' statue as a Civil War hero now stands in the Capitol.

Other connections are the Golden Horses above the Capitol entrance, sculpted by Daniel Chester French. French also created the Lincoln Memorial in Washington. And Lincoln's portrait by St. Paul artist, Edward V. Brewer hangs in the House chamber.

Lincoln County in southwestern Minnesota and Lincoln townships across the state are just some of Minnesota's honors to the fallen president. The state was the first to make his birthday a legal holiday in 1895.

Edward Neill aptly noted that Abraham Lincoln “was a patriot who had the welfare of his country close to his heart.”

With malice toward none, with charity toward all.

—LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

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Photograph taken Nov. 8, 1863

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

On the road

Miles of street and roadway in Minnesota, 1998	130,613
Number of vehicle miles traveled, 1998, in billions	46.9
Number of registered vehicles, in millions	3.77
Number of licensed drivers, in millions	3.49
Percentage of Minnesotans surveyed in 1999 who were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the time it takes to travel places	81
Percentage of Minnesotans who drive alone to work	85
Car/van pool to work, as percent	7
Take the bus to work, as percent	3
Percentage of Minnesotans who travel up to 10 miles to work, one-way	56.3
Between 0 and 1 mile to work, one-way	11.2
Between 30 and 120 miles to work, one-way	12
Percentage of Minnesotans who travel 10 minutes to work, one-way	14.1
15 minutes	13.3
20 minutes	13.2
30 minutes or more	24
Miles of congested roadway in the Twin Cities metropolitan area freeway system, morning rush-hour, 1998	123
Percentage of roadway in the Twin Cities	25
Afternoon rush-hour congestion, in miles	115
Morning congestion, 1993, in miles	91
Afternoon congestion, 1993, in miles	88
Speed traffic must be moving below to be considered congested, in miles per hour	45
Number of congested miles on Interstate 35W (north and south), morning rush-hour (most of any freeway), 1998	24.5
In 1997	11
Congested miles on Interstate 494 (north and south), 1998, morning rush hour ...	23
In 1997	12.5
Number of congested miles on Interstate 94 (east and west), 1998, afternoon rush-hour (most of any freeway)	22.5
In 1997	14
Congested miles on Interstate 494 (north and south), 1998, afternoon rush hour	19.5
In 1997	14

Sources: 1999 Minnesota State Survey: Results and Technical Report, Minnesota Center for Survey Research, University of Minnesota, January 2000; Metropolitan Freeway System Congestion Summary Report, Minnesota Department of Transportation, September 1999; and General Transportation Facts, Minnesota Department of Transportation, November 1998.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For general information, call:
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ABORTION BILL VETOED

STALEMATE AT HOLIDAY BREAK

SESSION Weekly

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On the cover: More than 1,000 people gather on the steps of the Capitol April 15 to rally for tax reductions.

—Photo by Andrew Von Bank

No end in sight

Legislature breaks for holiday with differences on major spending bills and some key policy initiatives still unresolved

When the 2000 Legislative session began, there was a consensus that the Legislature would attempt to finish its business by the Passover and Easter holidays.

But disagreement on the amount available for spending and permanent tax cuts means the deadline leaders imposed has arrived and the fate of all major omnibus measures hangs in the balance.

House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) and other House Republican leaders have been bombarded with daily questions over the past two weeks regarding whether the House would adjourn on schedule. And as the legislators closed the day before heading out on a four-day legislative break, he had to explain the situation once again.

“Coming away with a good deal is more important than a timely end of the session,” Pawlenty said.

The state Department of Finance has indicated that the state can afford approximately \$549 million per year for any combination of tax cuts and new spending measures. But House leadership has suggested those numbers are artificially low because the department has underestimated revenues in its last 17 budget forecasts. They think the Legislature can cut taxes more or spend more.

Until all sides can come to an agreement regarding the spending limit, progress on the major bills — most of which are in conference committee — is stalled.

Taxes cuts and rebates

The House omnibus tax bill would provide permanent income tax cuts totaling over \$840 million per year by cutting rates in all three brackets.

The Senate’s tax proposal would provide permanent cuts of around \$162 million per year focusing primarily on increasing exemptions and reducing the rate for automobile license registration fees, though not as much as the governor has proposed. The Senate’s omnibus transportation bill also contains a license tab reduction proposal.

Even where there is some agreement, the

House and Senate tax packages differ somewhat in their approach. Both sides, along with the governor, have agreed to a sales tax rebate, they’re each just a slightly different size.

The House plan would return around \$489 million to taxpayers in a manner similar to last year’s rebate. The House would expand eligibility to those on social security, and allow taxpayers with a qualified dependent to increase the amount of their rebate.

The Senate’s \$453 million proposal would expand eligibility for dependents and non-filers over the age of 18 as of December 21, 1998, with at least \$500 of qualifying income. Those people would also be eligible for a retroactive 1999 rebate.

The bill (HF4127) remains in conference committee.

Bonding bill

The House and Senate bonding plans, which would pay for repairs to state buildings and new construction projects, are about \$230 million apart. The two bills differ in the amount that would be used for such projects, either by issuing general obligation bonds, user-financed bonds, or direct spending.

In general obligation bonding, the House

bill and the governor’s capital budget plan each propose to use about \$400 million, whereas the Senate bill would use about \$665.6 million.

The proposals also differ in terms of priorities for spending.

Some projects would be funded equally under each proposal, such as a \$35 million Molecular Cellular Biology building at the University of Minnesota.

But funding for other major projects remains to be negotiated, such as a \$58 million proposal for a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension building. The House plan would spend \$28 million for a new BCA laboratory facility and repairs to the current building, while the Senate and governor would fully fund the \$58 million request.

The bill (HF4078) awaits action in conference committee.

Transportation plans

Funding for new roads and the future of a light-rail project also sit in conference committee, which had not met for more than a week before the holiday break. The committee is negotiating this year’s omnibus trans-



House Minority Leader Tom Pugh describes the House Republican tax plan as being like the ocean liner Titanic, saying that “it too will sink.” His comments came during an April 19 press conference in the Capitol rotunda. Pugh, Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe, and other DFL legislators were touting their plans to cut license tab fees and increase funding for education. House Republican leaders held a press conference that day to support their plan to cut income taxes in all brackets. In a stalemate on major tax and spending matters, legislators left for holiday break.

portation finance bill (HF2891).

The House version of the bill would require the Department of Transportation to cancel \$92 million in unspent bonds allocated for a



Hiawatha Corridor light-rail project. The Senate and the governor oppose the proposal.

Both versions of the bill would pump new funding into road construction. The House bill proposes \$402 million in cash, mostly from the general fund, for new roads. The money would be split evenly between the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota.

The Senate bill offers \$302 million in road projects, but that funding would be divided through county and municipal aid formulas. The Senate also would provide for \$200 million in bonds for road construction in 2002 and 2003.

Both the House and Senate would require a study of the ramp meter system in the Twin Cities. The House bill includes funding to conduct a study. The Senate bill would require the meters to be turned off in October 2000 while the House version would leave the option to the company performing the study.

The House bill contains no license tab fee reductions. The Senate plan offers a constitutional amendment that would dedicate 15 percent of motor vehicle sales tax, or about \$80 million, to a license fee cut. Another 15 percent would go into a transit account.

The governor favors the constitutional amendment that would dedicate 54 percent to cut vehicle tab fees. His proposal would cap fees at \$75 annually. The plan would cost the state \$274 million.

Education finance

The Senate has proposed \$293 million for permanent and one-time education spending. The House has tallied a figure of about \$70 million.

The biggest difference is in permanent financing. The Senate is proposing to increase annual spending by approximately \$144 million, with most of the money earmarked for Internet access, special education, and professional development.

The omnibus education finance bill (HF3800) awaits action in conference committee.

Both House and Senate conferees would like to help school districts pay more for teachers with advanced degrees or extensive service, and plan to discuss the best approach to providing incentives for individuals to enter the teaching profession.

Profile of Learning

Members of a House-Senate conference committee continue to attempt to resolve differences in bill (SF3286) proposing repairs to the Profile of Learning. Several key differences remain.

The House is offering to allow school

Continued on page 20.

Putting the tax before the sale

A failed Depression-era plan would have required consumers to pay a sales tax before they could purchase a product

Upon re-election in 1934, Gov. Floyd B. Olson vowed to change the structure of the state's tax system. Since taking office in 1931, changing the way Minnesota taxed its citizens had been one of his primary goals.

Following the governor's lead, the 1935 session was largely devoted to reforming the state's property tax system. The nation was still in the midst of the Great Depression, and the 1935 tax reform proposals were seen as key to the state's ability to move out of the economic doldrums.

Olson claimed that poorer Minnesotans were bearing too much of the tax burden, and he wanted more taxes on corporations. The Legislature and the governor would clash on this very philosophy as they worked to craft a tax reform package.

Minnesota property taxes at the time were considered high especially in comparison to similar states. In 1934, the state collected \$109 million in property taxes. Wisconsin brought in \$90 million that year.

While legislators generally agreed on the need to relieve the property tax burden on Minnesota taxpayers, they also knew replacement revenues would be needed. To force local governments to reduce their budgets would have had a serious impact on the services they provided, many lawmakers argued.

As the tax committees held hearings on various proposals, officials determined that no single tax could be increased to replace the property tax revenue. In the end, the Legislature instead proposed a combination of increases and new taxes.

The Legislature's proposal included increases in the following: income taxes on both individuals and corporations; inheritance taxes; rates on telephone, telegraph, and railroad companies; and taxes on tobacco products. The bill also called for a gift tax and a 3 percent state sales tax.

It was the last provision that quickly became the focus of debate. Many officials, including Olson, argued that sales taxes placed a greater burden on people with lower incomes.

To offset this burden, legislators proposed increasing rates of other taxes and exempting food from the sales tax. Still there was considerable opposition to the creation of a state sales tax.

And legislators had devised a system where the state could collect the sales tax before the actual sale even transpired.

The 1935 omnibus tax bill called for a stamp system in which two-part stamps of different denominations would be purchased from local authorized dealers. At the point of sale, the consumer would present the stamp to the merchant, who would detach the bottom portion containing a serial number, which he or she would keep as a record in the event of an audit.

Ohio had a similar system, and the method was endorsed by the retailers' associations as being the most effective method of collecting the sales tax. It was generally considered a more honest and accurate accounting because it eliminated an end-of-the-month tax payment by the merchant, based on total sales as shown on the books rather than actual taxes collected.

The massive tax reform bill passed the House by a 70-51 margin, and the Senate 37-22. But Olson vetoed it, saying it was unfair.

In his veto message, Olson wrote, "It is not based on means and ability of the persons taxed to pay the taxes imposed. Those who can least afford to pay taxes are taxed the most, and those who can most afford to pay are taxed the least or not taxed at all."

Shortly after vetoing the bill, Olson introduced his own tax measure, parts of which ultimately passed both houses. His bill also repealed the 28-year-old mortgage registry tax, which taxed property based on the length of time the property owner still had left to pay off the existing mortgage.

Controversy had swirled around the mortgage issue as Depression-era banks were forced to foreclose on a number of Minnesota properties, many of which were farms.

(D. MAEDA)

★ BUSINESS

Veto kills towing bill

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill April 13 that would have allowed people to claim any valuables from inside a car that has been towed and impounded.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the bill and was not pleased by the veto.

"The towing truck companies always knew they were stretching the law on keeping personal items," Dawkins said. "I'm surprised they were able to convince the governor their livelihood depended on their need to keep baseball mitts and briefcases."

The bill would have required impound lot owners to notify the vehicle owner within five days of where the car is located. If the vehicle owner did not pick up the vehicle within 45 days of the notice and pay all impound and towing fees, the impound lot would have been allowed to sell or junk the vehicle.

The bill also stated that, in the event of a sale, the bank or financial institution that has a lien on the car would have received first priority in obtaining payment. (Such language also was contained in a separate bill that the governor vetoed. See related story on page 7.)

Ventura expressed concern that Dawkins' bill would hurt the towing industry. He said impound lots would be required to absorb the costs of towing and storing abandoned vehicles.

"Owners of the vehicles would bear no responsibility for the towing, storage, or disposal costs of the vehicle, but would be permitted to obtain their possessions from the vehicle," Ventura wrote in his veto message. "Those possessions may be worth more than the vehicle itself."

State law says the impound lot owners have a lien on a car it has in its possession but says nothing about personal items in the car, Dawkins said. He added that he would like to see a court rule on that statute, because he believes the court would rule against impound lot owners and towing companies.

Ventura also disliked the bill because banks would have received first priority in obtaining payment.

"This law could cause towing costs to increase significantly," Ventura wrote. "Small towing companies may go out of business. Larger companies would pass the costs on to paying customers and the insurance industry,

which would, in effect, raise insurance premiums for everyone."

Sen. Steve Novak (DFL-New Brighton) sponsored the bill in the Senate.

HF3566/SF3291*/CH388

Soliciting funeral goods

The House passed a bill April 18 that would regulate solicitation and sale of funeral goods and services. The vote was 117-0.

The bill (HF2713/SF2686*), sponsored by Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope), would prohibit solicitation at a hospital, gravesite, nursing home, or wake, without a specific request from the family of the deceased or other representative to do so.

It also would prohibit an individual from offering goods and services to a person whose death is impending, or to an individual responsible for funeral arrangements of a deceased person within 10 days of that individual's death. Such acts, however, would be allowed, under the bill, if the deceased or a relative had made arrangements to discuss plans for the funeral or burial before death occurred.

The bill would not apply to communication between an individual and a funeral provider related by blood, adoption, or marriage.

When the deceased has handled his or her own arrangements in advance, the bill would require that the funeral provider produce a copy of arrangement documents and give the copy to the person controlling the disposition of the remains. A copy of the arrangements would be required to change hands no later than 24 hours after first contact between the provider and the individual in charge of the remains.

Provisions that would establish requirements for such arrangements and also allow a person making advance burial arrangements to cancel plans are also contained in the bill.

Furthermore, the measure would require that all funeral establishments and providers clearly state their ownership in all business literature, contracts, and correspondence.

The bill now heads to the governor's desk.

Language pertaining to a potential financial impact of the measure was incorporated into the omnibus state government spending bill (HF2699) last month. The provision would appropriate \$90,000 in fiscal year 2001 for the purpose of responding to public complaints about funeral goods and services

solicitation. That bill remains in a House-Senate conference committee.

Limits on dealership owners

Auto manufacturers are barred from buying car dealerships in Minnesota, under a law signed April 14 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The new law forbids manufacturers from buying a dealership and competing with other dealerships in the area.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), who sponsored the legislation in the House, said his primary concern is that without this law, manufacturers could own dealerships and would have unfair advantage in competition within the local market.

With access to dealers' records and marketing information, the manufacturers "could very easily cause mischief," Davids said.

Davids also said the law protects independent dealers from being muscled out of business by more powerful manufacturers.

The law was introduced after General Motors announced last fall it planned to purchase several car dealerships across the United States, Davids said.

Eleven states already have laws barring manufacturers from owning local dealerships, and more states were pursuing the issue this year, he added.

The law also specifically lists certain unfair market practices that are prohibited, such as refusing to offer all models manufactured in a line to a franchised dealership.

The law does grandfather in one Rochester Saturn dealership, which is already owned by the manufacturer.

Sen. Steve Novak (DFL-New Brighton) sponsored the Senate measure. The law is effective April 15, 2000.

HF2731*/SF2753/CH409

★ CONSUMERS

Credit card consent bill stalls

A bill that would ask consumers to give "adequate consent" for telemarketers to use their credit card stalled April 18.

The House Commerce Committee tabled the bill (HF3492) on a 10-8 vote. Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), who sponsors the legislation, said the tabling motion effectively kills the bill.

Currently, some telemarketers have access to consumers' credit card account information through arrangements with banks that issue cards, Entenza said. Even if a consumer does not give the credit card number over the phone, the telemarketer can charge the person's account if that person consents to buy a product or service.

Entenza said this telemarketing technique preys on elderly people. Telemarketers might speak quickly or confuse the consumer, then get the person to consent to buy a product, even though the consumer never verbally gave his or her credit card number.

"We need to stop some of the scam artists out there," Entenza said.

The committee heard a tape of a senior citizen who was charged for a product she did consent to buy. The elderly woman sounded confused and twice asked the telemarketer if the call was a scam. She also said on the tape that she believed she would not be charged for the packet of information.

The bill would have required the consumer to actually give the credit card number for the card to be used.

Prentiss Cox, assistant attorney general, brought four boxes filled with complaints about this practice to a recent Commerce Committee meeting.

"This bill is a result of a vehement number of consumer complaints," Cox said. "People use words like 'theft' in their complaints. It's like they are taking \$20 out of your pocket."

Cox added, "Unless the consumer listens to every word carefully and objects, they will be charged."

Cox said he has never seen a telemarketer use a script that asks the consumer if they can charge the credit card number.

Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson) said fraud is not the concern with this bill.

"It is to make sure the consumer is aware of a financial transaction taking place," Hilty said.

★ CRIME

Liability for providing alcohol

Supplying alcohol to people under age 21 would be a cause of action in civil law, under a law signed April 18 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) said the law may help put a stop to parties where adults serve liquor to juveniles. Adults will be less likely to supply alcohol to juveniles at a party if they know they could be held liable for the juveniles' actions when they leave the premises, Carruthers said.

"When adults go and give booze to kids, you know what happens? Kids get killed. That's the

reality," Carruthers said in floor debate on the measure.

The law pertains to people who do not possess liquor licenses, covering events like house parties.

Adults would not be expected to check identification of guests at a party, Carruthers said.

The law will make an adult liable for actions of the minor if the adult supplied alcohol and had control over the premises, was in a reasonable position to stop the juvenile from drinking, or knowingly and recklessly permitted the underage consumption of alcohol.

"It will hopefully make adults think twice before they give alcohol to minors," Carruthers said.

The intoxicated teen who caused any injury or other harm would not be able to sue the person providing the alcohol.

The law includes a Senate provision that says homeowners cannot purchase liability coverage under their homeowner's insurance to cover liability for an intoxicated juvenile's actions, unless it is specifically stated in the policy it is meant to cover such situations. However, that provision will expire Dec. 31, 2001.

"If insurance companies want to provide coverage, they can," Carruthers said.

The law stems from a 1997 New Year's Eve crash, when St. Paul teen-ager Kevin Brockway was killed after leaving a party where alcohol was provided by another teen's parent.

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2555/SF1733*/CH423

Redefining harassment

Judges would be granted more discretionary power in hearing harassment cases, under a bill the House passed April 19. The vote was 110-18.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) is sponsoring the bill (HF2516), which also would redefine harassment to include a "single incident" that has a "substantial adverse effect." Current law requires repeated incidents for an act to be considered harassment.

Smith said the key portion of the bill is it does not require a hearing to take place on every harassment complaint.

"It gives the court the flexibility they wanted after 10 years of looking at this statute," Smith said.

Ramsey County District Court Judge Gregg Johnson testified earlier this session that he does not want to close the door on worthy filings, but he hears many frivolous cases that do not deserve court time and keep him from other more important business.

The state began tracking restraining order filings in 1992, when 4,800 were filed. Last year, people filed for 8,800 restraining orders.

A victim would be required to allege a clear and present danger of harassment before the court could issue a temporary restraining order, under the bill.

An earlier version of the bill would have eliminated the fee waiver on filing costs, meaning victims would have been required to pay a \$50 fee to seek a restraining order. However, the House voted 128-0 to strip that part of the bill and keep the waiver intact.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) spoke

THE TAX DEBATE



Members of the conference committee on the omnibus tax bill meet in the Capitol April 12. The committee, along with other conference committees discussing major omnibus spending measures, has met sparingly while House leaders negotiate budget targets with the Senate and the governor.

against the \$50 fee, saying it would hurt low-income women and others. Skoglund supported the bill after the waiver was reinstated.

Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka) spoke against the bill, saying he disliked the redefinition of harassment. He expresses fears that a person might accidentally say something to a mentally unstable person one time that could lead to a harassment case.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

Penalty for assault during arrest

A person who physically assaults an officer during an arrest but does not cause any demonstrable bodily harm could be charged with a gross misdemeanor, under a bill the House passed April 17. The vote was 119-8.

Sponsored by Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul), the bill (HF2958/SF2830*) would make it a felony for someone to escape from police custody for a felony-related action, even if that person has not yet been charged or convicted of a crime.

Offenders would face a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. Current law only allows for a felony if the person flees after being charged or convicted of a felony.

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) introduced an amendment that would create a gross misdemeanor for a person who physically assaults an officer in the process of an arrest. Current law allows for a felony charge if there is “demonstrable bodily harm” to the officer, but there are currently no additional penalties for other cases.

The House passed the amendment.

Biernat, who presented a similar bill in the House Crime Prevention Committee last month, said the measure stems from a case in which an officer was struck in the groin by a suspect who was resisting arrest. The person couldn't be charged because there was no lasting demonstrable harm, like a bruise or a cut.

The House also changed Biernat's amendment to clarify that a gross misdemeanor charge would only be applicable on physical assaults, and not verbal ones. That change was suggested by Rep. Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna).

The bill now returns to the Senate.

Vehicle forfeiture bill vetoed

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill April 13 that would have given banks more rights to funds generated from forfeited vehicles.

Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the bill, which would have allowed banks to acquire forfeited vehicles if there is an outstanding loan or lease on the car.

“Right now, sales are done at impound lots,” Entenza explained. “This bill (would have allowed) the banks to remove the vehicle from the impound lot, clean it up, and sell it at a higher value.”

Under the bill, banks would have first applied proceeds to the debt they are owed by the vehicle owner. The bank then would have been required to reimburse impound lots for holding the car. Any remaining cash from the sale of forfeited vehicles would have gone into a special fund for law enforcement.

However, Ventura rejected the measure, claiming it had fiscal implications he could not accept.

“This bill does not require a financial institution to reimburse law enforcement agencies for their cost when the sale of the forfeited vehicle does not equal or exceed the loan balance,” Ventura wrote in his veto message.

“Current law provides an incentive for the lien holder to get the maximum value for the forfeited vehicle because they must pay the costs incurred by law enforcement before satisfying their lien. This bill eliminates the incentive and would result in increased costs to the taxpayers.”

Entenza said he was surprised by the veto.

“It was a disappointment that the Department of Public Safety, which watched this bill for two years, waited until after it passed to register their objections,” Entenza said.

The measure is being re-written, and Entenza hopes to introduce it as an amendment to a different DWI bill yet this session. Language that specifies a priority of which party is paid first will not be included in the rewritten version, Entenza said.

Under state law, drivers are required to forfeit their vehicle only after a third drunken driving conviction, Entenza said.

“What we are talking about is the most hard-core repeat offenders that continue to drive drunk,” he said.

Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids) sponsored the Senate version.

HF262/SF76*/CH383

Domestic violence prevention

An office of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention will be established, under a law signed April 13 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Sponsored in the House by Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack), the law will create the office, establish a position to direct it, and establish an interagency task force on domestic abuse and sexual assault prevention.

All battered women and crime victim services are now monitored through the Department of Public Safety, Howes said.

“The battered women's groups have been

around for 25 years,” Howes said. “They've always been shuffled in the corner.”

The law will create a “road map” for putting together the task force, Howes said. The task force would be required to include representatives from the departments of Corrections, Health, Human Services, Economic Security, and Children, Families and Learning. The task force also must have a county attorney, city attorney, and a judge.

Howes said he wanted a wide variety of people serving on the task force so it represents both urban and rural interests.

The director of the new domestic violence office would serve as chair of the task force.

The law outlines the director's duties, which include advocating victims' rights, increasing education and awareness, supporting litigation, initiating policy changes, and building partnerships with law enforcement and the courts.

The task force will evaluate the progress of the director and the office. In addition, the task force will establish a strategic plan for the director.

Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect July 1, 2000.

HF3331*/SF2980/CH368

Evading sales tax payments

People who collect motor vehicle sales tax and then fail to send the tax to the state could be charged with a felony, under a law signed by Gov. Jesse Ventura on April 13.

The law creates a felony for not submitting vehicle sales tax to the state, but it states that the person collecting the tax must “willfully” fail to send in the tax.

The final version of the measure provides for a felony, regardless of the dollar amount involved. Previously, the Senate version would have only provided for a gross misdemeanor if the dollar amount was less than \$500, and a felony above that amount.

House sponsor Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) said the law stems from a February state Supreme Court decision related to a case in which a Mankato businessman was convicted of collecting \$12,000 in vehicle sales tax and failing to send the money to the state. The effect of the court ruling made it no longer a felony to not send in the vehicle sales tax.

Entenza said his legislation reverses the law to where it was prior to the court decision.

The state will collect about \$526 million in vehicle sales tax in 2001, according to the non-partisan House Research Department. It is unknown what amount of sales tax is not collected.

Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids)

sponsored the Senate version. The law is effective April 14, 2000.

HF3303/SF3566*/CH366

Limited calls for inmates

Inmates will no longer have unlimited access to phone services, under a law signed April 14 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township) sponsored the House version of the measure, which will give wardens more control over phone systems at correctional facilities.

"We're allowing the warden to make the decision on what is a reasonable level of calls the inmates can make a day," Anderson said.

Inmates have more free time than in the past, Anderson said, and many inmates use the phone to make collect calls to friends and family. Some inmates make three, four, or more calls to one person each day. This frequent use can cause the phone system to become overloaded, Anderson said.

"They were using the phones in a way to clog up or delay, in a way corrections officials couldn't use the phones," Anderson said. "It became a point where they were seeing it as an abuse of the phone system."

State law prescribes that inmates can make only collect calls.

The law will change criminal penalties for officials who refuse to let inmates obtain phone privileges, by exempting them from criminal penalties.

Other inmates who deny inmates' phone calls will still be subject to misdemeanor fines and penalties.

Sen. Arlene Lesewski (R-Marshall) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3512/SF3108*/CH408

★ EMPLOYMENT

Workers' compensation benefits

Proposed changes to the state's worker's compensation laws, determined by a panel of business and labor leaders, were passed by the House April 19. The vote was 129-0. The bill now goes to the governor.

Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls), the sponsor of the measure (HF3960/SF3644*), said the bill is a reflection of recommendations from the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council. The council is composed of representatives from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the state's AFL-CIO, and the Legislature.

Nornes said the bill would provide an increase in the maximum weekly compensation an injured worker can receive for wage loss

benefits. Currently, that amount is capped at \$615 per week. The bill would increase the amount to \$750. The bill also would increase the minimum amount per week from \$104 to \$130.

In the case of a worker who is killed in a work-related accident, the bill sets the minimum amount of compensation for dependents at \$60,000.

The bill also would transfer \$325 million in surplus funds from the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Assigned Risk Plan to a fund for the second injury and supplemental benefits program.

The assigned risk plan provides a source of workers' insurance for employers who would otherwise be unable to obtain such coverage from the private insurance market.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said that the bill would not go far enough.

"I'm disappointed more wasn't done for the injured workers of the state," Rukavina said.

Aid for struggling farmers

The House passed a bill April 19 that would allow struggling farmers to qualify sooner for the state's dislocated workers program. The vote was 108-22.

The bill (HF2797/SF2575*), sponsored by Rep. Jim Tunheim (DFL-Kennedy), would direct the commissioner of the Department of Economic Security to give priority in 2001 for grants that provide training to dislocated farmers and ranchers.

Currently, farmers can qualify for the department's dislocated workers' program once they are unemployed as a result of economic conditions or because of natural disasters.

The bill would expand eligibility to farmers that have experienced a significant reduction in income due to inadequate crop or livestock prices, crop failures, or significant loss in crop yields due to pests, disease, adverse weather, or other natural phenomenon.

The bill now goes to the governor's desk.

★ ENERGY

Poultry litter as energy source

The House passed a bill April 17 that would move Minnesota closer to becoming the first state in the country to have an electric generating facility that uses poultry litter for fuel. The vote was 105-24.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris), the sponsor of the measure (HF2757), said it would make changes to the biomass mandate that was included as part of 1994 legislation relating to the Prairie Island nuclear power facility.

That legislation, which allowed Northern States Power Company to store more nuclear waste at its Prairie Island facility, required public utilities that operate nuclear power plants in the state to develop 125 megawatts of electric energy generated by certain forms of biomass or plants grown specifically for fuel.

The current bill would provide that 50 of the 125 megawatts may be provided by a facility that uses poultry litter as its primary fuel source.

Fiberwatt, a company based in Great Britain, is proposing to build the poultry litter plant in Minnesota. The company owns and operates three similar power plants in Great Britain. The facilities produce energy by burning the litter at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit, producing steam that drives a turbine.

Officials from the company testified that they are interested in building the plant in Minnesota because the state is the second largest turkey producing state in the nation.

Members approved an amendment that Jennings said was a compromise addressing concerns raised to the original bill. The original bill would have extended the deadline requiring the production or purchase of 125 megawatts of electricity generated from biomass from 2002 to 2005. The amendment restored the original 2002 deadline.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) said that although she supported restoring the deadline to the original date, she was concerned about providing a public subsidy to a company that proposes to use a valuable state resource when there is such a high demand for that resource. Poultry litter is a popular fertilizer because of its high nitrogen content.

Jennings said that the bill doesn't guarantee that the poultry litter facility will be built, but that it would allow the Public Utilities Commission to review the proposal. He said that although biomass energy would be more expensive than energy generated by traditional plants, the poultry litter proposal was important for economic development purposes in rural Minnesota.

The Senate later approved the bill, which then was sent to the governor.

★ ENVIRONMENT

Eventual ban on additive passes

The House passed a bill April 17 that would eventually ban the use of the oxygenating additive methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) in gasoline. The vote was 127-0.

The measure (HF3292/SF2946*) would prohibit the sale of gasoline containing more than one-third of 1 percent of the additive

after July 1, 2000, and provide a complete ban of the additive as of July 1, 2005. The measure also would apply to the two other similar additives.

Contained in gasoline in many states, MTBE is intended to help the environment by lowering pollution emissions into the air. However, research shows the additive is responsible for several incidents of ground and water contamination, including municipal wells in Iowa.

Experts say eight ounces of the additive can contaminate 5 million gallons of drinking water. Spillage from a car accident could threaten an entire aquifer.

“This will give us one of the strongest laws in the nation,” said the bill’s sponsor, Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea).

MTBE is produced from isobutylene, a byproduct in the gasoline refining process, and methanol, a byproduct of natural gas refining. Water contaminated by the additive has a bitter taste and detectable odor. Research has shown that it causes tumors in rats.

Minnesota requires that all gasoline sold in the state contain at least 2.7 percent oxygen by weight. Ethanol, derived from corn, is the additive currently used here.

The bill now heads to the governor’s desk.

★ FAMILY

Marriage license discount vetoed

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill April 14 that would have reduced the marriage license fees for couples who received at least 12 hours of premarital education.

The bill would have raised the cost of a regular marriage license from \$70 to \$75. But for those couples who received premarital education, the marriage license fee would have been only \$25.

The bill specified that the education topics would include teaching about the seriousness of marriage, conflict management skills, and the desirability of obtaining counseling if the marriage falls into difficulty later on.

Couples would have had to obtain education from a clergy member, a person authorized by law to perform marriages, or a marriage and family therapist.

Ventura said he doesn’t believe the government should have a role in marriage counseling.

“This bill is overly intrusive and increases costs for those who choose not to receive premarital counseling,” Ventura wrote in his veto message. “I understand the authors’ intent and share their concerns about our high divorce rate, however, I do not believe that government should intervene in a couple’s marital decisions.”

Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson) and Sen. Steve Dille (R-Dassel) sponsored the legislation.

HF2229/SF884*/CH397

Parenting plan bill advances

Parents who are getting a divorce would be allowed to create a parenting plan agreement, under a bill headed to the governor’s desk.

The House approved the conference committee version of the bill April 19.

Sponsored by Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), the bill would allow divorced couples to make agreements on splitting parenting time. Currently, parenting agreements are neither forbidden nor allowed in state law.

“This bill would allow parents to reinsert their own plan,” Dawkins said. “Why choose one parent over another parent when you have two good parents?”

Parenting plans could specify anything from where a child lives during the day to which parent can teach religious philosophy or which parent picks up the child from badminton practice. Child support would be a separate issue aside from parenting plans, Dawkins said.

If both parents agree to a parenting plan, the court must accede unless the court determines the plan is not in the best interest of the child, under the bill. If neither parent agrees to a parenting plan, the court would be allowed to create one on its own.

Dawkins said the final bill that emerged from conference committee would do more

to protect victims of domestic violence. According to the new language in the bill, courts could not require a parenting plan if one adult has been accused of domestic assault or sexual abuse.

The court would have to ask individuals if a parenting plan was entered into voluntarily, he said. The final bill is similar to a task force report recommendation, he added.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) said the bill is better than the original version, which would have allowed a judge to order parents to enter into a parenting plan agreement if only one parent agreed to that route.

“I’m happy it is voluntary at this point,” Paymar said.

The bill also would replace the word “visitation” in statute with the phrase “parenting time.” Dawkins said non-custodial parents find the word “visitation” to be offensive.

“It’s a good start,” Dawkins said. “It’s something we can build on.”

Investigating child abuse cases

A law signed April 14 by Gov. Jesse Ventura will repeal a 1999 domestic abuse law defining neglect and will replace it with language redefining counties’ responsibilities in domestic violence cases affecting children.

The law eliminates language that required counties to investigate cases where there is any child abuse, including verbal or other non-physical abuse. The repealed law also required an investigation if a child was within sight or

SPRING FEVER



Hundreds of school kids from around the state enjoy the grassy areas of the Capitol mall on an unseasonably warm April 14.

sound of any attempted abuse.

"It was very broad, and that's what concerned me," said Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault), House sponsor of the new measure.

Several groups, representing those advocating for domestic violence victims and county social service administrators, joined together asking legislators to repeal the law because of its costs. Boudreau said the county administrators estimated the old law would cost \$30 million statewide if fully implemented.

The \$30 million projection is based on the additional workers needed to investigate all the new mandated cases, Boudreau said.

The new language requires county investigation only when the parent "endangers the child's mental or physical health," the parent engages in "repeated domestic assault," or the child "witnessed repeated incidents" of domestic violence.

"Counties will appreciate this," Boudreau said.

A key part of the law, Boudreau said, states that the local welfare agency shall consider the safety of the child and the victim when determining action.

Under the repealed law, a victim might have chosen to not report an abusive situation out of fear that he or she would be found in neglect if that person kept living with or moved back in with the abuser.

"They'd rather be a victim than lose their child," Boudreau said.

The new law also requires homeless shelter employees to attempt to contact the parents of a runaway within 72 hours. The employee must tell the parents or guardian the runaway's location and status, unless there are compelling reasons to withhold that information.

Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version. The specific guidelines for abuse investigations take effect July 1, 2001. The other parts of the law are effective April 15, 2000.

HF3176/SF3410*/CH401

Designating custodians for children

Parents will have more rights to designate a temporary custodian for their children, under a law signed by Gov. Jesse Ventura on April 14.

Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) sponsored the House version of the measure, which repeals the designated caregiver statute and replaces it with the temporary and standby custodian language. Luther said the new law makes it clearer what should happen to children in cases where the parent suddenly is not available or is incapable of caring for them.

"It gives parents an opportunity to file with the court a guardian of the child if there was a tragic accident or if they are going out of the country for an extended period," Luther said.

"It helps families plan ahead and reduce an unnecessary burden on governmental child protection or foster care resources."

The law provides more options than the repealed statute, such as outlining standby, temporary, and co-custodian guidelines.

Standby custodians would assume permanent custody in the event of a parent's inability to care for the child. A temporary custodian would have the child or children for two years, up from one year in previous law. A co-custodian shares parenting duties with a parent when that parent has extended illnesses.

The new law also gives a non-custodial parent more rights to decide what happens to the child if the custodial parent becomes ill or dies, Luther said. Under the law, the non-custodial parent would automatically gain custody unless that parent lost parental rights.

The law allows both natural parents to be involved in the decision and requires a hearing if the fitness of a non-custodial parent is called into question, Luther said.

The custodial parent can designate a temporary custodian with the consent of the other parent, under the new law.

Twenty states already have such laws in place, she added. The law originated from several family law organizations, such as the Minnesota Kinship Caregivers Association, Luther said.

The repealed designated caregiver statute said the agreement expired four years after it was signed. The new language designates a person as temporary custodian indefinitely.

Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version.

The law is effective April 15, 2000.

HF3318/SF3018*/CH404

★ **GOVERNMENT**

Bleacher safety changes

Safety requirements for bleachers, such as those at sports facilities or local parks, will be modified under a new law signed by the governor April 17.

New safety requirements for bleachers were signed into law last year, but Gov. Jesse Ventura line-item vetoed \$100,000 that would have helped communities and school districts pay the costs of complying with the new standards.

The 1999 law required bleachers that are taller than 30 inches to have gaps between seats, floorboards, and guardrails that do not exceed 4 inches or to have safety nets installed. The previous standard for gaps was 9 inches.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), House sponsor of the new measure, said it will ease the financial burden for schools, county fairs, and local parks departments without compromising safety standards.

"It will save tens of millions of dollars and still require significant upgrades to bleachers that are unsafe," he said. "I felt the law last year went further than it needed to in reacting to the serious injuries that have occurred."

The new law will make the 4-inch requirement apply to bleachers that are at least 55 inches (nearly 5 feet) tall. Those bleachers must be in compliance by Jan. 1, 2002.

Retractable bleachers that are in place by Jan. 1, 2001, and that meet the previous 9-inch requirement for gaps, will be exempted from the 4-inch requirement. The responsible school district or organization will have to submit a safety management plan and amortization schedule for complying with the 4-inch standard.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound), House sponsor of the 1999 law, advocated upholding the 30-inch height standard. But the House and Senate voted to accept the 55-inch standard.

Smith had sponsored the 1999 measure in response to a fatal accident. Six-year-old Toby Lee of Mound died in January 1999 after falling from a set of bleachers while attending a hockey game at a Hutchinson arena. Smith said Toby fell through a 13-inch gap in those bleachers.

Bradley said no accidents have been reported where someone has fallen through a 9-inch gap.

The requirements are applicable to all new construction and installation as of Jan. 1, 2001.

Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan) was the Senate sponsor of the measure.

HF2846/SF3272*/CH417

★ **HEALTH**

Exposure to bloodborne diseases

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law April 18 that establishes procedures regarding occupational exposure to bloodborne diseases for emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, corrections employees, and secure treatment facility workers.

The law addresses proper procedure for obtaining consent for testing, obtaining and testing blood samples for bloodborne diseases, and for informing individuals of blood test results, in certain situations.

The situations the new law will apply to include cases when people holding these occupations are exposed to a bloodborne disease in the course of carrying out their jobs.

The measure also will expand the state's HIV and Hepatitis B prevention program for health professionals to cover Hepatitis C. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.

Also, the law modifies notification requirements that apply when emergency medical

personnel are exposed to a person with active tuberculosis.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) and Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the legislation. The new law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000. HF1631/SF1202*/CH422

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Designing campus buildings

Representatives of colleges, universities, and state agencies will be allowed to vote on the design of state buildings, under a new law that was signed by the governor April 13.

Contracts for designing state buildings are awarded through the state Designer Selection Board.

Under current law, the agency or school that will be using a new building appoints a non-voting member to the board, which consists of five voting members. The board looks at design plans from competing firms and decides which firm will receive the contract.

Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the board will consist of seven voting members, including one who will represent the school or agency that will be using the proposed building. Other board members will represent the American Institute of Architects, the Associated General Contractors, the Consulting Engineers Council of Minnesota (with input from other professional engineering societies in the state), the Minnesota State Arts Board, and two citizen members who will be appointed by the state commissioner of the Department of Administration.

If, for example, a building is being designed for the University of Minnesota, the university will have a vote on the final design of the building.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) and Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan) sponsored the measure.

HF3195/SF3701*/CH384

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Newborn drop-off law

A law signed by Gov. Jesse Ventura April 18 will allow a mother (or a person of her consent) to leave an unharmed newborn at a hospital emergency room up to 72 hours following the child's birth without fear of prosecution.

A hospital will be required to accept the child and to notify a local welfare agency within 24 hours of the departure of the person bringing the baby to the hospital.

Under current Minnesota law, a mother

who willfully neglects a newborn when she is reasonably able to care for the infant can be charged with a gross misdemeanor.

This new law will allow the individual delivering the unwanted newborn to exit the building without providing identification. The hospital will be allowed to ask questions about the medical history of the mother or newborn, but the person leaving the baby will not be required to provide any information.

A newborn that is left behind will be considered an abandoned child. The baby, according to the new law, must not have any obvious injuries or illness in order for the hospital to accept it.

A hospital or employee of the hospital receiving the child will be considered immune from any civil liability that could potentially result, if the act of receiving the newborn is done in good faith.

Furthermore, a social service agency taking custody of the child will not be required to later reunite the child with its parents or search for relatives of the child as a placement option.

Officials are uncertain how many babies hospitals could realistically expect to be dropped off as a result of the new law.

Rep. Luanne Koskinen (DFL-Coon Rapids) and Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids) sponsored the legislation. The new is effective April 19, 2000.

HF3008/SF2615*/CH421

Options for vulnerable adults

The House passed a bill April 18 that would create a panel to review decisions made by lead agencies regarding cases of potential maltreatment of vulnerable adults. The vote was 130-0.

The bill (HF3250/SF3028*), sponsored by Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), would provide a vulnerable adult or individual acting on behalf of such a person the opportunity to challenge an agency's decision before an impartial body.

"As it stands now, the vulnerable adult or person acting on the part of the adult has no other place to appeal but to the agency that produced the decision," Greenfield said.

The board the bill would create would consist of representatives from the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health, the ombudsman for older Minnesotans, and the ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation.

A request for a review, the bill states, would be taken up at the panel's next quarterly meeting.

Greenfield referred to the measure as a "quality assurance approach" to reviewing

decisions in cases of potential maltreatment.

The bill would require that within 30 days of the panel's review, it must notify the lead agency and the person who requested the review of its decision. The panel may decide whether it agrees with the agency's decision or require the agency to reconsider its ruling.

If the panel were to decide that the agency must reconsider its decision, the bill would require that it do so and report back to the panel with its determination within 30 days.

Furthermore, the panel would be required to report to the Legislature each January about the number of requests for review it received and how the panel ruled on each case. The report would include the number of times when the final disposition changed and any recommendations the panel has for improving the review process.

The bill now heads to a House-Senate conference committee.

Nursing center veto override

For the second time during this two-year session, the Legislature has voted to override one of Gov. Jesse Ventura's vetoes.

This time, the override involved a bill aimed at assuring the continued operation of the Ah-Gwah-Ching center, a nursing facility in Walker.

Ventura vetoed the bill April 3 and the House voted to override the veto the following day. The Senate override came April 17 and now the bill will become law, effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The override is only the second successful override of a governor's veto in the past 18 years.

The Ah-Gwah-Ching center serves residents whose aggressive or difficult to manage behavioral needs cannot be met in their home community.

In his veto message, Ventura said that the bill was "unnecessary" because law currently exists prohibiting the commissioner of the Department of Human Services to close the facility without the Legislature's approval.

The governor declined to comment on the veto override during a press conference April 17.

In addition to language in the measure calling for the center to remain open, the law will clarify the admissions criteria of the facility and require that the center promote emergency admittance and geriatric rapid assessment stabilization programs.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. Tony Kinkel (DFL-Park Rapids) sponsored the legislation.

Last year the Legislature voted to override a veto by the governor of a bill pertaining to the

introduction of evidence about seat-belt use in auto accident lawsuits.

HF2809*/SF2631/CH310

★ INSURANCE

Help for Holocaust survivors

A new law signed April 13 by Gov. Jesse Ventura will assist Holocaust survivors in settling and collecting insurance claims.

Aimed at insurance companies and their affiliates who do business in Minnesota and issued policies in Europe prior to 1946, the law allows the commissioner of the Department of Commerce to provide special assistance to Minnesota residents who have claims to settle.

The law allows the department to establish a registry of records of Holocaust-related insurance policies and claims. The registry will contain information such as a list of policies sold with the names of the insured and their beneficiaries, and whether the proceeds have been paid.

Companies that fail to provide the data to assist victims and their beneficiaries could be fined or have their authority to do business in the state suspended.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), House sponsor of the legislation, said that often life insurance claims require a death certificate, which for Holocaust victims is not available.

He said there are about 200 Holocaust survivors living in the state.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) was the Senate sponsor. The law is effective April 14, 2000. HF3756/SF3423*/CH367

★ LAW

Access to information

Public defenders will be given access to law enforcement databases, under a law signed April 13 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law will allow state and district public defenders, along with any attorney who is working for a public defense corporation, limited access to various criminal and juvenile databases.

"The defense felt they should have access to information on the people they are defending," said Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada), House sponsor of the measure. "We felt it was a fairness issue."

Public defenders will be given access to data regarding the attorney's client only and will not be able to examine data on other people. The defender also will not have access to active and ongoing investigative data, under the law.

A BIG HIT



Members of the House give a warm welcome to Minnesota blues legend Big Walter Smith as he is introduced on the House floor by Rep. Gregory Gray. Gray later presented Smith with a proclamation recognizing his 30 years in the music business. Smith, a constituent of Gray's, has won virtually every Minnesota music award in existence, and in 1998 was inducted into the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame, joining the likes of Bob Dylan and Judy Garland.

The proposal came from the State Public Defender's Office, Broecker said.

Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3950/SF3154*/CH377

Legal action for beer wholesalers

A new law signed April 18 by Gov. Jesse Ventura clarifies existing laws regarding legal actions between beer brewers and wholesalers.

The law allows wholesalers to sue a brewer in either state or federal court for violations to state laws regarding the Minnesota beer brewers and wholesalers act.

The new law also gives wholesalers the right to a jury trial against brewers, and it provides that the right to bring action may not be waived except at the time the suit is filed.

The state's beer brewers and wholesalers laws include provisions prohibiting brewers from inducing or coercing wholesalers into accepting delivery of any alcoholic beverage or any other commodity which wasn't ordered by the wholesaler.

The laws also establish the right of free association between all brewers and wholesalers. Brewers cannot collaborate to fix or artificially elevate prices.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) and Sen. Sam Solon (DFL-Duluth) sponsored the new measure. It is effective April 19, 2000.

HF1947/SF1618*/CH415

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Municipal finance provisions

The House passed a bill April 18 that would make a number of changes related to the state's public finance laws. The bill vote was 97-30.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), sponsor of the measure (HF4090/SF3730*), said that the bill is the annual public finance bill making changes in the authority of local governments to issue bonds and incur debt.

The bill would permit the cities of Minnetonka and Shorewood to opt out of the metropolitan transit system and establish replacement transit systems. Abrams said that the city of Minnetonka brought the initiative to him.

Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul) offered an unsuccessful amendment to delete that provision saying that to allow more cities to opt out of the transit system weakens the system as a whole.

Among the bill's other provisions is an exemption in reporting requirements on business subsidy bonds that are issued by a municipality to refund its outstanding bonds. Also, the bill would exempt nonprofit corporations that qualify for federal tax-exempt status from reporting requirements on bonds.

The bill also would authorize the Metropolitan Council to issue an additional \$19.4 million of transit bonds. Abrams said that the authority to issue \$36 million was provided last year and the additional money would fill what the council originally requested.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) offered a successful amendment that would allow counties outside the seven country metropolitan areas to form economic development authorities. Originally, the bill specified that only counties outside the federally defined 11 county metro area (which includes Chisago, Isanti, Sherburne, and Wright counties) could form economic development authorities.

Rep. Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls) argued against the amendment saying that economic development in the metropolitan area should be done looking at the area as a whole.

The bill also would require bidders for the contract for the 800-megahertz public safety radio network to propose systems that meet compatibility standards. Then any enhanced features that would affect that compatibility may not be accepted, according to the bill.

The bill now goes to a conference committee.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Right-of-way accident liability

The state will have limited immunity from civil lawsuits involving recreational motor vehicle accidents that occur in a highway right-of-way, under a law signed April 13 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law will establish the state is not liable when accidents or injuries occur involving snowmobiles or other off-road recreational vehicles.

“There has to be a level of responsibility on the hands of recreational vehicle users,” said Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), who sponsored the measure in the House. “Someone who uses a recreational vehicle in a

prudent and responsible manner will be fine.”

Recreational vehicles are supposed to drive only on the outside, or “backslope” of the ditch, not at the bottom or the side closest to the highway. The law does not effect where motor vehicles can be driven.

Statute already gives the state limited liability for accidents that occur on ice-covered roads or in state parks.

Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate measure. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3613/SF3307*/CH373

Right lane measure vetoed

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill April 20 that would have authorized the state to post signs requesting that freeway drivers travel in the right lane when possible.

The final bill, which emerged from conference committee April 11, was stripped of language that made it a petty misdemeanor to not stay to the right. The final bill also would not have allowed law enforcement to pull over drivers for failing to follow the provision. Drivers would have been asked, but not required, to move to the right lane after passing.

Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm) sponsored the bill, which would have required the placement of signs every 50 miles along highways reminding drivers to move to the right lane after passing.

“I don’t see any reason why he would veto it,” Tomassoni said. “I thought this would be the type of bill he would sign.”

Tomassoni would not comment further until he sees the governor’s veto message. He

noted that the bill passed in both houses by a wide margin, and an override is possible if legislators don’t change their votes.

Tomassoni has said throughout the session that his goal was to obtain signs asking people to move out of the left lane, and he was not pushing for the petty misdemeanor language.

The signs would have stated, “Move to the right after passing.” The bill did not contain funding for the signs.

Sen. Dick Day (R-Owatonna) sponsored the Senate version.

HF3091/SF2484*/CH425

★ VETERANS

Exempting rebate income

Sales tax refunds or rebates would not be considered income for residents of veterans’ homes, under a bill the House passed April 17. The vote was 128-0.

The bill (HF2968/SF3139*), sponsored by Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls), would clarify current law that requires residents of veterans’ homes to pay for their care based on their ability to pay.

Cost of care is based on the average costs of operating veterans’ homes.

Any sales tax rebates that are paid after June 30, 1999, would not be considered income for residents of veterans’ homes, under the bill.

The bill also would allow the governing board of the veterans’ home in Hastings to use federal grant money to purchase a home to be used as transitional housing for homeless or disabled veterans.

The bill now goes to the governor.

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Veto rankles 'informed consent' backers

After days of deliberation, Ventura vetoes a bill that would have required a 24-hour waiting period before a woman could have an abortion

By **MIKE DE LARCO**

Wanting to avoid what he called "government intrusion" into an individual's private life, Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed the contentious "right-to-know" abortion bill April 14.

The bill would have required a woman considering an abortion to wait at least 24 hours before undergoing the procedure. It also would have required that the woman be given information about risks and alternatives at least 24 hours before the procedure is scheduled.

"I have decided that it is wrong for government to assume a role in something that I always believed was between a woman, her family, her doctor and, if she chooses, her clergy,"

The decision by the governor to veto the measure drew criticism from pro-life organizations and House Republican leaders.

In a news release issued after the governor announced his veto, House Speaker Steve Sviggum called Ventura's decision "very upsetting."

He noted that Ventura's staff had appeared to have worked out a compromise with House Republican leadership over the bill, prior to the announcement of the veto.

"Ironically, Gov. Ventura talks about not being your typical politician. This action looks too much like the worst of a politician: Go back on your campaign promises, don't honor

your word through a negotiated agreement, and bend to powerful special interest group pressure," Sviggum said.

The measure was similar to language proposed earlier this session by Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) calling for a woman to give her informed consent prior to an abortion.

That provision was included in the larger state government appropriations bill (HF2699), currently in conference committee. The abortion-related provision was later pulled from the bill after House members suggested taking policy issues out to avoid constitutional challenges to the omnibus bill.

The language was then amended onto a separate (and relatively minor) measure during an early April floor session in the House.

The bill would have waived a 24-hour waiting period for cases when a woman's life or

health may be put in danger by delaying the procedure.

The bill did not include an earlier proposal that the name of the doctor performing the procedure be included with the information given to the patient.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the vetoed bill.

Any override attempt of the veto would have to begin in the Senate. An override requires a two-thirds majority in both houses — 90 votes in the House and 45 votes in the Senate.

The first time through, the House voted 89-44 and the Senate voted 37-30 in support of the measure.

HF3652/SF3387*/CH412 

Gov. Ventura's remarks to staff on the veto of the abortion waiting period

Good Afternoon. It's been a remarkable few days.

You have all worked very hard and for the past week have been under constant stress. For your hard work and your tremendous loyalty to this office, the people of Minnesota, and to me, I want to thank you. From the bottom of my heart, I want you to know how important you all are to me.

Yesterday, a legislator who has been around this business for many years told me that no governor over the last 20 years has been faced with a decision like the one I have been faced with this past week.

But you have served me well. I am proud of you and proud of the way we have come together to make this very important decision.

I have talked to family, friends, and advisors. I have heard from the good people of Minnesota. And listening to the people has brought me back to the convictions that have always been the centerpiece of my administration. Convictions like personal responsibility, self sufficiency, and limited government.

Therefore I have decided. I decided that those deeply held convictions would not allow me to sign this bill. I have decided that it is wrong for government to assume a role in something that I always believed was between a woman, her family, her doctor, and, if she chooses, her clergy.

And so today I vetoed Senate File 3387.

Sure, we tried to find a way. Together, we were willing to explore whether an acceptable bill could be achieved. And we learned something. We learned that there is no middle ground here. And so now we move on.

Thank you for bearing with me, because after all this, I want you to know that I still believe working together... we will not fail.

Thank you.

(These remarks were delivered April 14, 2000, in the reception room of the governor's office.)



In the hallway outside the governor's office April 14, Rep. Betty Foliard voices her approval over Gov. Jesse Ventura's decision to veto the bill that would have imposed a 24-hour waiting period on those seeking an abortion.

Ventura said when he announced the veto.

Ventura said that he thought long and hard about the bill, and talked with family, friends, advisors, and the people of Minnesota before coming to his decision.

Had the governor signed the bill, a woman would have been required to receive by mail, phone, Internet, or in person information about prenatal care, child support, adoption, and other material about pregnancy and community support services prior to having an abortion.

Back to her roots

After 10 years, Rep. Linda Wejcman is leaving the House to return to her pursuits in her south Minneapolis community

By CHRIS VETTER

Rep. Linda Wejcman (DFL-Mpls) got her first taste of politics in her own south Minneapolis neighborhood where she and her neighbors worked to close an adult bookstore.

After 10 years in the Legislature, Wejcman plans to return her focus to helping neighbors and strengthening her community.

Wejcman, 60, a native of Spencer, Iowa, moved to the Twin Cities for the first time in 1961, then went back to Iowa before making a permanent move to south Minneapolis 10 years later.

She has lived in the same home with her husband, Jim, for the past 25 years. It wasn't long after she moved to Minneapolis when she became involved in trying to close the adult bookstore because, she said, the shop drew unwanted people to the neighborhood who



harassed neighborhood residents.

"We did a lot of picketing and protesting," Wejcman recalls. "It was meant to let (the owners) know that neighbors didn't appreciate it."

That focus on community improvement is where Wejcman's future lies. She started thinking about leaving the Legislature and focusing on community issues after the 1998 election.

"Being in the minority was so different. I started to think, could I get more done working with people rather than trying to pass

laws?" Wejcman said. "I think building community is the best possible thing I can do now."

Wejcman wants to work on drug and gang issues, and to help people become "positive attributes" to the community.

"I want to help people understand the goodness in themselves and work on that," she said.

While her urban district faces poverty and crime problems, Wejcman is upbeat about the smart and determined youth of her community. She speaks passionately about how the young people in her district are opening their minds to their own abilities to improve conditions in the area.

"Our district is so exciting, just because of the diversity," she says.

During her tenure in the Legislature, Wejcman focused on health and human service issues. She backed an unsuccessful effort to create a consumer protection office where people could call and complain about problems with their health care provider or health maintenance organization.

"People don't know where to go for help," Wejcman said. "This would have been an office with real power."

Wejcman sponsored a 1997 bill that established a fathers'

registry for people who believe they may be the father of a child who may be offered for adoption. The registry provides that the man will be notified of a pending adoption and will have a chance to argue for his right to custody in a court hearing.

Fathers who do not register within a certain time lose their right to later challenge an adoption. The goal is to allow adoptive parents to be sure that the adoption will not be overturned later by an absent biological parent.

In 1997, Wejcman was named speaker pro tempore, which meant she assumed the role of the speaker when then-Speaker Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) left the podium. She also served as head of the Minneapolis delegation in the Legislature.

Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), who serves a district that neighbors Wejcman's, spoke highly of Wejcman's commitment to helping others.

"She's worked hard to empower people in south Minneapolis," Clark said. "She has a good sense of humor. I think she brings people together."

Clark cited work on human services, curtailing prostitution, improving housing, and the patients' bill of rights proposal as Wejcman's chief marks in the Legislature.

Although Wejcman comes from an urban district, she jumped at the opportunity to serve on an agriculture committee this year. She cited the parallels between her district and rural Minnesota — arguing that people in both areas share economic, employment, and environmental concerns.

Rep. Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda) worked with Wejcman on the House Agriculture Policy Committee. He said she "is giving people a helping hand up and out of poverty."

"Her sense of caring and her realistic approach to legislation" are her memorable attributes, Winter said. "She's always been positive, always up front."

Even if the DFL were to regain majority status in the House in the November elections, Wejcman said she wouldn't regret her decision to leave.

"My decision was, it's time to move on and do some more hands-on work," she said, reflecting on her decade at the Capitol. "For me, that's long enough." 🐼

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Linda Wejcman
DFL

District 61B – Minneapolis

Terms: 5

Career notes: Perhaps the best known legislation Wejcman sponsored was a 1997 measure that created a registry for men who believe they may be the father of a child that could be placed for adoption. The aim was to prevent cases where a biological father comes on the scene much later and tries to overturn an adoption.

Exiting under a cloud

Rostberg says his business pursuits and other interests prompted his decision to leave, not the criminal charge pending against him

BY JON FURE

After serving three terms in the House, Rep. Jim Rostberg (R-Isanti) will not seek re-election.

He said his decision to leave is not related to a criminal sexual conduct charge pending against him. He has maintained his innocence in the case.

Rather, the 43-year-old Isanti man said he is leaving largely because he and his wife, Kathy, plan to start a family business.

Rostberg said he will have fond memories of the six years he has spent as a lawmaker, but that he wants to dedicate more time to life in the private sector.

"It was never my intent to become a career politician," Rostberg said.

When he first ran for office, he felt that he had some good ideas that could benefit the state, Rostberg said.

At the end of his legislative career, he lists as one of his proudest accomplishments a bill related to property taxes that he originally sponsored in 1996. The proposal was passed into law in 1997 with the help of Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), now the chair of the House Taxes Committee and long a Republican leader on tax issues.

The law allows business owners to negotiate a property tax abatement to help them expand their business. The idea came from a constituent of Rostberg's who wanted to expand his business and increase staff, but the expected higher property taxes made the plan infeasible.

Under the law, a city, county, or school district governing board can reduce the tax on the property that is expanded for up to 10

years, provided that it would accomplish a specified public purpose, such as economic development and job creation.

Rostberg said the law makes sense because a business doesn't realize an immediate profit in that situation. It allows the business to expand and get established before paying the higher property tax. Such an abatement is negotiated through public hearings, he said, so that people in a community can speak for or against such a proposal.

He noted that the measure was significant to him because he helped the bill become law even though his party was in the minority.

"I've never had a problem working with members of either caucus," he said. "They're all professional, and they do a good job representing their districts. If I don't see eye-to-eye with someone on an issue, that's not something I take personally."

This year, Rostberg's life and political career took a turn nobody could have expected. He was arrested March 2 in the Capitol and charged in Isanti County the next day.

Rostberg is facing one count of second-degree criminal sexual conduct in Isanti County, but he has

repeatedly said that is not the reason for his decision to not seek re-election. He said he had already been contemplating leaving the Legislature at the end of this term.

According to the criminal complaint, Rostberg is accused of engaging in criminal sexual contact with a girl under 16.

Rostberg was originally charged with three counts, but two were dropped after prosecutors determined there was not enough evi-

dence to support them. He now faces a single criminal count for allegedly fondling the girl.

A House Ethics Committee probe into the allegations was delayed earlier this session until criminal proceedings are complete. That is unlikely to occur before the 2000 Legislature adjourns.

Addressing his colleagues on the House floor, Rostberg said he is innocent but that he could not comment further on the criminal case.

Looking back on his career, Rostberg said the ability to negotiate and the willingness to hear views from all sides are among the most important qualities for being a successful lawmaker.

"You need to be reasonable, able to negotiate, and willing to negotiate," he said. "You have to have an open door, and to allow input from all sides, and there's usually many sides. And you have to be able to accept criticism, as well as accolades. If you can't do that, you won't be successful here."

Rostberg currently is the vice chair of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee, and he also serves on the Agriculture Policy, Agriculture and Rural Development Finance, and Environment and Natural Resources Policy committees.

When the Legislature is not in session, Rostberg works as a veterans service officer and emergency management director for Isanti County.

A 1999 law that Rostberg sponsored with bipartisan support set up a training program for 13 local fire and rescue departments along the upper Mississippi River in central Minnesota, so that those departments can effectively respond to oil spills in the river. Quick responses are necessary in cleaning up those spills, he said, and the program could be expanded to other parts of the state. 🐾



STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Jim Rostberg
Republican
District 18A – Isanti
Terms: 3

Career notes: Rostberg has worked on veterans issues and environmental matters. In his final term, he was named vice chair of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

A mind for policy

Long a leader on tax issues, Rest combined background as an accountant and teacher to push for reforms as House member

By DAVID MAEDA

Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) came to the Legislature in 1984 with a slightly different background from many of her colleagues who are attorneys, farmers, or business owners.

With degrees in Latin, Greek, English, teaching, and accounting from a variety of institutions including Northwestern University, the University of Chicago, Harvard University, and the University of Minnesota, Rest spent nine years as a teacher in the Robbinsdale area school system.

Rest was primarily an English and literature teacher with the district.

She said declining enrollment in the school district led her to make a career switch to another service occupation, working as a certified public accountant.

And because of her growing interest and involvement in her political party's activities, along with her background in education and taxes, she then decided to run for a seat in the Legislature.

Now with her 16 years of experience as a member of the House, Rest, 58, said she has decided to change direction again.

Last winter she announced her decision to run for her district's state Senate seat currently held by Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope). Junge, an assistant majority leader in the Senate, has decided not to run for another term.

"I see it as an opportunity to serve a wider constituency," Rest said.

Her current district covers all of New Hope,

northwest Crystal, and part of Golden Valley. The Senate district includes all of Crystal, New Hope, Robbinsdale, and a portion of Brooklyn Center.

Rest said she'll miss the day-to-day relationships with many of her House colleagues but she hopes to continue working on many of the same issues she has been involved with over the years.

She said she is most proud of working on the following achievements as a member of



the House: reforms to the state's DWI enforcement laws, tightening the restrictions on youth access to tobacco products, and several tax related initiatives including the state's working family credit and reforms to tax-increment finance laws.

Among her ongoing priorities, Rest said, is finding adequate and stable funding for public education — which means finding a method to take education funding off of the property tax. The education homestead credit, which she

helped establish, is one step in that direction, Rest said.

In a way, Rest has come full circle as a House member.

"I came here in my first term as a member of the minority, and I'm going to leave as a member of the minority," she said.

In between that time, as a member of the majority, Rest served as chair of the House Taxes Committee and, later, the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee. She said being a member of the minority party doesn't necessarily mean not having an impact on the process.

"When one is willing to work on a bipartisan basis, a member can be effective in influencing public policy whether in the majority or the minority," she said. "I haven't stopped offering legislation since I've been in the minority."

Among her colleagues who hold Rest in high esteem is the current chair of the Taxes Committee, Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka). Abrams ended the final Taxes Committee hearing this year by recognizing Rest's contributions and accomplishments.

"You made the committee absolutely the best committee to serve on," Abrams told Rest.

Abrams said that both as the ranking member from the minority party on the committee and as tax chair, Rest was respectful of all members.

"She treated all members with equality regardless of their party designation," Abrams said. "She made her decisions as the tax chair based on what was good tax policy. She was willing to listen to and understand your point of view."

Abrams said he has the highest respect for Rest and will miss serving with her.

"She brings a centrist perspective that is so rare in these days of extreme partisan bickering," he said. 🐼

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Ann H. Rest
DFL

District 46A – New Hope

Terms: 8

Career notes: A former chair of the House Taxes Committee, Rest is widely respected as an expert in tax policy, and she sponsored several key tax reform measures during her time in the House.

Pressing for change

Early Minnesota editor's views forced confrontation with political powerhouse and vandals to keep newspaper alive

BY JON FURE

Conflicts between politicians and the press have been common throughout history, but those conflicts today seem tame compared to one that occurred in Minnesota's territorial days.

That conflict was between Jane Grey Swisshelm, outspoken editor of the *St. Cloud Visiter*, and Sylvanus Lowry, a prominent businessman and politician in that area.

Swisshelm's editorials caused such animosity that her printing press was destroyed by a few angry community members. Nevertheless, she was able to continue publishing her controversial editorials as other area residents rallied together on her behalf.

Before moving to Minnesota in 1857, Swisshelm had been a school teacher, editor, and writer in Pittsburgh. She had moved to the St. Cloud area after separating from her husband.

She moved to the territory to live near her sister and brother-in-law, George F. Brott. Brott was a recent settler and business owner who had bought a printing press, hoping to publish a newspaper that would promote the town and induce immigration.

Brott asked Swisshelm if she would become the editor, and she agreed under one condition. She told Brott that she "could not edit a paper in which I had not full liberty to express my sentiments on any question."

Brott replied that she could "talk any kind of politics she had a mind to."

She spelled out some of her main views in her first editorial on Dec. 10, 1857, including equal rights for women and the abolition of slavery — two topics she had written vehemently about for many years.

On the subject of voting, for example, she wrote, "Paying taxes is as unwomanly as voting; and is a privilege which should be exclusively confined to 'white male citizens, of this and other countries.'"

She also wrote about the quality of the agricultural land in the area and encouraged people from New England to consider settling

in central Minnesota.

The *Visiter* was struggling financially, as advertising revenue was falling far short of Brott's costs to produce the paper. So in the spring of 1858, Swisshelm set out to find other local businessmen to invest in the newspaper, because she felt that they stood to benefit financially from the paper's role in bringing in new settlers.

When Swisshelm approached Lowry, he refused to contribute any money, because he opposed Swisshelm's political views. Lowry had come to Minnesota from Tennessee, and he specifically opposed her abolitionist position, according to *Newspapers on the Minnesota Frontier*, a 1967 book by George S. Hage.

Swisshelm responded by declaring that she would change her views to support those of Lowry, and advocate the re-election of President James Buchanan.

She explained the switch by writing that she was simply doing what was necessary to stay in business.

Swisshelm wrote, "[W]hat was the use of our keeping up a 'factious opposition' like the little stick

trying to turn the course of a great river. It is nice for women to be gentle and yielding, especially if there is money to be made by it.

"... Self interest suggested that our fortune would be about made if we could support Mr. Buchanan. We thought the matter over five minutes and concluded that maybe we could if we tried."

Despite her claims to support the prevailing political views, the obvious sarcastic tone of her editorial showed through — for example, she endorsed Buchanan for the election of 1260 instead of 1860.

Those and other editorials prompted Lowry's attorney, James C. Shepley, to give a public lecture on the role of women. Without naming Swisshelm, he said that there was a certain type of woman "with whom some of us poor males as yet scarce feel at ease — the strong-minded woman . . . who leaves the sheltered domestic hearth . . . to enter the bitter invective and competition of politics."

After the lecture, Swisshelm wrote that Shepley neglected to describe another type of woman, which many people interpreted as a description of Shepley's wife.

Swisshelm described that type as "thick-skinned," "coarse," "loud-mouthed," "whose conversational tones are audible at the furthest side of the next square," and whose triumphs consist of "card-table successes, displays of cheap finery, and in catching marriageable husbands for herself and her poor relations."

That editorial appeared March 18, 1858, and on March 24, vandals broke into Swisshelm's office, destroyed the printing press and threw its parts into the Mississippi River.

A note was left, signed by the "Committee of Vigilance," saying the *Visiter* was a nuisance and that "it is fit only for the inmates of brothels, and you seem to have had some experience of the tastes of such persons. You will never have the opportunity to repeat the offence in this town, without paying a more serious penalty than you do now."

Swisshelm's supporters gathered that night and passed a resolution at a

Stearns County meeting, stating that they would not tolerate the attempt to stifle free speech and that they would purchase new equipment to allow the continued publication of the *Visiter*.

News of the vigilantes' action spread quickly, and it was condemned in various Minnesota newspaper articles that were reprinted in other states.

Shepley and others sued Swisshelm and Brott's company for libel, and they settled out of court.



Jane Grey Swisshelm

Continued on page 22

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill has passed both the House and Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor, who has several options when considering a bill, can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill;
- or do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium (even-numbered years), a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (Latin for adjournment "without a date certain"). If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes (save pocket vetoes) the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills

passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history—at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

This information is also available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "Legislative Initiatives" link, then click on "Legislative Log 2000."

Key:
CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
390	3554	3138*	Veterans Affairs commissioner duties technical changes provided.	4/14/00	
391	3424	3346*	Electronic filing of real estate documents task force established.	4/14/00	
392	3597	2795*	State investments modified.	4/14/00	
393	3328	2877*	Iron Range off-highway vehicle recreation area addition in St. Louis County provided.	4/14/00	
394	3075	2655*	Insurance tax laws recodified.	4/14/00	
395	3066	2783*	Secretary of State fees and annual corporate registrations regulated.	4/14/00	
396	3260	2968*	Lake improvement district provisions modified.	4/14/00	
397	2229	884*	Reduced marriage license fee provided for couples who obtain premarital counseling.		4/14/00
398	3964	3626*	Comprehensive Health Association eligibility and coverage modified.	4/14/00	
399	1394	1495*	Uniform Commercial Code secured transactions provisions adopted.	4/14/00	
400	1662	1896*	Medical assistance programs and liens modified.	4/14/00	
401	3176	3410*	Neglect definition modified.	4/14/00	
402	3263	3082*	Duluth Human Rights Commission additional powers authorized.	4/14/00	
403	3519	2794*	Expedited child support process provisions modified.	4/14/00	
404	3318	3018*	Standby and alternate custodians of children designation provided.	4/14/00	
405	3577	3116*	Creditors' garnishments, executions, and levies regulated.	4/14/00	
406	304	173*	Possession of wild animals taken on the Red Lake Indian Reservation authorized.	4/14/00	
407	2570	3259*	Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.	4/13/00	
408	3512	3108*	Local and state correctional facility inmate telephone access regulated.	4/14/00	
409	2731*	2753	Motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors, and factory branches unfair practices regulated.	4/14/00	
410	2935	2363*	Dental benefit plans regulated.	4/14/00	
411	3825	3338*	Tribal police departments annual insurance cap established.	4/14/00	
412	3652	3387*	Abortion informed consent requirements modified.		4/14/00
413	1383	1231*	Optometrist licensing provisions modified.	4/14/00	

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
414	3633*	3550	Mighty Eighth Air Force Week designated.	4/14/00	
415	1947	1618*	Brewer and wholesaler judicial remedies modified.	4/17/00	
416	2791	2471*	Hennepin County Human Resources Board and department provisions modified.	4/17/00	
417	2846	3272*	Bleacher safety building code requirements modified.	4/17/00	
418	3234	3091*	Sales and use tax law recodified.	4/18/00	
419	1834	1699*	Electronic funds transfers and credit card payments to state agencies authorized.	4/18/00	
420	3495	2972*	State purchases open bidding authorized.	4/18/00	
421	3008	2615*	Persons leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms not prosecuted.	4/18/00	
422	1631	1202*	Protocol established for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens.	4/18/00	
423	2555	1733*	Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.	4/18/00	
424	3901*	3769	Housing finance agency community rehabilitation grants and loans authorized.	4/20/00	
425	3091	2484*	Motor vehicles required to be driven in the right-hand lane clarified.		4/20/00
426	2953	3023*	Vehicle registration and titling provisions modified.	4/20/00	
427	2973	2870*	Financial institution loan charges and payments regulated.	4/20/00	
428	2889	2683*	Bowfishing archery bows exempted from casing requirement.	4/20/00	
429	2671*	2567	Temporary census employee income excluded from public assistance eligibility determinations.	4/20/00	
430	2563*	2381	Mechanics' lien civil cause of action created.	4/20/00	
431	2830*	2771	Pimps and patrons of juvenile prostitution provided enhanced criminal penalties.	4/20/00	

Continued from page 4.

districts to choose between the Profile and a second option to assess student achievement, called the North Star Standard. House conferees are also pushing for a moratorium on holding students accountable until certain conditions can be met.

The Senate has proposed to allow school districts the freedom to vote on the number of content standards students must complete to demonstrate understanding.

Health and human services

State welfare recipients could be forced to forfeit their entire welfare checks if they fail to comply with work rules tied to Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) eligibility.

A provision that would cut off benefits to parents who repeatedly fall into noncompliance is contained in the omnibus state government spending bill (HF2699) currently in conference committee.

The provision proposes spending \$160 million in surplus federal funds earmarked for an overhaul of the state's welfare system for programs to prevent teen prostitution and to aid hard-to-employ parents.

Disabled people on Medicare under age 65 stand to benefit from a provision to expand eligibility for the state's senior prescription drug program. The measure is also contained in the omnibus state government spending bill.

The provision also would make more people

eligible to receive help paying for drugs by doubling the asset limit for inclusion in the program. A sliding enrollment fee for individuals a certain percentage above the federal poverty level would also be created.

Felony DWI

A conviction for a fourth drunken driving offense in 10 years would be a felony under a bill (HF2995/SF2677*) currently in conference committee.

How to pay for increased stresses on jails and prisons is the main difference that remains.

The Senate version has a one-year sunset date if funding is not provided for more jail and prison space. The House measure would not take effect until 2001, giving the next Legislature time to figure out spending proposals.

Wolf management

A bill that would establish a state plan to manage the gray wolf population was passed by the House, but the bill was modified by the Senate and attached to another bill related to the environment.

The wolf management plan would allow people to shoot a wolf in defense of a human life, and to trap wolves under certain conditions in areas where wolves have destroyed livestock. The number of wolves in the state has exceeded the federal requirements for keeping the animal on the list of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants.

A conference committee had agreed to a

state plan that would allow the wolf to be removed from the list, and the House approved that bill (HF1415), but the Senate rejected it and sent it back conference committee.

The Senate later made slight changes to the wolf-management language and attached the plan to a bill that would increase hunting and fishing fees (HF3046), which had already been passed by the House.

That bill now must return to the House.

Unicameral dead

The governor's proposed switch to a one-chamber, or unicameral, Legislature is apparently dead.

House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) has been a proponent of the measure, which would put the question before voters as a constitutional amendment.

The first bill (HF159), sponsored by Sviggum, stalled in committee earlier this session. Sviggum introduced another bill (HF4147) last week that included the measure, but he was unable to get the bill sent directly to the House Rules Committee as he wished. The bill awaits a hearing in the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

Natural resources amendment

Another proposal to increase funding for natural resources projects would put a constitutional amendment before voters in the 2000 election.

The amendment would divert three-

sixteenths of 1 percent of sales tax revenue to pay for various environmental improvements, including fish and wildlife resource enhancement and improvement. That bill (HF3426) awaits action in the House Ways and Means Committee.

Auto glass incentives

The governor signed a law April 6 that limits rebates from auto glass companies to \$35.

Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville) said the law (HF2656*/SF3441/CH342) was needed because some glass companies were giving away \$200 rebates and boxes of free steaks to lure customers, then passing the costs on to insurance companies.

Newborn drop-off

Women can leave an unharmed newborn at a hospital up to 72 hours after the child is born without fear of prosecution, under a law signed April 18 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law (HF3008/SF2615*/CH421) came as a result of cases where babies were abandoned — including one left in a dumpster — causing death or serious injury.

Sex offender registration

Ventura signed “Katie’s Law,” which will require some sex offenders to be registered for life. More penalties are added for offenders who fail to register. The law also provides \$12 million for startup costs for a statewide criminal justice information database.

The law came as a result of the kidnapping and apparent murder of 19-year-old Katie Poirier. The man accused of killing her is a repeat sex offender.

Feedlot rules

A bill that would ease a set of new feedlot rules proposed in December by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is on its way to the governor’s desk.

The measure (HF3692) would give specific instruction to the agency on how the rules should be amended before final adoption.

The bill would also require that action on permits be taken within 60 days, and prohibit the MPCA from imposing additional conditions as part of a feedlot permit after the proposed rules are adopted.

Right-to-know bill vetoed

A bill requiring a 24-hour waiting period and written consent before a woman could obtain an abortion was vetoed by Ventura April 14.

The bill (HF3652/SF3387*/CH412) would have also required that the woman be given information about risks and alternatives at least 24 hours before the procedure is scheduled.

Background checks for aides

The fate of a bill that would require unlicensed teaching assistants to undergo criminal background checks before being hired remains uncertain. The bill (HF3402) awaits a vote in the House.

Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), sponsor of the bill, said that any increase in student safety would greatly outweigh any delay in the hiring process that could result if the bill becomes law. 🐼



During annual rites of spring, swallows return to California’s Mission San Juan Capistrano, Japanese cherry blossoms in the nation’s capital peak in late March, and robins build their nests in most states.

In Minnesota, it’s around the time “cabin fever” subsides — which waned early this year. Or, for some, spring comes at the end of the legislative session.

But the second year of the 81st Session continues.

And the Legislature plans to be in session the week after Easter. Since April 19 was the 110th legislative day of this session, the Legislature now has 10 legislative days to complete its work. The Legislature must close by midnight of the 120th legislative day or May 22 this year, whichever comes first.

Around the state, rites of spring happen earlier. Up north in District 2A, a constituent of Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), Eric Bergeson, has already moved annuals and perennials from the Bergeson Nursery greenhouses so local residents in and near the city of Fertile can prepare their summer gardens.

Reflections

Down in southwestern Minnesota, in District 22B, Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson) had as many as 175 constituents attend an annual Horticulture Day at the University of Minnesota Research and Outreach Service in the city of Lamberton. There they learned the latest in vegetable and fruit gardening, from growing hostas and other perennials to organic gardening.

And across the river from the Capitol in south Minneapolis District 63B where Rep. Mark Gleason (DFL-Mpls) resides, a transplanted Iowa farmboy has already tested the time “to plant.” According to him, each year, he exercises a rite of spring his father taught him.

During a full moon and after midnight, he sits on the ground. If it is not cold and damp, the time is right. The ritual must work, for the ex-Iowan has the most prolific flower garden in the area.

For many, “true” spring does not really come to the Capitol until the diverse, annual flowers are in place throughout the complex. According to groundskeeper Rick Rauen, some 12,000 annuals are planted each year, while thousands of daffodils, tulips, roses and other perennials greet the season of rebirth on their own.

Others believe the blossoming and greening of the trees are the most significant designations of springtime. And tree planting by Rauen and his staff is part of that process.

Recently, Rauen planted some tamarack trees and a Kentucky coffee tree to add to the exterior beauty of the area. As they grow, the new trees will replace two old green spruce trees south of the State Office Building that groundskeepers expect could get lost to a storm.

Some donated trees of note include the red splendor flowering crab trees discovered and introduced by Bergeson’s grandfather, Melvin Bergeson, in 1948. Their lustrous pink blossoms also add beauty to the nation’s capital at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts.

Other species are a red oak donated by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), a white spruce, a white pine, and a Sapporo elm. Unlike the 95 Dutch elm trees that still manage to grace the Capitol lawn, the Sapporo is invulnerable to critical attacks by the elm beetle.

Lawmakers will end session and go home soon, but the stalwart beauty of the Capitol’s trees, flowers, and deeply carpeted green lawn will remain for all to relish.

— LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

Monday, April 17

HF4154—Lenczewski (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Gifts to legislators from interested persons prohibited.

HF4155—Lenczewski (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Legislative meeting notice provisions modified.

HF4156—Abeler (R) K-12 Education Finance

Pupil transportation working group created, and labor and fuel cost increases studied.

Tuesday, April 18

HF4157—Wenzel (DFL) Crime Prevention

Life imprisonment without parole sentence provided to persons causing the death of another while committing a drive-by shooting.

HF4158—Wenzel (DFL) Taxes

State-paid agricultural property taxes provided payable in 2000 and 2001, and money appropriated.

HF4159—Mulder (R) Health & Human Services Policy

Breast cancer treatment by high-dosage chemotherapy with autologous bone marrow transplant health insurance coverage requirement repealed.

HF4160—Abeler (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Historic structures rehabilitation building code required.

Wednesday, April 19

HF4161—Larson, D. (DFL) Health & Human Services Policy

Orthopedic physician assistant practice requirements established, titles protected, and grounds for disciplinary action provided.

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

APRIL 24 - 28, 2000

MONDAY, April 24

No meetings have been announced.

TUESDAY, April 25

10:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Room to be announced
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes
Agenda: Campaign Finance and Disclosure Board members confirmation.

12 noon

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

123 State Capitol
Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty
Agenda: Calendar for the Day for April 25.

HF849 (Haake) A bill for an act relating to metropolitan government; defining minor use and intermediate use airports for certain purposes; establishing a reliever airport sound abatement council.

1 p.m.

The House meets in session.

3 p.m. or 15 minutes
after the last body adjourns

Conference Committee
SF3793/HF2891
Omnibus transportation bill

118 State Capitol
Chrs. Rep. Carol Molnau, Sen. Dean Johnson

6 p.m.

Conference Committee
SF2677/HF2995
Felony DWI and recodification
500N State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Doug Fuller, Sen. Dave Johnson

One hour after the last body
adjourns

Conference Committee
SF3801/HF3800
Omnibus education bill
112 State Capitol
Chrs. Rep. Alice Seagren,
Sen. Larry Pogemiller

WEDNESDAY, April 26

8 a.m.

Conference Committee
HF3839/SF2474
Health occupations
10 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Kevin Goodno, Sen. Sheila Kiscaden

8:30 a.m.

Conference Committee
HF3505/SF3092 Commerce
Department Enforcement Bill;
managing general agents, securities
broker-dealers, investment
advisors, contractor recovery fund,

collection agencies, and notarial act provisions modified.
125 State Capitol
Chrs. Rep. Greg Davids, Sen. Edward Oliver

2 p.m.

Legislative Commission on
Planning & Fiscal Policy
107 State Capitol
Chr. Sen. Roger Moe
Agenda: Department of Finance
Commissioner Pam Wheelock

Continued from page 18

Part of the settlement was that Swisshelm would not continue to write about the incident in the *Visiter*. Her response was to close the *Visiter* and start a new publication, called the *St. Cloud Democrat*. In the first issue, Aug. 5, 1858, she wrote:

"When we authorized the printing company to pledge *The St. Cloud Visiter* to silence on 'the subject' of the destruction of our office, we did so, simply to get our friends out of our way; and to circumvent three lawyers. The men pledged their honor that the *Visiter* should not 'discuss the subject.' We have pledged our honor that the paper we edit will discuss any subject we have a mind.

presentation regarding budget and forecast issues.

THURSDAY, April 27

No meetings have been announced.

FRIDAY, April 28

No meetings have been announced.

"... If these fellows destroy our office again, as they now threaten to do, we will go down to Hennepin County and publish the *St. Cloud Democrat* there."

She published the *St. Cloud Democrat* until 1863, and she then became active in giving lectures in Chicago, Philadelphia, Brooklyn, and Washington, D.C., according to *Women of Minnesota*, a 1998 book by Barbara Stuhler and Gretchen Kreuter. She stayed in Washington when she was appointed to a clerkship in the U.S. War Department. 

Order a free copy of *New Laws 2000*

Complete this form to receive your copy of *New Laws 2000*, a publication describing the new laws passed this year. The publication will provide brief, easy-to-read summaries of the bills that were passed by both the House and Senate and signed or vetoed by the governor. *New Laws 2000* will be available a few months after the session ends. Copies will be mailed without charge to those who order them.



Do you want to receive a copy of *New Laws 2000*? Yes No

Please place this form (with the mailing label on the back) in an envelope.

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Please take a moment to tell us what you think of *Session Weekly*. Your opinions will help us plan for next year.

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5. Please rate the following aspects of the *Session Weekly* by checking one answer in each set.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to understand | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat understandable | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy to understand |
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| Layout | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent |
| Photographs | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent |

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7. Do you have Internet access? Yes No

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Home values and property taxes

Net property tax collections statewide, payable 1999, in billions	\$4.6
Year state property tax was eliminated	1971
Property value appreciation of single-family homes, as percent, 1980-1997	149.2
Median home sale prices statewide, 1996	\$87,500
Median price in Carver County (highest of any county), 1996	\$131,320
Percent change since 1985	22
Median price in Kittson County (lowest of any county), 1996	\$18,000
Percent change since 1985	(11)
Property value increase in Lake of the Woods County (largest increase), as percent	34
Property value increase in change in Faribault County since 1985 (largest decrease), as percent	(40)
Number of counties with housing price loss from 1985 to 1996	9
Number of counties with housing price gain from 1985 to 1996	7
Property tax, as percent of gross income for apartment owners	16 to 18
Estimated Hennepin County annual property tax for a \$40,000 home, 1999	\$415
As percent of home's value	1
Estimated Hennepin County annual property tax for a \$300,000 home, 1999	\$5,545
As percent of home's value	1.8
Property tax liability for an apartment complex property valued at \$600,000, per year	\$22,668
Effective tax rate, as percent	3.778
Total property tax payments over 30-year life of property	\$680,040
Potential property tax revenue exempted by statute, fiscal year 2000, in millions,	\$945.5
Elementary and secondary schools, in millions	\$327.9
Hospitals, in millions	\$92.4
Federal parks and refuges, in millions	\$13.4
Cemeteries, in millions	\$8.1
Public property used for public purposes, in millions	\$455.5

Sources: *Smart Signals: Property tax reform for smart growth*, Minnesota Planning Environmental Quality Board, March 2000; *Tax Expenditure Budget-Fiscal Years 2000-2003*, Minnesota Department of Revenue, February 2000; *Population Notes*, Minnesota Planning State Demographic Center, August 1998.

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SESSION

Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

APRIL 28, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 13

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SEEKING A BUDGET DEAL

HISTORY OF VETO OVERRIDES

HF4162-HF4166

SESSION Weekly

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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On the cover: Carved eagles perched on the Capitol dome forever watch over the Capitol grounds, joined momentarily by their free-flying cousins.

—Photo by Andrew Von Bank

Deadline crunch

House leaders accept Finance Department numbers, but there is still disagreement about major tax cut and spending initiatives as constitutional deadlines approach

By DAVID MAEDA

After being unable to conclude business by the Passover and Easter holiday weekend as they had hoped, lawmakers took a five-day break for the holidays.

Upon their return to the Capitol, things remained at a relative standstill as the House and Senate continued to disagree over spending and tax cut priorities.

Though they seem to be coming closer, they still haven't reached an agreement.

On April 26, the House leadership made what Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) said was its sixth offer to the Senate leadership fi-

17 consecutive budget forecasts that have underestimated the amount of the state's revenue. In agreeing to accept the \$549 million figure, Sviggum said that the House would require that most of the money be used for permanent tax cuts.

The session, having now completed its 13th week, can end no later than May 22, if the Legislature doesn't run out of legislative days before then. It could be the first time in recent years that the Legislature has used the entire 120 legislative days it is allowed under the Minnesota Constitution. Legislative days are those on which either the House or Senate meets in full session.

As of April 27, the Legislature had used 113 legislative days.

Though it seems like the 2000 session is dragging on longer than most as the House and Senate leaders inch toward an agreement, statistics show other two-year sessions have gone nearly this long before.

In recent biennia, for example, the Legislature used 109 legislative days in 1997-1998, 113 days in 1995-1996, 106 days in

1993-1994, and 100 days in 1991-1992.

The even-year session has started and ended at various times over the past decade. Leadership of the House and Senate determine the schedule that will be used in the second year of the biennium. In 1998, for example, the session opened Jan. 20 and adjourned April 9, which was 13 weeks. This year, the session did not start until Feb. 1, 2000.

The Legislature met only every other year

before a 1972 constitutional amendment allowed for the current biennial system.

Traditionally, the first year, or odd-numbered year, of the session has been devoted to setting budgets for state agencies, constitutional offices, the Legislature, and the judicial branch of state government. The second year has been devoted to establishing a list of construction and repair projects to be paid for by selling bonds. The second year of the session also has usually included supplemental spending for costs that were unforeseen in the previous budget year.

Bonding and spending bills are now being held up until leaders reach an agreement. But their discussions have been primarily tangled in disagreements over permanent tax cuts.

The House's latest proposal would still reduce income tax rates in all three brackets. The upper and lower brackets would be reduced by 0.3 percent while the middle bracket would receive a 0.55 percent reduction. An additional one-eighth percent reduction in each bracket would occur contingent on a positive November forecast, Sviggum said.

In its original tax plan the House proposed reducing the rates in the upper and lower brackets by 0.5 percent and in the middle bracket by 0.75 percent.

As a condition to the House's acceptance of the \$549 million figure, Sviggum said that the House would also require that the state use \$340 million of the tobacco settlement revenue for a three-year "holiday" from the health care provider tax.

The provider tax is used to fund MinnesotaCare, the state-paid health insurance program for low-income families. The rate of the tax on health care providers is scheduled to increase from 1.5 percent to 2 percent next year.

Sviggum said that because the tax is ultimately imposed on those in need of health care, it is one of the state's worst taxes.

The House proposal also includes \$40 million in spending for the already passed crime bill and for debt service, leaving an additional \$45 million for other ongoing spending measures.

Also, the House is proposing to provide one-time funding of \$350 million for transportation projects, \$141 million for K-12 education, and \$11.6 million for higher education initiatives. The House's proposal also includes \$500 million for bonding and cash capital projects.



In an effort to move the budget negotiations closer to resolution, House Speaker Steve Sviggum, joined by other House Republican leaders, announces April 26 they will agree with Senate leaders and Gov. Jesse Ventura and accept the Department of Finance numbers regarding money available for tax cuts and spending. Sviggum said House leadership still advocates using most of the money available for permanent tax cuts.

nally agreeing to the overall budget number of \$549 million. That is the figure the state Department of Finance has said is the number available per year for spending and tax cuts that will keep the budget in structural balance.

"We have removed the last roadblock to permanent tax cuts for the taxpayers of Minnesota," he said.

House leadership has maintained that the \$549 million amount is too small, pointing to



Prohibition politics

Ties to illegal liquor sales almost cost a veteran legislator his job

While Sviggum said the agreement to use the \$549 million figure was “significant,” the House and Senate remain in disagreement over how that money should be used.

Of the \$549 million, the Senate is proposing to spend around \$229 million primarily for education and health care.

The Senate tax cut proposal would reduce the rate in the lowest bracket by 0.1 percent and the middle bracket by 0.25 percent. The Senate also now has agreed with the House not to reduce the state’s vehicle license tab fees, which Gov. Jesse Ventura strongly favors.

Two of Ventura’s other key initiatives also received some attention. On April 26, Republican House members had breakfast at the governor’s residence to discuss the possibility of reviving his unicameral proposal.

Such a bill would place a constitutional amendment on the November general election ballot so voters could decide whether the state should adopt a unicameral, or one-house, legislature.

Also, Ventura announced this week that the state has received federal approval to begin final design on the proposed light-rail project along the Hiawatha corridor in Minneapolis.

Sviggum said he and other House members remain unconvinced about the cost-effectiveness of light rail and that obtaining the latest approval was not significant.

“I don’t think it was much of a hurdle that was passed,” he said.

House proposals currently in conference committee would repeal the unspent funds previously allocated by the state for the light-rail transit project. Officials estimate about \$92 million remains of the total \$100 million in funds.

The governor has said he will veto any bill that would repeal the light-rail project.

With little time remaining to complete work, the Legislature is working to find an acceptable middle ground. The House and Senate can only hold floor sessions for a combined seven more legislative days, as of April 27. 🗿

Writer Jon Fure contributed to this report.

Correction

A story in the April 21 edition of *Session Weekly* incorrectly identified the House sponsor of a new law designed to protect unwanted newborns.

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior) sponsored the legislation, which will allow a mother (or a person of her consent) to leave an unharmed baby at a hospital emergency room up to 72 hours following the child’s birth without fear of prosecution for child abandonment. Gov. Jesse Ventura signed the measure (HF2945/SF2615*/CH421) on April 18.

We regret the error.

The politics of Prohibition marred the career of Ambrose Lennon, a Minneapolis man who spent a total of 16 years in the Legislature.

Lennon became the center of a months-long melodrama that was caused by his standing in a seemingly innocuous fraternal organization. A longtime member of his community’s Eagles lodge, the legislator was, in his own words, “pressed into the position of trustee when I personally would have avoided it.”

His wish to have avoided becoming a trustee could only have grown after the lodge was raided and several employees and officials were arrested for illegal liquor sales.

Undercover agents had applied to become members of the lodge and were accepted into the group quickly and whole-heartedly. With the trust of their “brothers,” the agents then watched the widespread sale of bootleg booze. They claimed to have been witness to more than 3,000 sales of alcoholic beverages.

When the law eventually swooped in, nine bartenders were arrested, along with all officers and trustees of the lodge. Lennon was not present when the raid took place, but he was among those later arrested and charged.

All were convicted. The bartenders each got eight months in jail, and the lodge officials also went to jail. Lennon, who appealed his conviction, was the lone exception.

With his case on appeal, Lennon continued his work in the Minnesota Senate, much to the chagrin of some of his colleagues. Led by Sen. Victor Lawson, an effort began to oust Lennon or to shame him into resigning.

“I have nothing personally against [Lennon], but I do want to state that his continued presence here has been a disgrace to this Senate and you know it,” Lawson said. “. . . It surely can be of little satisfaction personally for him to be here with this cloud hanging over him.”

In January 1927, Lawson introduced a resolution asking Lennon to resign from office. The Senate Elections Committee delayed action on the matter for weeks be-

fore finally voting that it should be deferred until the court ruled on Lennon’s appeal.

“I give notice that if he comes back next session, whether he goes to jail or not in the meantime, and attempts to sit as a member of this Senate, the proceedings to oust him will be renewed,” Lawson said.

And Lawson would get that chance.

In the 1928 election, with his case still tied up in the courts, Lennon won re-election to the Senate, garnering the largest majority he had ever enjoyed in any of his six legislative campaigns. (He had served eight years in the House before moving to the Senate in 1924.)

The 1929 session put Lawson back on the attack, but he wasn’t going to be satisfied with an unenforceable resolution suggesting Lennon resign. Lawson and his allies mounted an effort to have Lennon expelled from the body.

On the first day of the session, the Senate took up the matter, and Lennon gave a long and eloquent defense of himself.

He pointed out that he had never been accused of selling liquor, drinking liquor, or profiting from liquor sales. He explained that his accusers had claimed only that he knew or should have known about the illegal activities at the lodge.

“I wonder how well they will have served their own consciences if they succeed in wrecking my life, branding me with dishonor, heaping me with reproach as I near the end of a life that has been clean even if it has not been great,” Lennon said. “. . . My appeal is to men who can be calm and fair and merciful, not to men who regard themselves as divinely appointed censors of humanity.”

Lennon survived the ordeal, with 25 senators voting to throw him out and 38 in favor of allowing him to stay on the job, though it would be his last term in the Legislature.

And the 55-year-old knew that his career would be scarred by the event.

“It touches my wife and children,” he said. “It touches my lifetime of effort as a human being, and it effects the heritage I shall leave behind me when I am gone from this world.”

(N. HEALY)

★ **AGRICULTURE**

Feedlot rules relaxed

New feedlot rules proposed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) will be relaxed, under a law signed April 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The new law takes into account public testimony opposing new rules for permitting animal feedlots. Effective April 25, 2000, the law gives specific instruction to the agency on how the rules should be amended before their final adoption.

The law also prohibits the agency from imposing additional conditions as part of a feedlot permit after the proposed rules are finally adopted.

Under the law, state livestock operations will be allowed to grow, and regulation by the agency will be restricted.

Agency officials want farmers to prevent the flow of animal waste from lots into rivers, streams, and ground water. The agency is also concerned about air pollution caused by feedlots.

The MPCA's new plan would put limits on hydrogen sulfide gas found in manure and require that manure spills on roads be treated as serious problems. Sloppy handling of manure could result in fines if the revised agency rules were to go into effect.

The commissioner of the Department of Agriculture will be required by the law to work with the University of Minnesota to develop educational and training programs addressing manure applicator concerns, including water quality protection and the development of manure management plans.

If violations are found, the law will require that they be remedied in a timely manner.

A feedlot operator with less than 300 animal units, however, could not be required to spend more than \$3,000 to upgrade a lot unless assistance totaling at least 75 percent of the cost is available, under the law.

Livestock production facilities will be exempt by the law from state standards governing air quality in the area surrounding feedlots while manure is being removed from the site and up to seven days following the transfer.

The measure also will require the MPCA to remove several provisions from its proposed rules and allow the agency to submit a report to the commissioner of the Department of Finance if it is unable to accomplish timely response to feedlot permit applications.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) and Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the legislation.

HF3692*/SF3443/CH435

★ **BUSINESS**

Sales of funeral goods

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law April 24 that will regulate solicitation and sale of funeral goods and services. It will prohibit solicitation at a hospital, gravesite, nursing home, or wake, without a specific request from the family of the deceased to do so.

The new law also will prohibit an individual from offering goods and services to a person whose death is impending, or to an individual responsible for funeral arrangements of a deceased person within 10 days of that individual's death. Such acts, however, will be allowed if the deceased or a relative had made arrangements to discuss plans for the funeral or burial before death occurred.

The measure will not apply to communication between an individual and a funeral provider related by blood, adoption, or marriage.

In cases when the deceased handled his or her own arrangements in advance, the law will require that the funeral provider produce a copy of the agreement and give the copy to the person controlling the disposition of the remains. A copy of the arrangements will be required to change hands no later than 24 hours after first contact between the provider and the individual in charge of the remains.

The law also contains new requirements for pre-death arrangements and a provision allowing a person who makes an advance burial arrangement to cancel plans.

Furthermore, the law will require that all funeral establishments and providers clearly state who owns the establishment in all business literature, contracts, and correspondence.

Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) and Sen. Claire A. Robling (R-Prior Lake) sponsored the legislation.

Language pertaining to a potential financial impact of the measure was incorporated into the omnibus state government spending bill (HF2699) last month. The provision would appropriate \$90,000 in fiscal year 2001 for the purpose of responding to public complaints about funeral goods and services solicitation.

That bill remains in a House-Senate conference committee.

Most portions of the new law take effect Aug. 1, 2000. Provisions governing disclosure of ownership take effect Jan. 1, 2001.

SF2686*/HF2713/CH438

Liquor license law

Fraternal and charitable clubs will only need 30 members to obtain liquor licenses, under a law signed April 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The omnibus liquor law, sponsored in the House by Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie), also will allow specific liquor contracts for special events in several towns, including Anoka, Duluth, Eveleth, and Springfield.

The law reduces the number of club members needed to obtain a liquor license from 50 to 30. The provision addresses the dropping population in some rural areas, Paulsen said.

However, a provision that would have given cities more control over issuing liquor licenses to local theatres fell in conference committee. That provision was the focus of the original House floor debate about the legislation.

The law also will allow a commercial establishment to make wine on the premises for personal or family use only. Individuals under age 21 will be forbidden from helping make wine.

Liquor stores will be able to offer wine-tasting events on their premises, under the law. A wine-tasting event will be defined as an activity that does not last beyond four hours, at which patrons do not pay for each individual glass of wine.

The state agriculture society also will be allowed to sell alcohol at state fairgrounds events that are not held during the normal 12-day run of the fair.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), who chairs the House Commerce Committee, said the bill addresses primarily local issues.

"We tried to keep it very focused," Davids said.

Sen. Sam Solon (DFL-Duluth) sponsored the Senate version.

Statewide provisions of the law take effect Aug. 1, 2000. The items affecting specific cities take effect upon local action.

HF3974/SF3581*/CH440

★ CONSUMERS

Penalties for unscrupulous contractors

Contractors who fail to complete work on house projects will be subject to new criminal and civil penalties, under a law signed April 20 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

A tornado that hit St. Peter in spring 1998 devastated much of that area. Even more devastating was the work of an unscrupulous contractor who was hired to fix damaged homes, said Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter), who sponsored the legislation in the House.

The contractor collected money from homeowners, then did not pay subcontractors. The subcontractors then placed liens on the homes, whose owners thought they had finished paying for the repairs. The contractor eventually went bankrupt, but the liens were already placed on the homes.

"They had a very frustrating time trying to deal with him," Storm said. "They were in limbo."

That contractor was later ordered to serve two months in jail and repay the homeowners.

A builder, material supplier, or subcontractor can place a lien on a property if they are not paid for work done on the property. Contractors should receive a lien-waiver from a subcontractor once that subcontractor has been paid, she said.

A felony penalty for theft is also established under the law. The maximum penalty for theft in state statute is 20 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Under the previous law, the maximum theft charge under the mechanics lien statute was a gross misdemeanor, with a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a \$3,000 fine.

The law also will allow homeowners to seek civil penalties against contractors, which were not previously available.

Shareholders, officers, and directors of the contracting company who are aware of the theft could also face criminal and civil penalties, under the law.

The law will require that money for a construction project be kept in a trust fund. Proceeds can be kept separate within the trust. Contractors would then pay subcontractors from the trust.

Storm noted that several banks and contractors were involved in the drafting process and approved the wording of the law.

While the law stems from the St. Peter incident, Storm said the law could have a dramatic positive effect on homeowners and contractors across the state.

Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2563*/SF2381/CH430

★ CRIME

Cracking down on pimps

People who lure teens into prostitution will face expanded penalties, under a law signed April 20 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Sponsored in the House by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), the law aims to curb solicitors, or pimps, from pushing young children, both boys and girls, into prostitution.

The law will make it a felony for a person to solicit a juvenile under age 18 into prostitution. The maximum penalty is 20 years in prison and a \$40,000 fine.

Under previous law, a juvenile had to be under age 16 for a felony charge.

"It didn't make sense to have pimps have more severe sentences for soliciting teens under age 15 than when they are under age 18," Clark said.

The hike in age from 16 to 18 means more pimps will go to prison, Clark said. Under the existing law, a pimp who solicits a 16- or 17-year old person into prostitution would get only probation, she said.

A task force report submitted to the House Crime Prevention Committee earlier this session estimated that 1,000 Minnesota teens are currently involved in prostitution.

The law also requires the commissioner of public safety to study and make recommendations on training officers to combat prostitution. The study would include information on ways to increase penalties and prosecution of solicitors.

State law already says that luring adults into prostitution is a gross misdemeanor.

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

The increased penalties take effect Aug. 1, 2000, while the study provision takes effect July 1, 2000.

HF2830*/SF2771/CH431

Penalties for assaulting officers

A person who physically assaults an officer during an arrest but does not cause any "demonstrable bodily harm" still could be charged with a gross misdemeanor, under a law signed April 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) was the House sponsor of the legislation, which also provides for a felony charge if someone escapes from police custody for a felony-related action, even if that person has not yet been charged or convicted of a crime. The violator could face a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Previous law allowed for a felony only if the person fled after being charged or convicted of a felony.

Physically assaulting an officer during an arrest could more often lead to a gross misdemeanor charge, under the new law. The law previously required "demonstrable bodily harm" sustained by the officer, but there were no additional penalties for harm that was not visible or "demonstrable."

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) said the provision stems from a case in which an officer was struck in the groin by someone who was resisting arrest. The action did not result in demonstrable bodily harm, so no additional penalties could be brought against the assailant.

Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the Senate version of the legislation. The law is effective April 25, 2000.

HF2958/SF2830*/CH441

Serving court orders

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law April 24 that will strengthen domestic and child abuse laws. It also will allow officers to serve any court orders.

The law creates a shortened notification process that officers can use to serve court documents to people at any time.

The idea behind the law is that many defendants and parties to a court case are hard to find, and this measure will allow them to be formally served if an officer encounters them in a routine traffic stop or other police action.

For instance, if an officer pulls over a car for speeding, and the officer learns that a court is trying to contact that person to serve court orders, such as a subpoena or protection order, the officer will be able give a notification form to that person, under the law.

An officer could serve paperwork at any time, including Sundays or legal holidays, the law states.

The notification form would include the names of the parties involved, the county that served the order, the name of the judge, and the date of a hearing.

The short order form would direct the recipient to report to the sheriff's office or courthouse where the proceeding is set to take place to pick up the full copy of service.

The officer could detain the person as long as necessary in order to fill out and serve the person with the short form, under the law.

According to the law, a scheduled hearing can take place if the papers were served at least 12 hours before the hearing, and the person receiving the papers must appear. However, the person who received the papers may request a continuance of up to five days.

Previously, the hearing could not begin until five days had passed after the court papers

were served. The new provision is effective April 25, 2000.

The law also will allow an officer to arrest a person who violates a pretrial no-contact order, even if the officer wasn't present at the time of the violation. The orders, often issued in domestic abuse cases, require that the defendant have no contact with whoever is named in the order, typically the victim and their family.

Law enforcement already has the ability to arrest someone without a warrant in domestic abuse cases. The new law will extend that arrest ability to persons violating the domestic abuse no-contact order.

The law also will create a felony for a person who caused malicious punishment of a child. The law says the violator may be charged with a felony if the child is under age 4 and has sustained bodily harm to the head, eyes, or neck, or has suffered multiple bruises. The maximum penalty for the felony would be five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji) and Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope) sponsored the legislation. Most of the new law's provisions take effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF1067/SF551*/CH437

★ EMPLOYMENT

Workers' compensation law

Workers' compensation rates will be reduced while injured workers' benefits will be increased, under a new law signed April 27 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law represents recommendations from the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council. The council is composed of representatives from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the state's AFL-CIO, and the Legislature.

The law provides an increase in the maximum weekly compensation an injured worker can receive for wage loss benefits. Currently that amount is capped at \$615 per week, but the new law will increase that benefit to \$750. The minimum amount per week will go from \$104 to \$130.

In the case of a worker who is killed in a work-related accident, the minimum amount of compensation for the dependents will be \$60,000.

Under the law, there will be a transfer of \$325 million in surplus funds from the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Assigned Risk Plan to the compensation fund's second injury and supplemental benefits program.

The assigned risk plan aids in the operation of the workers' compensation system by providing a source of insurance for employers

unable to obtain such coverage from the private insurance market.

In a message accompanying his signing of the bill, Ventura said that the transfer of funds would likely reduce the workers' compensation fund assessment rate from 30 percent to 20 percent.

Ventura also said that he expects the Legislature to pass a separate bill transferring \$95

million from the Assigned Risk Plan to reduce the Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association assessment for employers in the state.

Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls) and Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton) sponsored the measure. Most of the law's provisions are effective Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3960/SF3644*/CH447

Hotdish haven

Legislators celebrate new law by indulging in long-standing Minnesota dining tradition

With plate in hand and a sea of delectable hotdishes before them, dozens of legislators and staff commemorated the signing of a law that will loosen restrictions on such potlucks.

They gathered April 25 in the Capitol's Great Hall to sample tasty items such as baked beans, tuna casserole, potato and taco salads, and an array of chocolate and sugar coated goodies.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) and Sen. Dean Johnson (DFL-Willmar), sponsors of the legislation, dined with those who attended the noontime meal.

Juhnke said the idea to draft the "hotdish bill" surfaced after he had attended a DFL bean feed at the American Legion Hall in his hometown and was told that health regulations prevented outsiders from bringing prepared food into community potlucks.

Aggie Leitheiser, assistant commissioner of the state's Health Protection Bureau, said such restrictions have existed to prevent outbreaks of food-borne disease. Over the past four years, Leitheiser said, 16 percent of the confirmed food-borne disease outbreaks in the state were traced to privately prepared food.

So, following regulations to the letter, organizers of the event in Willmar politely told Juhnke he could stay but he had to take his beans back to the car.

After the experience, Juhnke said he felt all people should be allowed to attend community potlucks and share their food without being subject to health inspection. Gov. Jesse Ventura agreed. He signed the bill into law April 13.

Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the law will allow any person attending a potluck event — not

just members of the organization sponsoring the event — to bring individually prepared food for consumption. It also allows an organization sponsoring potluck events to advertise the events and permit people who are not members of the organization to

attend the event and eat the food.

The bill had once contained language that would have required signs at a potluck event stating that the food was not prepared in a licensed kitchen and is not subject to Health Department regulation. But the provision was dropped before the bill won final passage.

Organizers of the Capitol potluck thought it would be humorous to post signs, anyway. Tucked away in a corner by the plates and napkins stood the tongue-in-cheek disclaimer. It read, "Welcome to the Great Minnesota Potluck. Warning: This food was not prepared in a commercial facility. Eat at your own risk."

SF3348*/HF2707/CH378

(M. DE LARCO)



Rep. Al Juhnke makes his way down a long table of hotdishes, salads, breads, and desserts as an honored guest at the Senate-sponsored "Great Minnesota Potluck" held April 25 in the Great Hall of the Capitol.

★ ENERGY

Powered by poultry litter

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law April 24 that could lead the way to the construction of an electricity generating facility that uses turkey litter as fuel.

Effective April 25, 2000, the law changes the definition of biomass energy to include poultry litter and plants that are grown specifically for fuel. Legislation in 1994 relating to the Prairie Island nuclear power facility required public utilities that operate nuclear power plants in the state to develop 125 megawatts of electric energy generated by biomass.

The law allows 50 of the 125 megawatts to be provided by a facility that uses poultry litter as its primary fuel source.

Fiberwatt, a company based in Great Britain, is proposing to build the poultry litter plant in Minnesota. The company owns and operates three similar power plants in Great Britain.

Those facilities produce energy by burning the litter at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit, producing steam that drives a turbine. Officials from the company testified that they are interested in building the plant in Minnesota because the state is the second largest turkey producing state in the nation.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) and Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton) were the sponsors.

HF2757*/SF2614/CH443

★ ENVIRONMENT

Gasoline additives banned

Gasoline additives that have caused severe water pollution in some states will be banned in Minnesota, under a new law signed April 24 by the governor.

Effective July 1, 2000, gasoline in the state can contain only trace amounts of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) and ethyl tertiary butyl ether (ETBE). Both compounds are alternative fuel additives to ethanol.

Currently, those additives are not used in Minnesota's gasoline supply. But Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea), sponsor of the measure, said that as other states ban the chemicals, gasoline with those additives could be sent to Minnesota unless it is banned here.

After July 1, 2000, gasoline cannot contain more than one-third of 1 percent of the chemicals. Gasoline is moved through common pipelines throughout the country, so traces of those chemicals can be found in almost all gasoline.

But after July 1, 2005, no traces of the chemicals will be allowed in gasoline, under the new law.

Research shows the additive is responsible for several incidents of soil and water contamination, including municipal wells as nearby as Alford and Ida Grove, Iowa.

Minnesota's legislators are not alone in their concern over the effects of MTBE usage in gasoline. Recent developments in other states are driving a national reconsideration of using MTBE as an oxygenate in fuel.

California Gov. Gray Davis issued an executive order in March 1999 to phase out MTBE from the California gasoline supply by December 31, 2002. His decision was supported by a state-funded research project by the University of California that indicated that the air pollution benefits of using the additive could be obtained in other ways.

Twenty-three states have established regulatory guidelines or standards for MTBE contamination in groundwater or drinking water.

Experts say eight ounces of the additive can contaminate five million gallons of drinking water. Spillage from a car accident could threaten an entire aquifer.

Water contaminated by MTBE has a bitter taste and detectable odor. Research has shown it causes tumors in rats.

Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) was the Senate sponsor of the measure.

HF3292/SF2946*/CH434

★ FAMILY

Parenting plans become law

Parents who are getting a divorce will be allowed to create a parenting plan agreement, under a law signed April 27 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law allows divorced couples to make agreements on splitting parenting time. Plans could specify anything from where a child lives during the day to which parent can teach religious philosophy. Child support issues are not included in the law.

If both parents agree to a parenting plan, the court must accede unless the court determines the plan is not in the best interest of the child.

If neither parent agrees to a parenting plan, the court may create one on its own, under the law.

Sponsored in the House by Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), the law is similar to a proposal that came from a task force that studied the issue during the interim.

An earlier version of the measure would have allowed the judge to order that parents enter into negotiations even if one parent did not want a parenting plan. However, the final legislation allows a plan if both parents agreed to enter into it.

The court cannot require a parenting plan if one adult has been accused of domestic assault or sexual abuse, under the law. In addition, judges must ask individuals if they agreed to the parenting plan voluntarily.

The law also replaces the word "visitation" in statute with the phrase "parenting time." Dawkins said non-custodial parents find the word "visitation" to be offensive.

Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect retroactively to Sept. 1, 1999.

HF3311/SF3169*/CH444

Extending judicial pilot project

A Ramsey County pilot program that allows one judge to hear all cases involving a single family would be extended another two years, under a bill the House passed April 26. The vote was 121-8.

Sponsored by Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights), the bill would extend the Combined Court Jurisdiction pilot program to 2002. The program is currently set to expire June 30 of this year.

The program allows one judge to hear issues that would go before family, probate, or juvenile court, McGuire explained.

"Rather than dealing with three different judges and three different court dates, let's combine it and put it before one judge," McGuire said, in explaining the rationale for the initiative.

The program is referred to as "one court, one judge," she said. Delinquency matters are not included in the program.

The Legislature initially approved the two-year pilot program in 1996. Former Rep. Howard Orenstein (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the original measure.

The pilot program was extended through 2000 by the 1998 Legislature. McGuire said she hopes the Legislature will make the program permanent within the next two years.

"Some of the implementation issues caused some concerns, and they want to iron out those issues," she said.

The bill (HF3997/SF3300*) now heads to the governor.

★ GOVERNMENT

Plan to move Agriculture Dept.

A bill that would call for a plan to relocate the state Department of Agriculture to rural Minnesota was passed by the House April 26. The vote was 75-56.

The relocation proposal was added to a bill (HF3852) that would require state agencies to encourage state employees to work from home by telecommuting.

Under the bill, sponsored by Rep. Bob Westfall (R-Rothsay), each state agency would submit an annual report to the Legislature that would explain its progress in achieving goals related to telecommuting.

The report would include descriptions of positions that are suitable for telecommuting and how they would be adjusted, incentives for employees to telecommute, and goals for achieving a minimum percentage of positions that can be filled fully or partially by employees who telecommute.

Westfall said the goal of the bill is to take a step toward decentralizing government.

Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake) proposed the plan to take a bigger step toward that goal by planning to relocate the Agriculture Department, and the House voted 75-56 to accept his amendment.

“This is a good opportunity to share some equity with rural Minnesota and share some jobs with rural Minnesota,” Westrom said.

The same provision had been proposed by Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) and added to the omnibus state government spending bill (HF2699), which is currently in a House-Senate conference committee.

Juhnke also spoke in favor of the Westrom proposal, saying that it would save money because office space is less expensive to build or lease outside the metro area. And, he said, it would move that department closer to the areas it serves.

The plan would be designed by the state Department of Administration, in consultation with the commissioner of agriculture, by June 30, 2003, when the department’s current lease expires at its St. Paul office.

Several lawmakers spoke against the proposal, saying the state would incur costs of relocating people and families. Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) said it would hurt families that have to move their children to a different school and employees’ spouses who would need to find jobs wherever the department is moved.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) proposed adding a similar plan to relocate the Department of Natural Resources outside the metro area, but that proposal failed on a 68-62 vote.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

Paying costs of lawsuits

State agencies that instigate unsuccessful lawsuits could have to pay higher costs to defendants, under a new law signed April 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Currently, agencies are required to pay the attorneys’ fees and other expenses of a defendant when the agency brings a civil action and

loses, under certain conditions. Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the new law will expand the types of expenses that can be recovered by the prevailing party, and it clarifies the procedure for receiving those awards from a court or administrative law judge.

The new law will allow the prevailing party to recover reasonable costs of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, or project that the party has done in response to the state’s action. Those costs are added to those that already can be recovered under current law, including various court fees, mileage, postage, and delivery costs.

Also, current law limits the amount of attorney fees that can be recovered to \$100 per hour. The new law will raise that limit to \$125 per hour.

The new law also modifies the definition of who is eligible for recovering those types of expenses. Groups that are eligible under current law include organizations with up to 50 employees and annual revenues that do not exceed \$4 million. The new law will expand the eligibility by increasing the number of employees to 500 and the annual revenues to \$7 million.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield), sponsor of the measure, said the current law is used very rarely, and it ideally would not be used at all.

“If the state bases its actions on facts and acts in good faith, there’s nothing to worry about,” Tuma said when the bill was debated on the House floor.

The law applies only if the state agency fails to justify its position when it instigates a civil suit or contested case other than a tort action.

Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope) carried the Senate version of the bill.

HF3497*/SF3539/CH439

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Setting salary for officials

A change would be made in the way the salary is determined for chancellor of the state’s largest higher education system, under a bill the House passed April 25. The vote was 95-34.

The bill (HF3726/SF3386*), sponsored by Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), would allow the Board of Trustees of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) to establish a salary range for the chancellor position. The board would then submit the proposed salary range to the Legislature for approval.

Currently, the board sets a specific salary amount that is then approved by the Legislature. The current salary for the chancellor is \$185,000.

The bill also would allow the board more

flexibility in the contracts they offer to presidents and other non-classified positions within the MnSCU system. Under current law, the board is allowed to propose a salary range for its presidents, which the Legislature approves. But the bill would allow the board to submit to the Legislature proposed contracts with other incentives to attract candidates.

Bishop said that increasing competition from other states has made retaining and recruiting quality people in the positions more difficult. He said he aims to give MnSCU more options to attract qualified candidates.

Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul) offered a successful amendment deleting a section of the bill that would have required MnSCU to conduct a study on the use of non-profit educational foundations to provide additional compensation and benefits for the chancellor and president positions.

McCollum said she opposed using foundation money to pay officials at public institutions because of the inequities in pay that would likely be created under such a system.

The bill now goes to the governor.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Responsibility for care

The commissioner of the Department of Human Services is now required to consult with stakeholders and develop recommendations for transferring guardianship responsibilities for adults with mental retardation from the department to another entity, under a law signed April 20 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Under the law, stakeholders include family members, advocacy organizations, counties, service providers, and the office of the ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation.

The law requires those taking over guardianship responsibilities to be either a multi-purpose agency providing a broad range of social services or a new or existing office within state government that does not currently have duties related to mentally retarded people.

The law also states that an entity must provide assurance that it will act in the best interests of each person left in its care.

Officials must provide recommendations for transferring guardianship responsibilities, including cost estimates, to the chair of the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee and the chair of the Senate Health and Family Security Committee by December 15, 2000, under the law.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) and Sen. John C. Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) sponsored the legislation. The law is effective April 21, 2000.

HF2671*/SF2567/CH429

★ LAW

Access to sex offender records

Lawyers would have more access to court and health records of sex offenders who could possibly be elevated to the level of predatory offender, under a bill the House passed April 26. The vote was 130-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), the bill would make alterations to the Sexually Dangerous Persons Act, which allows the state to civilly commit repeated predatory offenders to treatment.

The bill would allow county attorneys or the state attorney general access to health and court records before a petition to deem someone a predatory offender and have that person committed is filed in court. Currently, attorneys usually obtain those records after a petition is filed.

"What they want to do is look at the health records," Skoglund explained.

There are about 160 predatory offenders in state hospitals. The offenders have completed their prison sentences and have been sent to the state hospital for treatment rather than being released.

While a predatory offender could complete treatment and be released from a state hospital, that has yet to happen in the six-year history of the civil commitment law.

The attorney general or county attorneys are responsible for seeking petitions to commit offenders. The attorney general usually handles commitment cases for less-populated counties.

If the attorneys had access to records before a petition is filed, they might determine that civil commitment is not necessary and not pursue a petition, Skoglund said.

The bill (HF2880/SF2854*) would require the individual be notified that attorneys are seeking his or her records. However, that notice could be waived if it would result in harm or harassment of potential witnesses.

The health and court records would not be considered public information.

The Legislature approved the Sexually Dangerous Persons Act during a special session in 1994. The law stemmed from a case involving Dennis Linehan, who had a history of raping teen-agers in the 1960s and murdered one person. Linehan was set to be freed after a court struck down his commitment. The 1994 law allowed the state to keep Linehan committed.

The bill now returns to the Senate.

★ METRO AFFAIRS

Defining minor-use airports

The House passed a bill April 26 that would shore up law that prevents expenditures to expand or upgrade minor-use airports to intermediate-use airports without approval from the Legislature. The vote was 78-53.

The bill (HF849), sponsored by Rep. Barb Haake (R-Mounds View), would set into law the definition of a minor use airport as one with a runway or runways no longer than 5,000 feet.

In 1980, the Legislature approved a measure known as the "McCarron Amendment," named after former Rep. Paul McCarron. It prohibited the expansion of minor- and intermediate-use airports in the metropolitan area unless the expansion was approved by the Legislature.

This new bill would not change the McCarron Amendment. It would merely put into law the definition of a minor-use airport, Haake said.

The bill stems from a compromise between the Metropolitan Airports Commission and communities near the Anoka County Airport. The airport has proposed extending its east-west runway, which would allow business jets to use the airport.

In its Metropolitan Development Guide, the Metropolitan Airports Commission defines a minor-use airport as one with a runway of no longer than 5,000 feet, Haake said.

Currently, St. Paul's Downtown Airport is the only intermediate-use airport in the metropolitan area, she said. Minor-use airports include Flying Cloud, Crystal, Anoka County, Blaine, Lake Elmo, and Airlake.

The measure now moves to the Senate.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Exceptions to restrictions

Some heavier vehicles such as public utility or recycling trucks are exempt from spring-time road weight restrictions, under a law signed April 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law allows a few specified vehicles to travel on roads that usually have weight restrictions for eight weeks in the spring.

"No one is for wrecking roads. I'm certainly not," said Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen), House sponsor of the measure.

Public utility vehicles need to be able to travel on side roads when emergencies occur, Workman said.

"For them to come onto your street and restore your power, they are technically breaking the law," Workman said during a House Transportation Policy Committee meeting in February. "That's ridiculous."

Exempted vehicles under this bill must not exceed 20,000 pounds per axle.

The law sunsets in three years, so legislators will have to take further action to continue the law if it works well, Workman said.

The law does not include two House floor amendments, which would have exempted trucks containing raw sewage or milk from the road restrictions.

The eight-week weight restrictions are enforced when the ice thaws and roads become particularly soft. Road restrictions are generally placed on state and county highways or city streets. By starting the weight restrictions on time, the department estimates it saves \$10 million annually in road replacement costs.

Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing) sponsored the Senate measure. The law is effective April 25, 2000, and is to be repealed June 1, 2003.

HF3274/SF2785*/CH433

★ VETERANS

Exempting rebate income

Sales tax refunds or rebates will not be considered income for residents of veterans' homes, under a new law signed April 24 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The new law, sponsored by Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls), will clarify current law that requires residents of veterans' homes to pay for their care based on their ability to pay.

Cost of care is based on the average costs of operating veterans' homes.

The law relates to any future sales tax refunds and rebates, and to those paid after June 30, 1999. That money will not be considered income for residents of veterans' homes, under the law.

The law also will allow the governing board of the veterans' home in Hastings to use federal grant money to purchase a home to be used as transitional housing for homeless or disabled veterans. That provision of the law takes affect Aug. 1, 2000.

Sen. James Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

HF2968/SF3139*/CH442

Youth restored

Once-controversial fountain should soon return to its home near the Veterans Service Building after months of repairs

BY JON FURE

An artwork that once stirred considerable controversy during its design has been noticeably absent from its perch on the Capitol grounds in recent months.

Known as the “Promise of Youth,” the fountain features a bronze statue of a nude woman sitting in the middle of tulip petals that open and close. People have commonly referred to the statue as “Millie” after the model who posed for the piece.

Now more than 40 years old, the statue has been sent away for repairs that are nearly complete.

The fountain was designed in 1952 by Alonzo Hauser as part of the Veterans Service Building. The building and surrounding monuments serve as a memorial to all members of the armed services.

Hauser had been chosen as the sculptor in 1952 by Brooks Cavin, architect of the veterans building. Hauser was the director of the Art Department at Macalester College until he became a freelance sculptor in 1949. He also has made sculptures for several Twin Cities area churches.

Hauser’s concept for the Promise of Youth was to reflect the larger theme of the importance of peace, with the youthful figure looking up at the Court of Honor, which is a wall of commemorative plaques dedicated to various groups of veterans.

According to a 1957 article in the *Minnesota Daily*, Hauser showed a small model of the Promise of Youth to the 11-member Veterans Service Building Commission in 1952 as part of the overall design for the building. None of the board members objected to the design of the fountain when they approved the building.

But in 1954, the board voted to reject the design due to concerns that the community would consider the nude statue inappropriate.

Then-secretary of the board, William Fallon, explained the board’s position in a *Minneapolis Tribune* article.

“The commission objected, generally speaking, because nudes in public places are often criticized,” Fallon said.

Hauser’s sculpture was nearly complete in June 1953, when he received a visit at his Mendota studio from Maj. Gen. Ellard Walsh of Minneapolis, chairman of the board. Walsh saw the sculpture and

said Minnesotans “would not go for it,” according to the article.

Walsh suggested that the public would find the sculpture more appropriate if instead of the female nude figure it depicted a soldier throwing a grenade.

At a May 1954 board meeting, Cavin spoke in favor of Hauser’s sculpture and pressed the

issue of taking a vote to formally approve or reject the design. Cavin had brought letters of support from W.B. Bryan, director of the Minneapolis School of Art, and Malcolm E. Lein, director of the St. Paul Gallery and School of Art. But the board refused to read the letters and unanimously voted to reject Hauser’s design.

The issue did not receive much more attention until a *Minnesota Daily* article and others appeared in 1957, which led to public support for the Promise of Youth fountain despite the statue’s risque nature. Several letters from readers appeared in local newspapers asking for the board members’ names and qualifications as art critics.

In 1958, the fountain was finally placed in its perch in front of the veterans building, just south of the Capitol. But that wasn’t the end of its struggle.

According to a 1963 *St. Paul Dispatch* story, children in the neighborhood were using the reflecting pool surrounding the fountain as a swimming pool, leaving behind their candy wrappers, pop bottles, banana peels, and other litter.

The article also said “some legislators felt the young lady should have some clothes on even if they got wet,” and that vandals had jammed the mechanism that opened the petals, so that the nude statue was permanently covered by the closed petals.

More recently, leaks in the pool have forced it to be left empty for the past several years, which has made it an occasional destination for local skateboarders.

The current repair project was funded through the 1998 bonding law. The law ordered several repair projects for Capitol monuments.

The work for the Promise of Youth will cost \$262,000, which includes repairs to the reflecting pool and pipes, as well as the repairs to the statue. The fountain’s petals will be fixed in a permanent position, partially open to reveal the statue and high enough to prevent children from climbing on the petals. The fountain’s base will be strengthened to help it withstand wind and elements.

The water level in the pool will be kept at a depth of about six inches.

The work is expected to be complete in June, so it will be on display for the Taste of Minnesota festival held on the Capitol grounds annually in early July. 🗿



This somewhat risque fountain attracted controversy when it was first installed on the Capitol grounds. After years of neglect, it has been temporarily removed for repairs.

Cross checks and balances

The Legislature's veto override power has been used infrequently throughout the history of the state

By DAVID MAEDA

In the political world of checks and balances, where the three equal branches of government share power and keep each other in line, the veto override is the equivalent of a body check. If it connects, it can really sting.

Just consider the circumstances of former Gov. Harold LeVander, who in the late 1960s used a veto to stop enactment of a state sales tax, only to have a Legislature controlled by his own party override that veto.

LeVander may have seen the override as more of a cross check, to stick with the hockey terminology. To him, it may have seemed a cheap shot meant to cause harm.

The governor's veto power is an obvious, highly visible one of the checks and balances created by this three-branch system of government. A check on that check is the Legislature's ability — with a two-thirds majority vote — to override the governor's veto.

These safeguards are considered important enough that every state in the nation now allows gubernatorial vetoes and legislative veto overrides. In 1996, North Carolina became the last state to give its chief executive veto power.

Considering the number of bills passed into law in Minnesota's history, there haven't been that many vetoes used. In the past 60 years governors have vetoed about 375 bills.

Former Gov. Arne Carlson was far and away the most frequent user of this executive power, vetoing 179 bills in his eight years in office. The next highest amount came from Gov. Al Quie who vetoed 31 bills in four years.

As relatively infrequent as vetoes have been, the Legislature's use of its power to override those vetoes has been even rarer.

The Legislature has overridden vetoes only six times since 1939. Two governors have had two veto overrides. Several governors have had none.

In the current era of tri-partisan government, Gov. Jesse Ventura may be less protected from the veto override because he has no direct party allies in either the House or the Senate. He is the lone member of the Independence Party to hold office in the state.

Last year, the Legislature overrode a veto by

Ventura of a bill that allows court evidence about allegedly defective seat belts in product liability lawsuits. It was the first veto override since 1982. And the 2000 Legislature overrode another Ventura veto of a bill aimed to prevent closure of a state-run nursing facility in Walker.

Also this session, an attempt to override a line-item veto of a measure that would have appropriated \$150,000 for a World War II memorial at the Capitol failed in the House, coming up 11 votes short.

Prior to the overrides of those Ventura vetoes, the last time the Legislature exercised that power was in 1982, when two of Quie's vetoes were overridden. One was to a bill that removed the education commissioner from the State University Board. The other bill allowed the state to pay medical insurance benefits to state employees who took early retirement.

The House also attempted to override a veto on a third, and much more controversial bill, that sought to establish a \$46 million environmental Superfund to clean up 49 hazardous waste dumps. The override vote failed by eight votes.

Perhaps the most contentious veto override came with the establishment of the state's sales tax in 1967. The Legislature, looking for a method to alleviate the state's dependence on property taxes passed a bill establishing the sales tax. LeVander said he would veto any bill that contained a sales tax provision and did not also contain a clause for a referendum on the issue.

But members of LeVander's own Republican Party, which had a majority in both the House and Senate, ignored the governor's warning and passed a measure creating a 3 percent sales tax without a referendum provision.

True to his word, the governor vetoed the bill. The House then voted to override the governor's veto. But the Senate, despite a majority vote, didn't have the necessary two-thirds majority required for a veto override.

LeVander called a special session during which both the House and Senate re-passed the tax bill containing the 3 percent state sales tax. LeVander again vetoed the bill. But this time both the House and Senate voted to override the veto.

It was the first time in state history that a governor's own party voted twice to overturn his veto.

The only other veto override since 1939 occurred when Gov. Luther Youngdahl vetoed a bill that authorized financial assistance to seven counties that the state agreed to pay off outstanding ditch bond indebtedness.

In his veto message, Youngdahl said he was



Until Gov. Jesse Ventura came to the Capitol, former Gov. Al Quie was the only person to twice feel the sting of a veto override. Shown here, Quie signs a veto message in his Capitol office Dec. 21, 1981.

vetoing the bill because it had passed both houses with little or no discussion and he had been informed that it had lacked "full disclosure of the facts involved."

However Youngdahl's argument didn't dissuade legislators against the importance of the bill. An overwhelming majority — 124 in the House and 60 in the Senate — voted for the override. 🐾

Hard time

State’s Sentencing Guidelines Commission rates crimes and determines how long felons should stay in prison

By CHRIS VETTER

When the Legislature passes changes to law that strengthen felony-level penalties, the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission must figure out how to make those changes fit into its guidelines.

The 11-person board, which is a policy-making body, has been tweaking the state’s sentencing guidelines annually since the concept was approved in 1978.

“They are constantly being changed every year, both by the Legislature and by other changes,” says Deb Dailey, executive director of the commission for the past 14 years.

Prior to the inception of the guidelines, there was little consistency in how long a convicted felon was sentenced to prison.

“People were not happy with the indeterminate time people spent in prison,” Dailey said. “People felt inmates were getting out of prison too soon.”

State Supreme Court Justice Russell A. Anderson, a member of the commission, said the process makes sentencing rules similar across the state.

“Our job is to make sure sentencing is rational and consistent,” he said. “Sentencing should be neutral with respect to gender, race, or economic status of the felons.”

The Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission was created by the 1978 Legislature and has been making a guideline system based on the average crime ever since.

“The statute maximum is meant to address the most egregious cases,” Dailey said. “The guidelines address the typical case.”

The guidelines rank offenses on a scale of 1-10, ten being the worst level of offense. Second-degree murder is a level 10 offense; sale of a controlled substance, such as marijuana, is a level one offense.

The level of offense is then cross-referenced with the felon’s “criminal history score,” which is based on a separate formula of prior criminal offenses. The higher the criminal history score, the longer period of prison sentence for a convicted felon.

The guidelines pertain to felony crimes only, not to gross misdemeanors or lesser offenses.

Along with the guidelines, convicted felons are required to serve at least two-thirds of the full sentence imprisoned, with a maximum of one-third of the sentence on supervised release.

Judges can depart from the guidelines, delivering either a lengthier or shorter sentence than the guidelines suggest, Dailey said.

“It’s important that judges have the discretion to depart from the guidelines,” she said. “The guidelines cannot address every situation.”

minorities in Minnesota prisons — about 37 percent of current inmates are black, according to the Department of Corrections. That percent is far higher than the state’s black population.

“It’s stunning, when you look at people walking down the street,” Swanson said.

Robert Knickerbocker, Anoka County probation officer, also was appointed to the board last year. He said he hears input from probation officers from across the state, asking for technical changes or questioning the weight given to specific provisions.

“I find it very interesting and challenging,” Knickerbocker said.

While it meets at least once a month, the board is likely to meet more often in the summer months as it changes the guidelines to match changes passed by the Legislature in the spring. That way, the guideline changes are in place by August 1, when most of the new laws take effect, Dailey said.

The commission board members are appointed to four-year terms that are concurrent with the governor’s term. The governor appoints eight members. His appointments

“Our job is to make sure sentencing is rational and consistent. Sentencing should be neutral with respect to gender, race, or economic status of the felons.”

—State Supreme Court Justice Russell A. Anderson

If the felon is convicted of a crime with a mandatory minimum sentence lengthier than the guidelines suggest, the felon must serve the mandatory minimum.

Scott Swanson, assistant state public defender, was appointed to the commission last year. Swanson likes the system, saying it “treats similarly situated people similarly.”

Swanson predicts the commission will be unusually busy altering the guidelines this year because of felony changes in “Katie’s Law.” The law increases penalties for sex offenders. The law is named for Katie Poirier, who was abducted and allegedly killed by a repeat sex offender.

Swanson said the commission is concerned about the disproportionate number of

include a county attorney, a law enforcement official, a probation officer, and three citizens. The chief justice of the Supreme Court appoints the other three members.

About 20 states currently have a sentencing guidelines commission, Dailey said. Minnesota’s system is similar to versions in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington.

Changes to law since 1989 have shifted the sentencing guidelines toward lengthier prison terms, Dailey said. She noted that the guidelines for murder increased from 17 years in prison to 30 years. The guidelines for several other crimes have doubled in recent years, she added. 🐼

Legislative connections

Legislative information is plentiful, accessible, and free

Keeping track of what's happening in the Minnesota Legislature has never been easier. The latest technology is being used in all areas of communication.

Whether you call or visit the Capitol, receive information via e-mail, watch the action on television, or follow the proceedings via the Internet, your choices have never been better.

Give a ring

Begin your quest for information by calling the House Public Information Office (651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550. Staff will answer general questions regarding the legislative process, identify your legislators, or connect you to other offices for additional information.

For copies of House bills, call the Chief Clerk's Office at (651) 296-2314. To discover the sponsor of a bill, or to find a House File number, call House Index at (651) 296-6646. If you have a concern about a pending bill call your legislator.

You may also access a voice version of the House committee schedule by calling (651) 296-9283.

For Senate information, begin by calling (651) 296-0504.

Come on down

The best way to get the full flavor of what's happening in the Legislature is to pay a visit. Start your trek at the House Public Information Office on the first floor of the State Office Building directly west of the Capitol.

The office has a series of informational and educational publications designed to make the legislative process understandable and accessible for all.

Using your home address, staff can quickly determine in which House and Senate district you live and provide you with the name, office number, and phone number of your representative and senator.

Pick up a copy of committee schedules for the day or week for both the House and Senate and



Through the Legislature's Web site, the public can access information including bill descriptions and status, committee meeting schedules and agendas, and weekly publications of both the House and Senate.

you're on your way.

You may also take a moment to request a subscription to *Session Weekly* newsmagazine, a free publication covering weekly House activities during session. To sign up for *Senate Briefly*, covering weekly Senate activities, stop by Senate Information in Room 231 of the Capitol.



Since 1996 House Television Services has provided coverage of action on the House floor and selected committee hearings on Channel 17.

You've got mail

If you have e-mail service, you already have a tremendous link to the Legislature. Anyone with e-mail can receive daily and weekly committee schedules from both the House and Senate without having to request them each day.

Here's how it works.

To sign up to receive the House committee schedule, you have two options. Send an e-mail message to join-houseschedule@ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us or direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/scripts/lyris.pl?join=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

To receive the Senate schedule, send a message to listserv@senate.leg.state.mn.us. Leave the subject line blank and in the body of the message type: subscribe sen-schedules.

Messages are updated each day and sent to over 1,600 subscribers.

Tune in

Residents of most communities in Minnesota have access to a variety of programming from the State Capitol.

Beginning in 1996, coverage of the House and Senate, including committee meetings and floor sessions of both bodies, began airing in the Twin Cities on KTCI-TV, Channel 17. Previously, coverage was available only to cable subscribers. Minnesota was the first state to make such extensive coverage available at no charge to viewers.

Since then, broadcasts have also been made available via satellite statewide. Outstate residents should consult with cable operators for time and channel information, or view a program listing on the House Television Services' Website at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/htv/htv.htm>.

All televised floor sessions and committee hearings are closed-captioned.

Three committee hearing rooms in the State Office Building are equipped for television broadcast. Two of the rooms have remotely-operated cameras mounted at three different angles.

From these rooms, legislative proceedings

can be broadcast live or recorded for later broadcast with minimal interruption.

The televised committee hearings and floor sessions are carried by about 10 cable companies serving dozens of Minnesota cities from Warroad to Worthington.

There is also an interactive television site in Room 5 of the State Office Building. Connected to more than 80 sites throughout Minnesota, the technology allows members of the public from across the state to testify in legislative hearings without having to travel to St. Paul.

Get on the Web

Perhaps the most comprehensive way to follow activities in the Legislature is through the Internet.

Since 1994, anyone with access to the Internet has had access to legislative information. In January 1996, the Legislature debuted on the World Wide Web, which provides a user-friendly format that anyone, regardless of computer prowess, can navigate.

Begin your quest by directing your Web browser to <http://www.leg.state.mn.us>, the Legislature's Web site.

The site offers access to a variety of pages, including the House, Senate, bill tracking, Minnesota Statutes and Session Laws, Minnesota Rules, schedules and joint legislative departments and commissions.

Both the House and Senate pages provide access to bill tracking functions, and you can find easy-to-understand bill summaries on the Web. You may search for a bill by number or by using keywords likely to be found in the bill's title. You can also search by chief author, other authors, statutory citation, or revisor's number.

Bills from previous sessions are also available for search.

If you are interested in a current list of bills



A committee hearing room in the State Office Building features interactive television technology through which lawmakers can communicate with people at more than 80 sites around Minnesota.

being heard by a particular committee, select the committees link and click on the committee of your choice and then choose the "legislation" option.

You can also find schedules of bills to be heard on the floor, committee schedules, television schedules, house journals, and a staff directory of the House and Senate.

If you're not sure where to find information on the Legislature's Web site, take advantage of a new searching capability added this year.

Direct your browser to <http://search.state.mn.us/leg/> and enter your topic. A high-powered search engine will bring up links to relevant information.

All of the information on the site can be read, sent to a printer, or saved as files on your computer for future reference. The site is also compatible with browsers used by the visually impaired.

You can also view *Session Weekly* on the Internet, with all graphics and photos intact,

at <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/swkly.ssi>. *Senate Briefly* can be accessed from the Senate Web page.

Questions or comments regarding the House Web site may be sent via e-mail to the webmaster at: webmaster@house.leg.state.mn.us.

Frequently used Web links

Legislature's main page:
<http://www.leg.state.mn.us>

Session Weekly on the Web:
<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/swkly.ssi>

To search the Legislative Web site:
<http://search.state.mn.us/leg/>

North Star government information:
<http://www.state.mn.us/mainmenu.html>

Governor's office:
<http://www.mainserver.state.mn.us/governor/>

Legislative Reference Library:
<http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl.htm>

Revisor's Office:
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/revisor.html>

Legislative Links to the World:
<http://www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/links/links.htm>

Frequently called numbers

House Information:
651-296-2146
1-800-687-3550

Senate Information:
651-296-0504
1-888-234-1112

Chief Clerk's Office:
651-296-2314

Office of Secretary of the Senate:
651-296-2344



E-mail is an increasingly common and efficient way for constituents to contact their legislators. Lawmakers regularly respond to signed messages, and they prefer that correspondents include their full names and addresses.

Minnesota House of Representatives 2000 Members

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-
49A Abeler, Jim (R)	581	1729	33A Lindner, Arlon (R)	417	7806
45A Abrams, Ron (R)	585	9934	47A Luther, Darlene (DFL)	371	3751
19B Anderson, Bruce (R)	411	5063	67A Mahoney, Tim (DFL)	223	4277
3A Anderson, Irv (DFL)	343	4936	55A Mares, Harry (R)	401	5363
6A Bakk, Thomas (Tom) (DFL)	345	2190	65B Mariani, Carlos (DFL)	209	9714
59A Biernat, Len (DFL)	303	4219	57B Marko, Sharon (DFL)	221	3135
30B Bishop, Dave (R)	453	5073	55B McCollum, Betty (DFL)	239	1188
25B Boudreau, Lynda (R)	473	8237	36B McElroy, Dan (R)	437	4212
30A Bradley, Fran (R)	559	9249	54A McGuire, Mary Jo (DFL)	259	4342
53B Broecker, Sherry (R)	533	7153	39B Milbert, Bob (DFL)	243	4192
35B Buesgens, Mark (R)	415	1072	35A Molnau, Carol L. (R)	443	8872
46B Carlson, Lyndon R. (DFL)	283	4255	21B Mulder, Richard (R)	515	4336
47B Carruthers, Phil (DFL)	217	3709	58A Mullery, Joe (DFL)	387	4262
10B Cassell, George (R)	421	4317	8A Murphy, Mary (DFL)	357	2676
52A Chaudhary, Satveer (DFL)	311	4331	20A Ness, Robert "Bob" (R)	509	4344
23A Clark, James T. (R)	583	9303	10A Nornes, Bud (R)	471	4946
61A Clark, Karen (DFL)	307	0294	19A Olson, Mark (R)	501	4237
11A Daggett, Roxann (R)	439	4293	16A Opatz, Joe (DFL)	279	6612
31B Davids, Gregory M. (R)	367	9278	60B Orfield, Myron (DFL)	377	9281
65A Dawkins, Andy (DFL)	215	5158	29B Oskopp, Mike (R)	449	9236
14A Dehler, Steve (R)	491	7808	66A Osthoff, Tom (DFL)	273	4224
29A Dempsey, Jerry (R)	549	8635	11B Otremba, Mary Ellen (DFL)	393	3201
27A Dorman, Dan (R)	579	8216	37A Ozment, Dennis (R)	479	4306
24A Dorn, John (DFL)	201	3248	42B Paulsen, Erik (R)	445	7449
64A Entenza, Matt (DFL)	213	8799	38B Pawlenty, Tim (R)	459	4128
42A Erhardt, Ron (R)	591	4363	64B Paymar, Michael (DFL)	211	4199
17A Erickson, Sondra (R)	407	6746	32A Pelowski Jr., Gene (DFL)	295	8637
1B Finseth, Tim (R)	517	9918	13B Peterson, Doug (DFL)	287	4228
44A Foliard, Betty (DFL)	281	3964	39A Pugh, Thomas W. (DFL)	267	6828
4A Fuller, Doug (R)	525	5516	46A Rest, Ann H. (DFL)	277	4176
36A Gerlach, Chris (R)	531	5506	28A Reuter, Doug (IND)	567	5368
63B Gleason, Mark S. (DFL)	313	5375	44B Rhodes, Jim (R)	409	9889
9A Goodno, Kevin (R)	563	5515	32B Rifenberg, Michelle (R)	423	1069
58B Gray, Gregory (DFL)	229	8659	18A Rostberg, Jim (R)	545	5364
62A Greenfield, Lee (DFL)	207	0173	5A Rukavina, Tom (DFL)	375	0170
54B Greiling, Mindy (DFL)	253	5387	17B Schumacher, Leslie J. (DFL)	327	5377
26A Gunther, Bob (R)	379	3240	41A Seagren, Alice (R)	477	7803
52B Haake, Barb (R)	429	0141	57A Seifert, Jim (R)	577	7807
48A Haas, Bill (R)	569	5513	21A Seifert, Marty (R)	593	5374
50A Hackbarth, Tom (R)	575	2439	2B Skoe, Rod (DFL)	321	4265
22B Harder, Elaine (R)	487	5373	62B Skoglund, Wes (DFL)	251	4330
12A Hasskamp, Kris (DFL)	353	4333	34A Smith, Steve (R)	503	9188
66B Hausman, Alice (DFL)	245	3824	3B Solberg, Loren A. (DFL)	309	2365
8B Hilty, Bill (DFL)	241	4308	33B Stanek, Rich (R)	543	5502
37B Holberg, Mary Liz (R)	433	6926	14B Stang, Doug (R)	597	4373
56A Holsten, Mark William (R)	381	3018	24B Storm, Julie (R)	527	7065
4B Howes, Larry (R)	431	2451	28B Sviggum, Steve (R)	463	2273
6B Huntley, Thomas (DFL)	351	2228	7A Swapinski, Dale (DFL)	331	4282
7B Jaros, Mike (DFL)	291	4246	23B Swenson, Howard (R)	539	8634
18B Jennings, Loren Geo (DFL)	237	0518	43B Sykora, Barb (R)	403	4315
48B Johnson, Alice M. (DFL)	349	5510	50B Tingelstad, Kathy (R)	507	5369
15A Juhnke, Al (DFL)	329	6206	5B Tomassoni, David J. (DFL)	233	0172
59B Kahn, Phyllis (DFL)	255	4257	67B Trimble, Steve (DFL)	289	4201
26B Kalis, Henry J. (DFL)	317	4240	25A Tuma, John (R)	369	4229
60A Kelliher, Margaret Anderson (DFL)	231	0171	1A Tunheim, Jim (DFL)	335	9635
20B Kielkucki, Tony (R)	521	1534	34B Van Dellen, Henry Todd (R)	571	5511
16B Knoblach, Jim (R)	451	6316	51B Vandevier, Ray (R)	529	4124
49B Koskinen, Luanne (DFL)	301	4231	63A Wagenius, Jean (DFL)	227	4200
53A Krinkie, Philip (R)	365	2907	61B Wejcman, Linda (DFL)	203	7152
15B Kubly, Gary W. (DFL)	315	4346	12B Wenzel, Stephen G. (DFL)	389	4247
31A Kuisle, William (R)	565	4378	51A Westerberg, Andrew (R)	523	4226
56B Larsen, Peg (R)	551	4244	9B Westfall, Robert L. (Bob) (R)	553	6829
40A Larson, Dan (DFL)	225	7158	13A Westrom, Torrey (R)	557	4929
27B Leighton, Rob (DFL)	261	4193	38A Wilkin, Tim (R)	413	3533
40B Lenczewski, Ann (DFL)	337	4218	22A Winter, Ted (DFL)	247	5505
45B Leppik, Peggy (R)	485	7026	41B Wolf, Ken (R)	359	5185
2A Lieder, Bernie L. (DFL)	323	5091	43A Workman, Tom (R)	537	5066

Note: Room numbers are subject to change.

List as of March 2, 2000

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill has passed both the House and Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor, who has several options when considering a bill, can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill;
- or do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium (even-numbered years), a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (Latin for adjournment "without a date certain"). If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes (save pocket vetoes) the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills

passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history—at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

This information is also available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "Legislative Initiatives" link, then click on "Legislative Log 2000."

Key:

CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
Res. 4	4060	2348*	Resolution for release of Americans held in North Korea, China, Russia and Vietnam.	4/3/00	
251	2980	2763*	Fishing season modified.	2/16/00	
252	2634	2411*	Northern Itasca hospital board membership requirements modified.	3/1/00	
253	2521	2320*	Lake Edwards township name change.	3/1/00	
254	76	86*	K-12 education technical changes provided.	3/7/00	
255	2067*	2071	Juvenile offenders modifications.	3/7/00	
256	2722*	2502	Kittson County town dissolution authority.	3/7/00	
257	2535*	2291	Shorewood authorized to elect city council members by wards.	3/13/00	
258	3039	2554*	Wadena County truth in taxation process advertisement requirement penalty exemption.	3/13/00	
259	3338*	2907	Scott County officials duties reorganized.	3/14/00	
260	2749*	2464	Revisor's bill.	3/14/00	
261	2642*	2552	Search firms surety bonding requirements modified.	3/14/00	
262	2774	2485*	Carisoprodol schedule IV controlled substance listing effective date delayed.	3/20/00	
263	2680	2465*	Political party treasurers authorized to sign political contribution refund receipt forms.	3/20/00	
264	3232	2692*	Business corporations and limited liability companies shareholder rights modified.	3/20/00	
265	2603	2346*	Permanently disabled hunters permit privileges modified.	3/20/00	
266	2723*	2528	McLeod County office authority extended.	3/23/00	
267	3236*	3236	Vital record certified copy issuance provisions modified.	3/23/00	
268	979*	2059	Landlords authorized to apportion utility payments among units.	3/23/00	
269	1865*	2094	Nursing mothers needs study by the Supreme Court Jury Reform Task Force required.	3/23/00	
270	2815*	2386	Hennepin County District Court fine proceeds distribution modified.	3/23/00	
271	3064	2776*	St. Louis County nursing home renovation approval deadline extended.	3/23/00	
272	3762	3355*	Port authority electronic funds disbursement authorized.	3/23/00	
273	2927*	2685	Metropolitan Inter-County Association group insurance protection authorized.	3/23/00	

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
274	3766*	3676	Pawnbrokers computerized records transmission format specified.	3/23/00	
275	2873*	2516	Anoka County department head time requirements clarified.	3/23/00	
276	3113*	3089	Pharmacies permitted an additional certified technician.	3/24/00	
277	118*	160	State agency commissioners acting service time limited.		3/24/00
278	2505*	2289	Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period.	3/24/00	
279	2502*	3207	C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway designated.	3/24/00	
280	2824*	2578	Collector motor vehicles license plate option.	3/24/00	
281	3156*	2709	I-35 designation as 34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division Highway.	3/24/00	
282	3132*	2890	Security deposit interest rates provided.	3/24/00	
283	2836*	2982	National Guard and organized militia membership eligibility clarified.	3/27/00	
284	3222*	3117	Health-related licensing boards reporting requirements modified.	3/27/00	
285	3332*	3120	Dairy research and promotion council alternative term expiration dates authorized.	3/27/00	
286	3433*	3292	St. Paul Port Authority recreational facilities and purposes authority modified.	3/27/00	
287	3475	2813*	State vehicle identification requirements modified.	3/27/00	
288	3142*	2844	Trunk Highway No. 4 designated as Richard J. Mathiowetz Memorial Highway.	3/28/00	
289	2687	2652*	Electric power generating plant siting act exemptions expanded.	3/28/00	
290	3016	2756*	Hospital districts annexation authority expanded.	3/28/00	
291	3003	3097*	Department of Corrections fugitive apprehension unit created.	3/28/00	
292	3421*	2779	Electric cooperatives' election to be regulated petition and balloting provisions modified.	3/28/00	
293	3053*	2508	Collector vehicles authorized to display a blue light as part of rear brakes.	3/28/00	
294	3196*	2978	Nursing facility employee pension benefit costs treated as PERA contributions.	3/28/00	
295	3375	3161*	Health care purchasing alliances modified.	3/28/00	
296	3188	3253*	Special transportation services medical assistance reimbursement study required.	3/28/00	
297	3281	2691*	State building energy code authority transferred to commissioner of administration.	3/28/00	
298	2909	2365*	Physician assistant supervisory requirement modified.	3/28/00	
299	3370	3330*	Department of Corrections housekeeping bill.	3/28/00	
300	3219	2903*	Omnibus gambling bill.	3/31/00	
301	1333	2193*	Wood sales contracts regulated.	3/31/00	
302	2785	2821*	Charitable organization annual report filing requirements modified.	3/31/00	
303	2883	2579*	Prescription drug discounts regulated.	3/31/00	
304	2675	2569*	Vicarious liability insurance coverage for punitive and exemplary damages authorized.	3/31/00	
305	3399	3145*	Minnetonka qualified newspaper designation priority variance.	3/31/00	
306	2588	2326*	Monarch designated as the state butterfly.	3/31/00	
307	3209*	2699	Health care cost containment major commitment expenditure report requirements modified.	4/3/00	
308	3352	3586*	Lighted fishing lures authorized.	4/3/00	
309	2719*	2436	Rental automobile insurance coverage regulated.	4/3/00	
310	2809*	2631	Ah-Gwah-Ching nursing center admissions criteria clarified.		4/3/00♦
311	2688*	2769	Omnibus crime prevention and judiciary finance bill.	4/3/00	
312	3226	2896*	Nursing home resident assistants authorized and survey process procedure developed.	4/3/00	
313	2994	2748*	Ambulance service and EMT requirements modified.	4/3/00	
314	3212	2734*	Home care and personal care provider transportation expense reimbursement studied.	4/3/00	
315	3048	2868*	New medical assistance case-mix system based on federal minimum data set transition timelines.	4/3/00	
316	3107	2634*	Civil commitment relative notification provided and minor voluntary treatment consent provisions modified.	4/3/00	
317	3306	3549*	Residential hospice program requirements modified.	4/3/00	
318	3023	2701*	Lawful gambling fraud defined and criminal penalties imposed.	4/3/00	
319	3365	2941*	Vulnerable adult neglect and medical error provisions modified.	4/3/00	
320	3220	2510*	Real property recording and redemption and common interest ownership provisions modified.	4/4/00	
321	3596	3369*	Special environmental purpose districts pilot projects.	4/4/00	

♦ veto overridden by Legislature

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
322	3310	3055*	Health plan contract stacking regulated and remedy provided.	4/4/00	
323	3290	2894*	Occupational safety and health discrimination complaint communications classified as privileged.	4/4/00	
324	3555	3283*	Snowmobile metal traction device sticker requirement civil enforcement provided.	4/4/00	
325	1590*	1952	Warrant authority of alcohol and gambling agents clarified.	4/4/00	
326	2819	2444*	Stearns County land conveyance authorized.	4/4/00	
327	3103	3005*	Human services licensing provisions modified.	4/4/00	
328	3152	2905*	Local government units purchase provisions modified.	4/4/00	
329	3169*	3167	Dakota County personnel board of appeals provisions modified.	4/4/00	
330	2670*	2566	Mental retardation community-based waived services modified.	4/4/00	
331	3868	3260*	Aquatic farm licensing requirements modified.	4/4/00	
332	4076	2653*	Internet state agency grant information required and uniform application developed.	4/4/00	
333	2940*	2735	Dry cleaner environmental response and reimbursement law modified.	4/4/00	
334	2936	2511*	Public and private property entry authorized for the purposes of examinations and surveys.	4/4/00	
335	3327	2676*	Local government authorization to petition to amend or repeal rules sunset modified.	4/6/00	
336	3571	2828*	Gambling regulated, specified activities prohibited, and shipment of gambling devices regulated.	4/6/00	
337	2559	2546*	Inland water sunken logs recovery and historical artifacts ownership provided.	4/6/00	
338	3342	3025*	Foster care providers medical equipment operation competency required.	4/6/00	
339	3134*	2857	Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission authority to enter specified state lands limited.	4/6/00	
340	3122*	2901	Medical Assistance, General Assistance, MinnesotaCare, and health care program provisions modified.	4/6/00	
341	3510*	3378	Taking two deer authorization extended in specified counties.	4/6/00	
342	2656*	3441	Auto glass repair and replacement regulated, and rebates and incentives limited.	4/6/00	
343	3806	3554*	Nonprofit organization re-employment compensation provisions modified.	4/6/00	
344	465	624*	Firefighter training and education board created.	4/6/00	
345	2803*	3119	Court reporters allowed to organize under the Public Employment Labor Relations Act.	4/10/00	
346	2969	2803*	Certified public accountant licensing requirements modified.	4/10/00	
347	3477	2499*	Speech language pathology and audiology services medical assistance clarified.	4/10/00	
348	2761	3379*	Omnibus tax-forfeited land bill.	4/10/00	
349	2643	2767*	Health plan companies and third party administrators clean health or home care services claims.	4/10/00	
350	2974	3203*	Insurance uniform accounting principles codification.	4/10/00	
351	2639	2397*	Employees bloodborne pathogens exposure reduction procedures.	4/10/00	
352	3584	3354*	Manufactured homes limited dealer license requirements clarified.	4/10/00	
353	3052	2850*	Itasca County medical assistance prepayment demonstration project participation extended.	4/10/00	
354	2751	3455*	Stolen or fraudulent checks provisions modifications.	4/10/00	
355	3347	2989*	Administrative law and workers' compensation judges conduct regulated.	4/10/00	
356	3795	3478*	Rochester firefighter probationary period rules modified.	4/10/00	
357	3119	2725*	Public defenders and court-appointed counsel minors juvenile court representation restriction.	4/10/00	
358	1267	1126*	Civil actions economic loss doctrine clarification	4/11/00	
359	3457	2858*	Civilly committed sexual psychopaths or sexually dangerous persons transfer procedure.	4/11/00	
360	3202	2789*	Coroner compensation provisions clarified.	4/11/00	
361	947	1038*	Occupational therapist and assistant licensing requirements established.	4/11/00	
362	3208	2723*	Trust and probate provisions modified.	4/11/00	
363	3626	3428*	Psychologist supervisory and disciplinary requirements modified.	4/11/00	
364	3537	3198*	Nursing facilities closure plans and savings reallocation process established.	4/11/00	
365	3952	3533*	Claims against the state payments provided.	4/11/00	
366	3303	3566*	Criminal penalty for failure to remit motor vehicle sales taxes.	4/13/00	
367	3756	3423*	Holocaust victims insurance relief act established.	4/13/00	
368	3331*	2980	Prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault interagency task force created.	4/13/00	
369	1326*	1130	Community social services limited liability provided.	4/13/00	

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
370	3576*	3361	Solid waste and wastewater treatment facilities reporting requirements modified.	4/13/00	
371	3109*	3699	Uniform electronic transactions act adopted.	4/13/00	
372	3517	2742*	Expedited child support hearing notice to remove filing period modified.	4/13/00	
373	3613	3307*	Recreational vehicles personal injury claims.	4/13/00	
374	2807	2514*	Yellow perch limit rulemaking authority restricted.	4/13/00	
375	2613	2949*	Big Woods heritage forest established.	4/13/00	
376	3520	3290*	Environmental response and liability agreement grants provided.	4/13/00	
377	3950	3154*	Criminal and juvenile justice database access authorized for criminal defense purposes.	4/13/00	
378	2707	3348*	Organization sponsored potluck event requirements modified.	4/13/00	
379	3903	2987*	Cooperative income financing and distribution provisions modified.	4/13/00	
380	2822	2547*	Capitol area site selected for installation of Minnesota firefighters memorial.	4/13/00	
381	2888*	2573	Canoe and boating route marking authorized on a portion of the Chippewa River.	4/13/00	
382	1493	83*	Wetland regulation simplified and consolidated.	4/13/00	
383	262	76*	DWI motor vehicle forfeiture proceedings requirements modified.		4/13/00
384	3195	3701*	State designer selection board membership modified.	4/13/00	
385	3174	3195*	Dairy product adulteration penalties modified.	4/13/00	
386	3082	3150*	Higher education facilities authority bonding authority increased.	4/13/00	
387	2981	2848*	Public Employment Labor Relations Act supervisory or confidential employees list expanded.	4/13/00	
388	3566	3291*	Towed motor vehicles lien provisions clarified.		4/13/00
389	562	619*	Collection agencies regulated.	4/13/00	
390	3554	3138*	Veterans Affairs commissioner duties technical changes provided.	4/14/00	
391	3424	3346*	Electronic filing of real estate documents task force established.	4/14/00	
392	3597	2795*	State investments modified.	4/14/00	
393	3328	2877*	Iron Range off-highway vehicle recreation area addition in St. Louis County provided.	4/14/00	
394	3075	2655*	Insurance tax laws recodified.	4/14/00	
395	3066	2783*	Secretary of State fees and annual corporate registrations regulated.	4/14/00	
396	3260	2968*	Lake improvement district provisions modified.	4/14/00	
397	2229	884*	Reduced marriage license fee provided for couples who obtain premarital counseling.		4/14/00
398	3964	3626*	Comprehensive Health Association eligibility and coverage modified.	4/14/00	
399	1394	1495*	Uniform Commercial Code secured transactions provisions adopted.	4/14/00	
400	1662	1896*	Medical assistance programs and liens modified.	4/14/00	
401	3176	3410*	Neglect definition modified.	4/14/00	
402	3263	3082*	Duluth Human Rights Commission additional powers authorized.	4/14/00	
403	3519	2794*	Expedited child support process provisions modified.	4/14/00	
404	3318	3018*	Standby and alternate custodians of children designation provided.	4/14/00	
405	3577	3116*	Creditors' garnishments, executions, and levies regulated.	4/14/00	
406	304	173*	Possession of wild animals taken on the Red Lake Indian Reservation authorized.	4/14/00	
407	2570	3259*	Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.	4/13/00	
408	3512	3108*	Local and state correctional facility inmate telephone access regulated.	4/14/00	
409	2731*	2753	Motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors, and factory branches unfair practices regulated.	4/14/00	
410	2935	2363*	Dental benefit plans regulated.	4/14/00	
411	3825	3338*	Tribal police departments annual insurance cap established.	4/14/00	
412	3652	3387*	Abortion informed consent requirements modified.		4/14/00
413	1383	1231*	Optometrist licensing provisions modified.	4/14/00	
414	3633*	3550	Mighty Eighth Air Force Week designated.	4/14/00	
415	1947	1618*	Brewer and wholesaler judicial remedies modified.	4/17/00	
416	2791	2471*	Hennepin County Human Resources Board and department provisions modified.	4/17/00	
417	2846	3272*	Bleacher safety building code requirements modified.	4/17/00	

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
418	3234	3091*	Sales and use tax law recodified.	4/18/00	
419	1834	1699*	Electronic funds transfers and credit card payments to state agencies authorized.	4/18/00	
420	3495	2972*	State purchases open bidding authorized.	4/18/00	
421	2945	2615*	Persons leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms not prosecuted.	4/18/00	
422	1631	1202*	Protocol established for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens.	4/18/00	
423	2555	1733*	Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.	4/18/00	
424	3901*	3769	Housing finance agency community rehabilitation grants and loans authorized.	4/20/00	
425	3091	2484*	Motor vehicles required to be driven in the right-hand lane clarified.		4/20/00
426	2953	3023*	Vehicle registration and titling provisions modified.	4/20/00	
427	2973	2870*	Financial institution loan charges and payments regulated.	4/20/00	
428	2889	2683*	Bowfishing archery bows exempted from casing requirement.	4/20/00	
429	2671*	2567	Temporary census employee income excluded from public assistance eligibility determinations.	4/20/00	
430	2563*	2381	Mechanics' lien civil cause of action created.	4/20/00	
431	2830*	2771	Pimps and patrons of juvenile prostitution provided enhanced criminal penalties.	4/20/00	
432	3786	2456*	Wright County ditch conveyance to St. Michael and Albertville authorized.	4/24/00	
433	3274	2785*	Utility-owned vehicles exempted from specified weight restrictions.	4/24/00	
434	3292	2946*	Gasoline blended with the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether sale prohibited.	4/24/00	
435	3692*	3443	Feedlot permit provisions modified.	4/24/00	
436	2451*	2271	Legislative Electric Energy Task Force expiration date extended.	4/24/00	
437	1067	551*	Domestic abuse crime sentences and provisions modified.	4/24/00	
438	2713	2686*	Funeral acts and services regulated.	4/24/00	
439	3497*	3539	State of Minnesota attorney fees recovery regulated.	4/24/00	
440	3974	3581*	Omnibus liquor bill.	4/24/00	
441	2958	2830*	Crime of escape from custody expanded.	4/24/00	
442	2968	3139*	Veterans homes support test not to include sales tax rebates.	4/24/00	
443	2757*	2614	Biomass power mandate regulated.	4/24/00	
444	3311	3169*	Parenting plans provided, parenting time procedure clarified, and terminology modified.	4/27/00	
445	3550	3178*	Commissioner of public safety rule authority continued.	4/26/00	
446	3586	2951*	Alternative dispute resolution process use clarified.	4/26/00	
447	3960	3644*	Workers' compensation benefits increased.	4/27/00	

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

APRIL 21 - 27, 2000

HOUSE FILES 4162 - 4166

Tuesday, April 25

HF4162—Abeler (R)

Transportation Finance

Northstar commuter rail line appropriated money.

HF4163—Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

Individual income, corporate franchise, sales and use, and motor vehicle sales tax collection limited; and rate reduction authority provided.

Wednesday, April 26

HF4164—Seifert, M. (R)

Taxes

Active duty military pay subtraction from individual income taxes provided.

HF4165—Tuma (R)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Local planning assistance encouraged and assisted by the Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning.

HF4166—Abeler (R)

Jobs & Economic Development Policy

Historic structure preservation grant program created and money appropriated.

Schedule is subject to change. For information updates, call House Calls at (651) 296-9283. All meetings are open to the public. Sign language interpreter services: (651) 224-6548 v/tty. To have the House committee schedule delivered to your e-mail address, send an e-mail message to join-houseschedule@ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us or direct your Web browser to <http://ww3.house.leg.state.mn.us/scripts/lyris.pl?join=houseschedule> and fill out the subscription form on the Legislature's Web site.

MONDAY, May 1

No meetings have been announced.

TUESDAY, May 2

8:30 a.m.

Conference Committee

HF3505/SF3092

Commerce Department Enforcement Bill; managing general agents, securities broker-dealers, investment advisors, contractor recovery fund, collection agencies, and notarial act provisions modified.

125 State Capitol

Chrs. Rep. Greg Davids, Sen. Edward Oliver

1 p.m.

Legislative Audit Commission

316 State Capitol

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Release and review of best practices review of preventive maintenance for local government buildings; Selection of new best practices review topic; Review of purpose and use of program evaluation topic roundtables.

WEDNESDAY, May 3

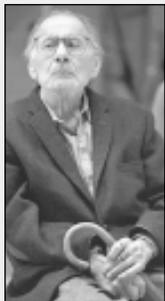
No meetings have been announced.

THURSDAY, May 4

No meetings have been announced.

FRIDAY, May 5

No meetings have been announced.



George Morrison

The State Capitol building, occupied by the Legislature since 1905, has often been a repository for art by local and national visual artists. The permanent works are diverse. One can find paintings of former governors and Civil War battles, and sculptures of important people who made an impact on the state.

Ceiling designs and allegorical murals are also an integral part of the permanent motif of the edifice. Singularly, the building itself is a major accomplishment and glorification of art and architecture available for all to ponder.

But some of the works of art that grace the Capitol are transitory. These are works that appear temporarily for a day, or for a short exhibition in the North Hall off the Rotunda. Some school art classes have an annual showing of their students' best works, while on occasion, some Minnesota artists' productions appear.

One exhibition of note in 1995 was the newly acquired collection of George Morrison by St. Paul's Minnesota Museum of American Art. Five pieces of his work are

Reflections

presently on exhibit by the museum at Landmark Center, as a memorial to his April 17 death at the age of 80.

The host group for Morrison's 1995 exhibition opening at the Capitol included two artists, Rep. Doug Peterson (DFL-Madison), and Rep. Leslie Schumacher (DFL-Princeton). Other hosts were museum board members Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul) and Larry Kitto, who has since died.

Early on, Morrison saw himself as an artist who was American Indian, rather than an American Indian artist, but often found himself being mis-defined. In Trimble's opinion, this was "because he did not paint feathers, beads, and leather as some art critics unfairly expected." For those who are intrigued by art, those fascinations are only enhanced by Morrison's outstanding use of imagery that only few artists attain.

Born near Grand Portage in 1919, he began his career early with a scholarship to the Minneapolis School of Art, now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design.

After art school, he purchased a one-way ticket to New York City during a new art explosion in America. There, he became friends with Jackson Pollock, Willem De

Kooning, and others, and with them, greatly influenced abstract expressionism.

Morrison briefly lived in Paris and also taught at the prestigious Rhode Island School of Design before he returned to teach at the University of Minnesota.

The artist's Ojibway roots drew him back to the shores of Lake Superior where some of his best works were produced. "I guess my religion is nature," he once said. It shows in his unique depictions of the lake, sky and horizon through color, light, and reflections.

"I was always impressed by his imagery," even before I knew him, said Peterson. "He had the unusual ability to take you away from reality in his art of the North Shore, but bring form back to you through his images."

Artist Schumacher, who said she was very honored to meet Morrison and be photographed with him, remarked how impressed she was by his use of color to depict a sense of place.

As his health became worse in later years, Morrison was asked about retirement. He said, "What are you supposed to do if you don't make art?" And he did until he died.

— LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

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Complete this form to receive your copy of *New Laws 2000*, a publication describing the new laws passed this year. The publication will provide brief, easy-to-read summaries of the bills that were passed by both the House and Senate and signed or vetoed by the governor. *New Laws 2000* will be available a few months after the session ends. Copies will be mailed without charge to those who order them.



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5. Please rate the following aspects of the *Session Weekly* by checking one answer in each set.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to understand | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat understandable | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy to understand |
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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Veto overrides

Earliest year for which full records of vetoes are available	1939
Attempts to override a veto since 1939	31
Number that succeeded	6
Number of override attempts that failed or were tabled in the House, since 1939	19
In the Senate	6
Average number of votes by which a veto override failed, in the House	10
Attempts that failed by five or fewer votes	6
Average number of votes by which a veto override failed, in the Senate	3
Number of votes required to override a veto in the House	90
In the Senate	45
Number of governors who have never had a veto overridden, since 1939	9
Total number of governors since 1939	13
Bills vetoed by Gov. Arne Carlson	179
Total number of bills vetoed from 1939 to 1990	178
Number of Carlson vetoes overridden	0
Number of bills vetoed (full and line item) by Gov. Jesse Ventura, as of April 27	25
Attempts to override Gov. Jesse Ventura's vetoes	3
Successful overrides	2
Appropriations in those two overridden bills	0
Appropriation for World War II memorial contained in line-item veto that was subject of failed override in the House	\$150,000
Governors who have had more than one veto overridden	2
Vetoes by Gov. Al Quie that were overridden by the Legislature in 1982	2
Number of times Gov. Harold LeVander vetoed the state sales tax in 1967 (in regular session and special session)	2
State sales tax established by law after an override, as percent	3
Number of votes by which the veto override failed in regular session in the Senate	1
Number of legislators voting to override the special session veto in the House	93
In the Senate	47
Payments to counties authorized in 1949 bill vetoed by Gov. Luther Youngdahl and overridden by Legislature	\$785,000
Number of overriding votes cast in the House	124
In the Senate	60

Sources: Legislative Reference Library; *Journal of the House*, 1967,
 Minnesota House of Representatives; *Journal of the Senate*, 1949, Minnesota Senate.

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SESSION Weekly

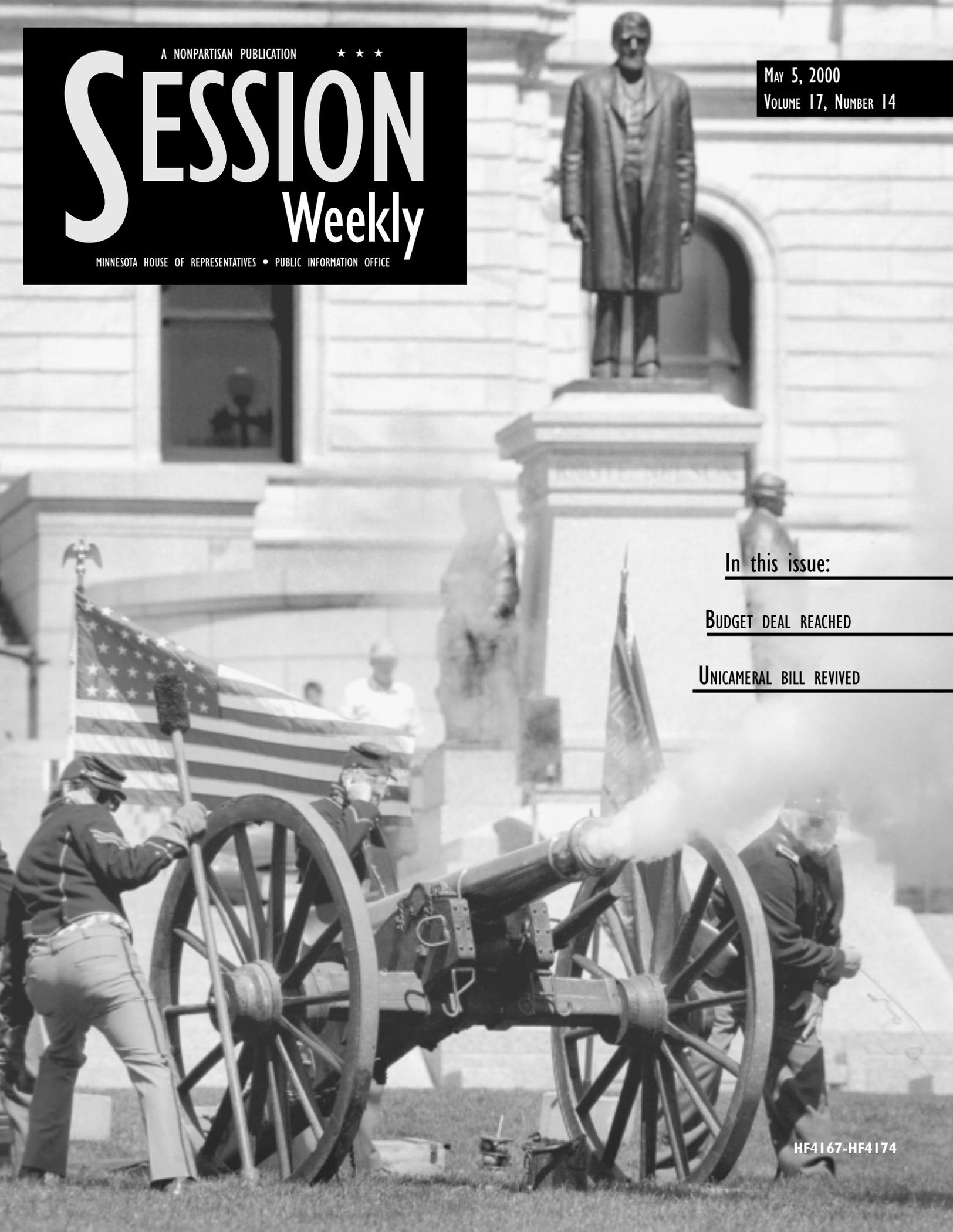
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BUDGET DEAL REACHED

UNICAMERAL BILL REVIVED



HF4167-HF4174

SESSION Weekly

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On the cover: Members of Berg's Battery from New Ulm fire an 1856 cannon on the front lawn of the Capitol to celebrate Freedom Day on May 1. The day is meant to celebrate the nation's heritage of liberty. Members of Berg's Battery include Wardell Lueck of New Ulm, *left*, Bill Rosenwald of Glencoe, *center*, and John Fritche of New Ulm.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

A three-way split

Budget compromise would give House, Senate, and governor each an equal piece of the pie

By CHRIS VETTER

With the 2000 legislative session coming to a close, leaders finally agreed on a budget package that could lead to income tax cuts, a reduction in license tab fees, and a boost for education funding.

The House, Senate, and Gov. Jesse Ventura will each designate a third of the \$525 million reserved for a combination of permanent tax cuts and new spending, under an agreement announced May 3 by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon).

“It’s a win-win-win package, to varying degrees,” Sviggum said.

Each of the three parties will have about \$175 million to work with as they see fit, under the agreement.

There is a total of \$549 million available, be it for permanent tax cuts or other ongoing spending, according to the Finance Department. The Legislature has already agreed to spend \$9.2 million for a criminal records database and could spend as much as \$15 million for debt service on bonds from this year’s bonding bill. Subtracting the money already allocated leaves \$525 million to be split three ways.

That money is totally separate from the \$1.8 billion surplus forecast for the 2000-2001 biennium. Any tax rebates would be drawn from that money.

Sviggum said he has a verbal agreement from Ventura that all of his portion of the money will be used to cut license tab fees. Sviggum said he plans to hold Ventura to that promise.

Under the plan, the House would use its third of the pie to reduce taxes. Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) said the House’s share would likely go toward across-the-board income tax reductions. A decision on how to split the \$175 million through three tax brackets will likely be made quickly, Abrams said.

Permanent K-12 education

funding is expected to comprise \$125 million of the Senate’s \$175 million portion. The Senate is also expected to invest \$25 million for human services and another \$25 million in natural resources programs.

Sviggum stressed that the total tax reduction to Minnesotans will be \$350 million under the agreement, even though a cut in tab fees was not a priority in the House.

The House omnibus transportation bill, currently in conference committee, contained no tab fee cuts. The Senate’s bill, in its current form, would designate 15 percent of the motor vehicle sales tax — about \$80 million — to reduce tab fees.

Ventura advocates reducing all license tab

fees to a maximum of \$75. That proposal is estimated to cost the state \$274 million. Sviggum said the governor’s office still must figure out a tab fee reduction plan that limits the state’s costs to \$175 million.

“That may not be the tax cut we would have chosen, but it does reduce the tax burden for Minnesotans,” Sviggum said.

Minnesota will lead the nation in tax cuts for the biennium with this package, Sviggum said. The Legislature cut taxes by \$750 million last year.

While Sviggum said he is pleased with the accord, the \$350 million in tax cuts is less than half what House leaders sought prior to the beginning of the session, when they outlined \$850 million in tax cuts. The final agreement is better than nothing at all, he said.

“We can’t just take our marbles and go home,” Sviggum said.

Even with the agreement on permanent money, there is still much to accomplish before the session ends, said House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan). The question of how much to spend on one-time funding has not been settled.

Pawlenty noted the Senate bills spend \$25 million more for transportation and \$100 million more on bonding projects.

The House’s bonding bill is about \$400 million, similar to a proposal by Ventura. The Senate has proposed about \$500 million for bonding.

However, the bonding priorities of the House, Senate, and Ventura vary widely. For example, Ventura has been a strong advocate of bonding funds for a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension laboratory at a cost of \$58 million. The House’s bonding bill provides for only about half of that figure.

The House and Senate have agreed on some areas of one-time spending. For instance, state agencies would receive \$10 million in emergency funding requested by the governor and higher education will receive \$11.6 million.

Leaders also agree to spend \$270.5 million in federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) dollars, but

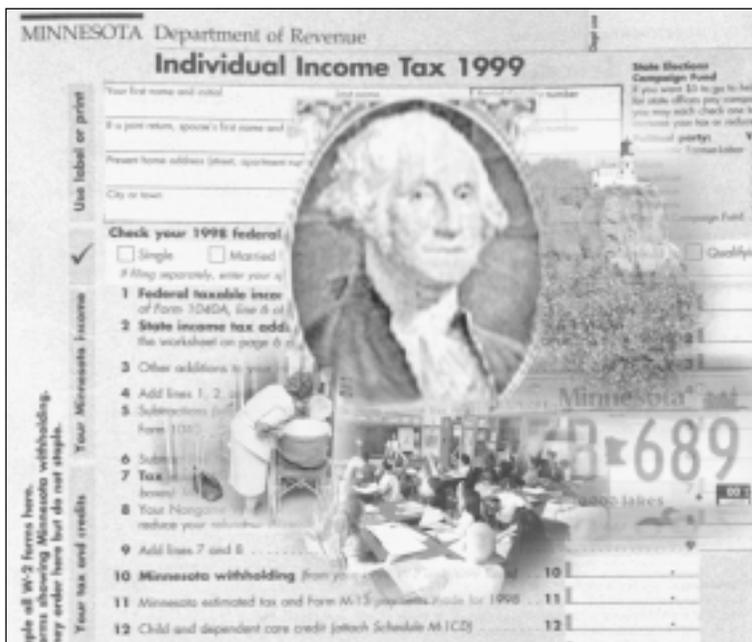


Photo illustration by Tom Olmscheid



At a May 3 press conference, House Speaker Steve Sviggum and others from the House Republican Caucus announce that the House, Senate, and governor arrived at a three-way budget agreement.

they have not settled which programs to send the money to.

Sviggum said he is still optimistic that the Legislature will settle on a one-time tax rebate higher than previously estimated.

"We are going to try and supersize the rebate," Sviggum said. He estimates the rebate will be between \$800 million and \$900 million. The one-time rebate also will contain a portion — less than \$20 million — for farmer relief, he said.

A few weeks ago, the House proposed a \$500 million rebate. Currently, the Senate plan would return \$600 million in a rebate.

Pawlenty said conference committees will meet throughout the weekend in hopes to have the non-funding measures completed while they wait for budget targets.

One of the larger unresolved issues is the Hiawatha corridor light-rail transit project. House Republicans advocate canceling previously allocated funding for the Hiawatha line; the Senate and the governor do not. Ventura has promised to veto any bill that could halt the project.

The Legislature is running out of time to complete its work. After both houses met May 4, only four legislative days remained. Under the state Constitution, no action can take place on the final, or 120th, legislative day.

Legislative leaders can spread those days apart to work on negotiations. However, the session must be completed by May 22.

Ventura has the power to call a special session to wrap up legislation, but he has stated he does not intend to do that.

Sviggum acknowledged that the plan does not have unanimous support from the Republican caucus, but he believes the major spending bills now have enough votes to pass.

The compromise splitting the money three ways evenly was reached after the Senate rejected a plan that would not have given the governor a portion of the allotted money, Sviggum said.

While Sviggum said he is happy with the agreement, he is displeased with the process that led to the compromise.

"It doesn't feel right. That's not the premise of good government," Sviggum said of the deal. "That's not the process we like." 🐼

IT'S A FACT



Taking the plunge

Legislator's attempt to make couples wait for marriage fell short

In his message upon vetoing a bill that would have provided reduced marriage license fees for couples who attended premarital counseling, Gov. Jesse Ventura wrote that he did not believe government should intervene in such personal decisions.

The bill was one of two well-publicized measures considered this year attempting to address Minnesota's increasing divorce rate. The other bill, which stalled in committee, would establish a covenant marriage option in the state, making it more difficult to obtain a divorce for couples who enter such a marriage.

This is certainly not the first time legislators have tried to make young couples think about their decision to marry or prepare for married life.

In 1913, when divorce rates had not even climbed to 1 percent, Rep. Claude Southwick, a Republican from Wells, introduced a bill that would have required people to wait five days after a marriage license was issued before the wedding ceremony could be performed.

Southwick, who was single, was the city attorney of Albert Lea prior to his six-year stint as a member of the House. He had the further distinction of being one of three students who composed the first graduating class of Wells High School in 1890.

The intent behind his bill was to prevent people entering into "hasty" and "ill-considered" marriages.

But not everyone agreed his bill was the solution.

C.J. Buell, who wrote several books chronicling the Minnesota Legislature in the early 1900s, said Southwick's bill was "a very good example of ill-advised attempts to remedy evil."

Buell agreed with Southwick that the legislation would prevent some hasty marriages. But he argued that other ramifications would occur if the bill were to become law.

"It certainly would open the door to any evil-minded man who wanted to take advantage of an ignorant girl," Buell wrote. "To first get a license and persuade the girl that all legal requirements had been met; live with the girl five days, as his wife, and then leave her to the tender mercies of society perhaps with a child to rear, and the scorn of good people to endure."

But even more pervasive, Buell wrote, was the bill's provision proposing to abolish common law marriages in the state.

That type of marriage, which was common in Europe during the Middle Ages, was a marriage undertaken without either a civil or religious ceremony. In a common law marriage, both partners for legal purposes are considered "married" after a period of living together as a couple.

Recognizing common law marriages as legal marriages allowed wives and children to inherit property from the father and husband.

Southwick said that such an arrangement led to situations where "bad women" used a common law marriage to "get part of the property of some old rounder who had died and left more money than character."

But Buell argued for the state to abolish common law marriages would have placed an undue burden on those "honest, faithful, and pure" couples who would then have to go before a minister or magistrate to have their marriage legally recognized.

Buell said Southwick's bill would have denied wives the right to property and left women and children to face their remaining years in poverty and destitution.

Further, he said, that to place more requirements on becoming married would simply mean more people would ignore those requirements.

Southwick's bill failed in the House, but his efforts weren't entirely in vain.

In 1941, the Legislature finally banned common law marriages in the state. That type of marriage is now recognized in only 14 states.

In addition, since 1931 couples have to wait five days after applying for a marriage license before they can pick it up and walk down the aisle.

As lawmakers continue to examine government's role in marriage, perhaps Buell's words provide a common starting point.

"Marriage — the real true love union of a man and a woman — is the purest and most sacred relation in all the world," he wrote. "And what we really need is to be educated to look upon that relation in its true light, as the one most cherished hope and grandest consummation of life."

(D. MAEDA)

BUSINESS

★

Changing business subsidies

The House passed a bill May 1 that would make several changes to a business subsidy law that was enacted last session. The vote was 133-0.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), who is sponsoring the bill (HF3057/SF2893*), said that last year the Legislature passed a law that defined, clarified, and established further criteria for when financial assistance is given from a public entity to a business.

McElroy said the bill would raise the amount of what is defined to be a business subsidy as any financial assistance in excess of \$100,000. Currently the amount is defined amounts of more than \$25,000.

Current law also requires wage and job goals of all subsidies. The bill would allow those job goals to be set at zero, if it is determined that job retention and creation are not purposes of the subsidy. A zero job goal would require a public hearing.

The bill also would allow a recipient of a subsidy to switch locations within five years of receiving the subsidy, which is prohibited under current law. The bill would allow the recipient to move at any time after a public hearing is held.

The bill would make several technical changes. For example, under current law a business subsidy is required to meet a public purpose other than increasing the tax base. The bill would require a subsidy to meet a public purpose, which may include, but may not be limited to increasing the tax base.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

CRIME

★

False ID measure denied

A bill that would increase penalties for using false identification to buy alcohol or tobacco failed in the House April 28, after some members expressed concern over questions about penalties and public safety.

The House returned the bill to conference committee on a 93-33 vote.

The bill would allow alcohol providers — from liquor store clerks to bartenders — to confiscate what they believe to be false identifications. The bill also would increase the penalty to a gross misdemeanor for a second conviction for attempting to purchase

alcohol under age 21.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) is sponsoring the bill (HF2655/SF2845*). She said the measure is necessary to enforce the state's laws on selling alcohol to minors.

"These are people who are knowingly violating the law, and they are doing it over and over again because there are few penalties," Leppik said. "We have a rampant problem in Minnesota with false IDs."

On April 28, the Senate approved the conference committee report 59-0. Leppik said she did not expect difficulty in getting the bill passed through the House.

"I think everyone was caught by surprise," Leppik said. "(Opponents) were able to raise enough doubts in people's minds."

Leppik said she expects the bill will return to the House floor before the session ends. She could not specify what changes she plans to make to the bill in conference committee.

In its current form, the bill would allow the commissioner of public safety to suspend a minor's driver's license for up to 90 days if the minor attempted to purchase alcohol with false identification.

Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm) spoke against that provision, saying juveniles who have their license suspended would have difficulty obtaining insurance once the license is reinstated.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said she dislikes the provision that would allow clerks or bartenders to hold licenses for up to 24 hours before they are turned over to the police.

"It's not a minor inconvenience," Kahn said. "It could be really serious."

The penalty for clerks who mistakenly sell tobacco to minors would be reduced from a gross misdemeanor to a misdemeanor for the first offense, under the bill. Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) presented a similar bill earlier in the session, saying the Legislature was too tough on clerks.

"It's over-punishment for a mistake," Solberg said.

The clerk could still be charged with a gross misdemeanor on a second offense of selling tobacco to minors, under the bill.

The bill now returns to conference committee.

GAME & FISH

★

DNR enforcement bill rejected

The House rejected a proposal to modify the responsibilities of conservation officers in the state Department of Natural Resources April 28. The vote was 102-27 to return the bill (HF2962/SF3036*) to a legislative conference committee.

Hmong Veterans



Captain Chue Chou Tchang, left, salutes as lawmakers recognize the sacrifice of the Hmong veterans who filled the House gallery during session May 4. Other Hmong officers seated on the House floor were, from left, Captain Neng Mai Xiong, Major Wakai Yang, Lieutenant Cher Pao Pha, and Captain Chong Ge Chang. (See related story, page 9.)

Conservation officers, like police officers, have authority to give blood-alcohol tests under the state's implied consent laws.

But conservation officers can issue those tests only to people who are hunting while intoxicated, or to those who are intoxicated while driving snowmobiles, motorboats, or all-terrain vehicles — not automobiles.

Under the bill, sponsored by Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), conservation officers' implied consent authority would be extended to include automobile drivers.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) spoke against the bill, saying conservation officers already can pull over a vehicle and contact the State Patrol or other law enforcement officer to handle drunken driving incidents. He said the DNR officers do not need the additional authority.

Haas disagreed with Bishop's objections, saying the increased authority for DNR officers would mainly benefit rural areas.

"(DNR officers) can call for the state patrol or sheriff, but they could be on the other side of the county," he said. "That is a waste of time."

Another provision in the bill would allow the DNR to keep proceeds from the sale of a forfeited vehicle. The bill would require the DNR to use that money for DWI-related enforcement, training, and education.

Bishop said the House wisely removed that provision, or "open appropriation," from the bill, because it would take away the Legislature's oversight of those funds.

Regarding the open appropriation, Haas said it would rarely be used and it only would deal with small amounts of money.

Bishop countered by saying, "If it's not good policy if it's regularly used, it's not good policy if it's rarely used."

Also, the bill would modify some procedures regarding forfeited vehicles or property.

Under current law, conservation officers can seize firearms from hunters who are violating laws, such as shooting at deer from a road or possessing too many game birds. In some instances, the officer later finds out that the person illegally possessed a firearm because of prior criminal convictions or other reasons.

In that kind of situation, current law requires the officer to send the firearm to the county sheriff's office, even though that office was not involved in the original incident.

The bill would allow the DNR to administer the forfeiture instead of sending it to the county.

The bill now goes back to the conference committee.

★ GOVERNMENT

Board members confirmed

The House confirmed two members of the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board on May 4.

Sidney Pauly of Eden Prairie, a former House member and current board chair, and

Douglas Kelley of Bloomington, both Republicans, were appointed by Gov. Jesse Ventura and confirmed by the House.

Pauly served eight years as a member of the Eden Prairie City Council and 12 years in the Minnesota House of Representatives. She has served one term on the board and was re-appointed.

Kelley owns and manages a law firm that concentrates on white-collar crime, provides services in compliance programs, internal investigations, Indian gaming, employment law, and complex civil litigation.

Both terms expire Jan. 5, 2004.

The board's stated mission is "to promote public confidence in state government decision-making through development, administration, and enforcement of disclosure and public financing programs, which will ensure public access to and understanding of information filed with the board."

The board was established in 1974 as part of the Ethics in Government Act. The six-member board administers programs that provide for disclosure of economic interests and of conflicts of interest for certain state and metropolitan officials. The board is also responsible for administration of the state's public subsidy program, which provides public funding for political campaigns.

The board's programs require registration and public disclosure by candidates, political committees and funds, and lobbyists.

In the well

Acoustic conventions used in early days of Legislature came in handy when modern technology failed on the House floor

When the microphone system on the House floor went haywire April 28, Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) found a spot where he could be heard loud and clear.

Rukavina left his seat and walked to the "well," just in front of the chief clerk's desk at the front of the House chamber. From that location, his voice could be heard throughout the room.

The House floor, which was designed similar to opera houses, has great acoustics.

"I think it's the first time I've seen it used in my time here," Rukavina said. "I've never seen it used because we had the microphones."

All legislators know where the spot is because they hear their voice echo when they walk across that area, Rukavina said. He said



Rep. Tom Rukavina speaks from the well of the House chamber to be heard as he debated a conference committee report April 28. In years past, before the modern sound system was installed in the chamber, members would go to the well to give speeches.

it was fascinating to hear his voice bounce around the chamber and echo back to him.

"It was fun while it lasted," he said.

Until the late 1930s, when microphones were installed, a legislator would walk to the

well to deliver his speech. A permanent podium stood in the walkway for legislators to place their notes while delivering their speeches. The podium was later removed with the installation of the microphones.

The public announcement microphone system allowed legislators to stay at their desks. Pages would carry handheld microphones to legislators' desks and plug them in. The state had eight to 10 portable microphones.

Now, the microphone system is highly sophisticated. When a legislator picks up the microphone on the desk, it activates itself.

Because legislators use the microphones at their desks, it is truly a rare occasion when one speaks before the House in the well.

(C. VETTER)

Hospital pay bill vetoed

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill May 1 that would have exempted certain public hospital employees from state law that sets compensation limits on individuals employed by a city, town, county, or other local government agency.

The law says that a person employed by a political subdivision, excluding a school district, may not exceed 95 percent of the salary of the governor.

The bill would have provided an exemption for public hospital administrators, pharmacists, and psychologists to exclude them from having to comply with limitations on compensation.

In his veto message, Ventura said the exemption is not necessary because there is already an existing process for public employers to request exemptions on a case-by-case basis.

He continued by saying the Department of Employee Relations and the Legislative Coordinating Commission's Subcommittee on Employee Relations have responded positively to exemption requests that demonstrate that an employer is competing in a national or regional market and would have problems attracting or retaining employees if forced to follow statutory salary limits.

"The current exemption process works and should not be circumvented with broad exclusions in statute," Ventura wrote.

Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) and Sen. Mark Ourada (R-Buffalo) sponsored the vetoed bill.

Any override of attempt of the veto would have to begin in the Senate. An override requires a two-thirds majority in both houses — 90 votes in the House and 45 votes in the Senate.

The first time through, the House voted 74-52 and the Senate voted 34-27 in support of the measure.

HF3629/SF2385*/CH448

Complementary health care

The House gave final passage to a bill May 1 that would allow the Department of Health to oversee complementary and alternative health care practices and would make policy changes to statutes that govern the department's regulation of other health occupations. The vote was 110-23.

Sponsored by Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), the bill (HF3839*/SF2474) would establish an office, housed at the Department of Health, for unlicensed complementary and alternative health care.

The office would investigate complaints

against alternative health care practitioners and serve as a clearinghouse for information on such practices.

The language in the bill that would enable the department to oversee complementary and alternative health care practices was added to the measure in conference committee.

As a result, the proposal drew some criticism from House members during floor debate of the conference committee report.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe), a physician, urged members to vote the bill down because of the provisions providing for regulation of complementary and alternative health care.

He said there is some fear in the medical community that patients may opt for one or more unproven alternative treatments instead of conventional medicine for life-threatening illnesses.

"By passing this bill, we're going to recognize all these procedures that have not been based on scientific fact," Mulder warned.

Goodno, however, disagreed.

"The bill provides for consumer protection and does not encourage the use of procedures unproven in the medical community," he said.

Mulder also said many doctors are already using alternative methods to complement traditional medicine.

Less controversial parts of the bill would make changes to the regulation of both speech-language pathologists and audiologists, unlicensed mental health practitioners, and alcohol and drug counselors.

Goodno's bill also would alter the Administrative Simplification Act by requiring uniform procedures, both for offering medical advice and for explaining health care benefits. The act, originally passed in 1994, was intended to reduce certain health care costs through simplifying administrative processes and electronic data exchange.

The bill now heads to the Senate.

Similar language pertaining to complementary health care exists as part of the omnibus state government spending bill (HF2699), currently in conference committee.

Abortion amendment approved

During May 1 debate on a bill related to runaways and homeless youth, the House passed an amendment that would prohibit state funding for organizations that provide abortion information, counseling, or services.

The amendment was attached to a bill that would rearrange existing law related to runaways and homeless youth and put the Department of Human Services in charge of a comprehensive program to aid such youths. The bill passed 92-40.

With the amendment attached, the measure would dictate that "any entity that is an organization or affiliate of an organization which provides abortions, promotes abortions, or directly refers for abortions shall not be eligible to receive state funds under this chapter."

Rep. Kathy Tinglestad (R-Andover) is sponsoring the bill (HF2622/SF2865*). The bill provides clarified definitions and other technical changes, and it does not include any funding measures, Tinglestad said.

Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) offered the successful amendment that would bar organizations that promote or provide abortions from obtaining state money. The amendment passed 77-55.

Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins) spoke against the amendment, saying it would effectively kill the entire bill. Folliard said Gov. Jesse Ventura would likely veto the bill if the funding restriction remains.

Earlier this session, Ventura vetoed a bill, dubbed the "Woman's Right to Know," which called for a 24-hour waiting period for abortions and would have required women be given information about the procedure at least 24 hours before it could be performed.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) spoke against the Wenzel amendment, saying he worried women and children would suffer because other services not related directly to abortion would be inhibited by the amendment. Skoglund agreed with Folliard, saying the governor would likely strike the entire bill down.

However, Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) urged legislators to vote with their convictions rather than weighing whether a measure would be signed.

Tinglestad acknowledged that she did not want the amendment attached to her bill.

The bill is intended to establish a comprehensive program in the Department of Human Services to deal with already homeless youth, youth at-risk of homelessness, and runaways.

★ **LOCAL GOVERNMENT****Resolving boundary adjustments**

A law that would clarify the process for resolving disputes over municipal boundary adjustments was signed April 26 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Those adjustments, such as consolidations or annexations of towns or cities, used to be resolved by the Minnesota Municipal Board.

The board was abolished in 1999. The Legislature had set Dec. 31, 1999, as the date for the board to expire, but all of the board

members resigned by June 1999, which left some of the adjustments unresolved.

At that time, the board's duties were set to be transferred to Minnesota Planning, a state agency that acts as a long-range planning arm of the governor's administration.

The new law, effective April 27, 2000, clarifies the dispute resolution process that may be used, and it authorizes the director of Minnesota Planning to delegate such disputes to the Office of Administrative Hearings. The parties involved in the dispute will share the associated costs of the resolution process.

Some provisions of the new law are retroactive to June 1, 1999, to address the disputes that were unresolved by the municipal board.

The law also requires Minnesota Planning to send a report to the House and Senate committees on local government and metropolitan affairs during the 2001 Legislative Session, regarding the effects of the transfer of duties.

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland) and Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) were the sponsors of the measure.

HF3586/SF2951*/CH446

★ TRANSPORTATION

Fight over exam stations

The House rejected a transportation house-keeping bill May 4 because it did not include a provision to keep several small-town driver examination stations open.

The House sent the bill back to conference committee on a 109-23 vote.

Sponsored by Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris), the bill (HF3319/SF3160*) would make technical changes to a pilot program on ignition devices that automatically refuse to allow drivers to operate vehicles if they are drunk.

An amendment by Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls) was previously included in the bill with the intent of keeping open 22 rural driver examination stations that were scheduled to close May 1, 2000. The measure would have required the Department of Public Safety to keep the stations open until July 1, 2001.

However, Kubly's amendment was dropped in conference committee, which drew criticism from several rural legislators. Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria) called for the House to send the measure back to conference committee, saying the department should have held

hearings about closing the stations, rather than simply informing towns they would be closed.

"It is appropriate to talk to the people affected," Cassell said.

Other rural legislators agreed the stations should be open beyond their new closing date, slated for Aug. 1, 2000.

"It is very important to keep these driving stations open," said Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe). "If it was a good idea (to close them), they should have brought it to the Legislature."

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) agreed, saying it would hurt small towns across the state.

"It's a fairness issue for rural Minnesota," Juhnke said.

Managing rail project

Under the state's plan for managing the Hiawatha Corridor light-rail transit project, the Metropolitan Council now has primary authority over other state agencies, which some House members say is a violation of state law.

The House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee voted May 1 to request a written opinion on the issue from the state's attorney general.

One million hits

Legislature's Web site reaches milestone by receiving more than 1 million requests for information in one week

Many years ago, information about what was going on at the State Capitol relied heavily on the spoken word. Often constituents found out the news by talking to their neighbors.

Even the way business was conducted by the Legislature was wholly different. Because some legislators were illiterate, the entire text of bills had to be read on the House and Senate floor.

Now, with the click of a mouse button, information appears on a computer screen faster than the revolution of a horse buggy wheel.

In 1993, the Minnesota House of Representatives established its first Internet presence. That year the House developed resources on Gopher, which was a precursor to the World Wide Web allowing users to search for and retrieve materials from other sites. It was the first legislative information to be found on the Internet.

The House made available the text of bills and statutes, and other information about the Legislature. There was an average of 23,946 requests for information or "hits" to

the Gopher server per week. It took about 10 months to reach 1 million hits.

In 1996, the Legislature's World Wide Web site went online. And last year, the site had logged more than 1 million hits during the first four weeks of January.

This year, the House's Web site reached a milestone. For the week of March 26, the House's site received more than 1 million requests for information in a single week — for the first time ever.

There have been more than 46 million total requests for information since the Legislature established its Internet presence. According to the staff of the Legislative Reference Library, an estimated 30 percent to 40 percent of the hits to the Web site come from the outside public. Other major users are legislative staff and staff from state agencies.



1,000,000!

The use of information provided via the Internet is expanding rapidly. According to the Computer Industry Almanac, the United States had more than 110 million users by the end of 1999, a 62 percent increase from the previous year.

As the use of the Legislative Web site (www.leg.state.mn.us) increases, so does the effort to provide more and more information. In addition to viewing the text of bills and statutes, users can now find out the authors and status of bills, view committee schedules along with the calendar for the day, and follow floor activity via the official Journal.

Publications, such as *Session Weekly* and its online companion *Session Daily*, are also available online, as well as links to over 2,000 other pertinent Web sites.

Live video of floor sessions was also made available for the first time this year.

An interim committee of legislative staff will examine ways to enhance and revamp the online information to make the Web site even more useful.

(D. MAEDA)

Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview) proposed the measure, saying state law gives the authority for the management of the Hiawatha project to the Department of Transportation — not the Met Council. The Federal Transit Authority recently approved the state's management structure, which was necessary to allow the federal government to provide funds for the project.

Several committee members objected to Krinkie's proposal to formally ask for the attorney general's opinion.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said the committee should not act on the issue because it had not been publicized on the meeting agenda. And Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) said Attorney General Mike Hatch had not been notified and was not at the meeting to give his input on the issue.

An attempt to adjourn the meeting before the committee could vote on the matter failed.

Krinkie said the request is appropriate because the governmental operations committee has jurisdiction over the power and structure of state government. Also, state law allows any committee in either the House or Senate, or a Legislative commission, to make such a request for the attorney general's opinion.

Krinkie said he had already asked Hatch about the issue in an April 13 letter. In that letter, Krinkie asked Hatch to investigate possible violations of state law related to the state's management plan.

Also, Krinkie wrote that the Met Council has not completely responded to requests for information under the state's data practices laws. Krinkie wrote that withholding information in that situation could be considered an attempt to influence the vote of a legislator by concealing facts, which is punishable by a maximum of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Hatch responded in an April 14 letter that his office does not have jurisdiction over those questions and that he forwarded copies of Krinkie's letter to the Ramsey County attorney, the state auditor, and to the legislative auditor.

The committee's May 1 vote specifically requests that the attorney general issue a formal opinion about whether the Hiawatha management plan conforms with state law and legislative intent for the design and construction of the project.

Passenger rail compact passes

The House passed a bill May 4 that would allow the state to join a compact of Midwestern states intended to improve passenger rail lines. The vote was 128-2.

The Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail

DAY OF PRAYER



Several participants in the May 4 National Day of Prayer gather in front of the Capitol to celebrate the 50th annual event. The rally included music and speakers representing many denominations.

Compact commission will take effect when it is signed into law by any three states in the Midwest. Currently, only Indiana has signed the compact.

More than three states can be involved in the compact, however.

The compact is designed to promote, coordinate and support regional improvements to passenger rail lines, said Laura Kliewer, senior policy analyst for the Council of State Governments, located in Chicago.

"It's an effort among Midwest states to bring improved passenger rail to the Midwest," she explained. "They would have the authority to say, 'It is important to all Midwestern states.'"

States in the commission could lobby on the federal, state, and local level for support on projects.

The Midwest, as defined by the Council of State Governments, stretches as far east as Ohio, south to Missouri, and as far west as Nebraska and South Dakota.

Because the bill calls for a compact, each state must pass an identical version, Kliewer said.

The commission would include one legislator from each body (or two total from a unicameral state) and two appointments of each governor, for a total of four members per state. The commission could meet in person or conduct business through conference calls, Kliewer said.

Legislatures in Missouri, Ohio, and Michigan are still working on the compact this year, Kliewer said.

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska) is sponsoring the bill (HF3688/SF2956*). Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester) is the Senate sponsor.

The bill now goes to the governor.

★ VETERANS

Helping Hmong veterans

The House indicated support for a federal bill pending in the U.S. Senate that would make it easier for Hmong people who fought for the United States in the Vietnam War to become U.S. citizens.

The resolution (HF2216), sponsored by Rep. Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul), urges Congress to pass and the President to sign the bill, known as the Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 1999. Trimble's measure passed in the House May 4. The vote was 129-0. It now goes to the Senate.

Trimble said the resolution would honor the 25,000 Hmong veterans and their widows who live in Minnesota.

The federal bill would allow the veterans to take the naturalization tests in their native language. It says that many of them did not have the opportunity for education in their homelands, as well.

According to the House resolution, Hmong and Lao guerilla units fought along with U.S. clandestine and armed forces during the war, and more than 35,000 soldiers were killed.

During the war, the White House National Security Council, in joint cooperation with the U.S. Department of Defense and the Central Intelligence Agency, relied upon Hmong and Lao units and air units in Laos for ultra-sensitive intelligence gathering programs. They fought in the U.S. Secret Army with Air America.

At the time, government officials promised they would not be abandoned if they helped in the fight. Many of the soldiers and their families faced retaliation for being involved in the covert operations, according to the resolution.

Off the mat

Once down for the count, a unicameral proposal staggers to its feet, thanks to a House committee

BY JON FURE

A proposal to switch to a one-chamber, or unicameral, legislature has been revived, and it is one step closer to receiving a vote on the House floor.

The House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee voted May 1 to send the bill (HF4147), sponsored by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), to the House Rules Committee. The vote was 13-10.

Whether the bill will move ahead and come up for a vote on the House floor remained uncertain.

Under the bill, a question would be placed on the 2000 general election ballot asking voters, "Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to provide that the Minnesota House of Representatives and Senate be replaced by

Senate districts, each of which is divided to make 134 House districts.

The proposed terms would be four years, and they would be staggered — half of the members' terms would expire every two years.

If the voters were to approve the constitutional amendment, the people who take office in 2001 would have the task of re-



Members of the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee approved a unicameral proposal sponsored by House Speaker Steve Sviggum on May 1.

a single legislative body called the Legislature, beginning in 2003?"

If that question makes it onto the ballot, and if a majority of voters were to support the measure, the one-house legislature would consist of 135 districts. Currently there are 67

drawing district boundaries and establishing specific rules for those who would later be elected to the unicameral legislature in 2003.

Earlier in the session, a similar bill (HF159) had been sent to the House State Government Finance Committee, where it failed on a 5-5

vote. Before that, the proposal had received many hearings during the interim throughout the state, as well as several committee meetings during the session.

Some committee members denounced the unusual amount of attention that the committee has given the proposal, which is a top priority for Gov. Jesse Ventura and is strongly supported by the speaker.

"I think this is an abuse of power," said Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal).

Normally, a bill that has failed in a committee would not be heard again until the next Legislative session, he added.

Others objected to the fact that the Legislature is still in session, considering that House leadership had set a goal to adjourn by Easter.

Sviggum responded by saying, "I will take part of the blame for you being here on May 1. We're arguing for tax cuts for moms and dads."

He also explained that he wanted to revive the bill as a courtesy to the governor.

Two weeks ago, Sviggum had said the unicameral proposal was dead. But Ventura recently re-emphasized his desire to put the question before voters.

"I think it's appropriate to give Gov. Ventura — and this is his marquee issue — one more chance," Sviggum said.

This move comes after Ventura invited House Republican members to the governor's residence for breakfast April 25 so he could pitch his unicameral proposal one last time.

Sviggum cited a recent poll where 82 percent of Minnesotans said they would like to vote on the issue.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said that conclusion is not surprising.

"That question is posed in a way that everyone answers 'yes,'" she said. She added that people would also like to vote on cuts or increases in taxes, funding for stadiums or theaters, or any sort of spending items.

But Sviggum said the inherent self-interest of the legislators on the unicameral issue does not carry over to those other issues.

Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park), chair of the committee, said he also supports putting the question on the ballot.

"We take a lot of votes that affect the people of the state, and this would be a chance for them to take a vote that affects us," he said.

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Laws on lobbying

Concerns about public perceptions prompted first efforts to register and monitor lobbyists

By MICHELLE KIBIGER

Lobbyists have promoted issues and viewpoints in the halls of the Capitol both formally and informally for as long as can be remembered, but it's only in recent history that the Legislature has regulated their activity.

Laws governing registration and disclosure of lobbying activities were passed during the 1974 legislative session — nearly 20 years after initial recommendations for such laws.

Many of those initial provisions are still in effect, while new ones have been added over the years. Still, perceptions about back-room deals and wining and dining of legislators still color public opinion.

Back in the late 1950s, when lobbyists were routinely wining and dining legislators, there was no clear trail to the interests lobbyists were representing, and the public had no way to

address those concerns without creating a cumbersome bureaucracy for lobbyists. But some lawmakers felt strongly that lobbyists were expressing important views and that right should not be inhibited in any way.

Gov. Orville Freeman decided an impartial group should evaluate the situation and determine whether a formal state law governing lobbyists was necessary. In 1958, Freeman appointed a 12-member commission that studied the issue for 18 months, without pay.

In his speech when he appointed the Committee on Ethics in Government, Freeman said that lobbying is an important function, providing important points of view. He challenged the panel to determine whether federal laws regulating lobbyists and such measures enacted in other states were effective and should be implemented in Minnesota.

“Governmental processes today involve weighing the arguments on one side in balance with the arguments on the other, and lobbies fill a useful and necessary function in presenting such arguments,” Freeman said. “But there exist serious problems relating to lobbying. . . . And it may even conceal its existence by failing to openly state what and whom it represents.”

The committee, led by Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut of St. Paul, determined that lobbyists should register and should be required to report who they represent and how much money they spend — both during the session and during campaigns.

Specifically, the committee found it was perfectly acceptable for legislators to support a party platform or otherwise work to promote the interests of schools, taxpayers, business, or other legitimate groups. However, perceived behind-the-scenes decision-making that was pervasive at the time was not acceptable.

“It is one thing to pledge publicly to support an already formulated and published platform of a group, and quite another to barter away secretly in advance his independence of decision on public issues that may come before him for action,” the committee wrote in its report.

“The question is not whether in fact a legislator or public official . . . has actually voted or acted differently from what he would have done without having so compromised himself. The real question is whether he has not put himself in a position where public doubts may arise as to his loyalty to the public service and even as to his integrity and the integrity of others in the public service.”

In 1959, the Senate passed a rule that required lobbyists to register with the secretary of the Senate. An early tally of registered “lobbyists” was 31, including one House member and 12 staff members at the University of Minnesota.

Several attempts to require a similar process — where lobbyists would register with the chief clerk in the House — failed.

In fact, from 1957 to 1971, the years preceding the enactment of legislation to regulate lobbyists, more than 20 bills were introduced in the House alone to require registration and disclosure of expenditures.

Four times the House passed such a bill, but the Senate did not take up the matter.

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About 1,300 lobbyists are registered in the state of Minnesota. They are a permanent fixture outside the House chamber during each session.

determine just how much money lobbyists were spending to perform their duties.

At the time, the citizens were expressing a growing level of distrust for the lawmaking processes.

Early on, the Legislature attempted to

Freeman was concerned that lobbyists were using persuasive methods, rather than merely presenting their points of view. Furthermore, he questioned the lengths to which lobbying groups would go to make sure legislation turned out in their favor.

Remembering Vietnam

Twenty-five years after fall of Saigon, Legislators reflect on their experiences during the Vietnam War and its impact on their lives



A visitor discovers the name of a loved one at the Vietnam memorial on the grounds of the Minnesota Capitol.

By MIKE DE LARCO

The 25th anniversary of the fall of Saigon and the end of the Vietnam War marked a time for Minnesota legislators with close ties to the fighting to reflect on the war and the ramifications.

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) was a school teacher when he was drafted by the U.S. Army in 1969. While Biernat did not see action overseas, he worked with personnel who fought while he was stationed at Fort Benning in Georgia, and experienced the bitter reaction that many Vietnam veterans received after the war was over.

“It was quite hurtful to see how poorly many who had served their country in the war were treated upon their return home,” Biernat said.

As the history books say, the goal of U.S. involvement in Vietnam was containing the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. The U.S. government attempted to accomplish this task by supporting the anti-communist regime known as the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam) in its battle against a communist take-over.

But the United States’ involvement in the war continues to be a hotly debated topic.

Some question whether the problems in Southeast Asia were military in nature, or if our country’s involvement had more to do with political and economic gain.

Biernat recalls watching the vicious fighting on television at night, he said. During the war, South Vietnam not only had to contend with the military power of its communist neighbor, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam), but also faced a communist-led revolutionary movement within its own borders.

On April 29, 1975, the city of Saigon fell to the communists, essentially marking the end of the conflict. North Vietnamese military units were successful in bringing the fighting to a close, but insurgency among the people of South Vietnam is said to have allowed that outcome to occur.

Troop support at home during the war was low. Biernat said he hopes that in the future, the United States has strong support for a cause before the government commits troops to engage in combat.

Rep. Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul) agreed with Biernat. Her husband, Doug, served at a radio communications post for the Marines in the village of Dien Ban for several years, beginning in the late 1960s.

“I’ve always viewed war veterans as people who take their patriotism very seriously,” McCollum said. “It’s a shame the servicemen in the Vietnam War didn’t receive the support they rightly deserved.”

McCollum said she and her husband met shortly after his return from the war. She remembers some people expressing disapproval over the fact she was dating a Vietnam veteran early in their courtship.

Twenty-five years after their marriage, McCollum and husband Doug are discussing a trip to Vietnam.

“Doug would like to go back, and I’m interested in joining him,” she said.

As the anniversary of the war’s end came and passed, thoughts centered on soldiers who have yet to be accounted for.

Officials estimate 2,000 U.S. servicemen remain unaccounted for in Indochina, including 1,500 in Vietnam. The process of locating the servicemen or finding out what happened to them has been slow and often frustrating for families and officials in the United States.

McCollum has worn a Vietnam POW/MIA bracelet around her wrist since 1969.

Earlier this month, Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a resolution calling for the president and Congress to take whatever action is necessary to obtain the release of Americans who may be still being held against their will in North Korea, China, Russia, and Vietnam. The resolution was sponsored by McCollum and Sen. Charles W. Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul).



Jailhouse confessions

Former legislator and sheriff tells tales of his life as a rural law enforcement officer and jailer in a new book

BY JON FURE



Neil and Helen Haugerud

When Neil Haugerud became the sheriff of Fillmore County in 1958, he and his family moved into a two-story brick building that included jail space both upstairs and down, along with office space, a kitchen, and living areas.

Unlike modern county facilities, where jailers sometimes sit behind bulletproof glass and have doors with electronic locks and other high-tech features, Haugerud and his “guests” at the jail got to be pretty close.

In a recently published book, Haugerud, who served in the House from 1968 to 1977, describes some of his adventures as a sheriff in rural Minnesota in the 1950s and 1960s.

Haugerud said he has told many of the stories in conversations with friends, and he began taking writing classes in 1994. He received a lot of positive feedback from his classmates, and he wrote a column in the *Fillmore County Journal*, a local weekly newspaper, called *Jailhouse Stories*.

The book carries the same title, and it features short stories about the people he met while working as the main law enforcement officer in the county, which is in southeastern Minnesota.

He served the same district currently represented by Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston).

The building that the Haugeruds called home contained jail space on both levels. Both featured heavy steel bars with four separate cells, each with two bunks — a total 16 beds in eight cells.

“We were one of the last sheriff families that served in an era when the family residence, the sheriff’s office, and the jail were all in one building,” he writes. “In many ways we became a family. It is out of respect for these characters that I write.”

His wife, Helen, cooked meals for the inmates, responded to calls on the two-way radio, and

helped out with other office duties. Many of the stories reveal how the prisoners of the jail benefited from that family-like atmosphere.

In one of the stories, Haugerud writes about a recent conversation with a man who had spent time in his jail and later the state prison at Stillwater. Haugerud had called the man, and found that he had stayed out of trouble after serving his time. He wrote a letter for the book, which reads in part:

“I later realized the importance of where it starts. The way you are treated in jail before you are sentenced. I thank you and your deputies for the way you treated me. Also your wife for all the good food, especially on Thanksgiving and Christmas.”

Other stories reflect Haugerud’s tendency to defuse, rather than escalate, conflicts.

In one situation, Haugerud had been criticized for not putting in jail two participants in a bar fight. But his response was, “I told them a sheriff’s job wasn’t to punish, but to keep the peace. I said it was a lot easier to stop fights if you had a reputation for being considerate.”

In another, about 400 members of the National Farm Organization planned to stop a weekly auction to protest low commodity prices, and threats of violence had been rumored. Haugerud went to the event armed not with a gun, but with a friend who had an 8 mm camera. The sale took place without any major incidents.

He later learned that a similar protest occurred in Wisconsin, where two of the organization’s members were run over by a truck and killed.

Many of the people who spent time in the Fillmore County Jail had been taken in for public intoxication, while others had committed more serious crimes, such as burglaries, thefts, or domestic abuse. Haugerud describes the various people he met and the things he learned about dealing with people in those situations.

“When you can personalize it and bring the characters out, that’s what makes it interesting,” he said.

In the book’s final chapter, Haugerud writes about his own recent brush with law enforcement officers. He was arrested in Iowa by some over-zealous officers in 1996. He had been walking home after attending an evening class, and he had stopped for dinner at a local sports bar. He saw two officers harassing another man, and when one officer told Haugerud to get moving, he replied “I think I’ll just watch.”

He was arrested for public intoxication, and he spent the night in jail. He describes the many differences in how he was treated compared to how he had treated the people he had taken into custody. The next day, he appeared



The Fillmore County Jail, which has now been converted to a bed and breakfast, used to serve as the office and home for the county sheriff. Photo courtesy of Neil Haugerud.

in court and was found not to have violated the law in any way.

Haugerud’s experiences as a sheriff had influenced him to run for the House. Among his main goals were probate reform and other reforms of the judicial system.

In those days, anyone who received an

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Minnesota State Government

State Departments*

Administration

200 Administration Building
50 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul 55155 296-6013
David Fisher - Commissioner 296-1424

Agriculture

Agriculture Building
90 W. Plato Blvd., St. Paul 55107 297-2200
Gene Hugoson - Commissioner 297-3219

Children, Families & Learning

1500 Highway 36 W., Roseville 55113 582-8200
Christine Jax - Commissioner 582-8204

Commerce

133 E. Seventh St., St. Paul 55101 296-4026
Jim Bernstein - Commissioner 296-6694

Corrections

Suite 200
1450 Energy Park Drive, St. Paul 55108 642-0200
Sheryl Ramstad Hvass - Commissioner 642-0282

Economic Security

390 N. Robert St., St. Paul 55101 296-3644
Earl Wilson - Commissioner 296-3711

Employee Relations

Second Floor, Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St., St. Paul 55155 297-1184
Julien C. Carter - Commissioner 296-3095

Finance

400 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St., St. Paul 55155 296-5900
Pam Wheelock - Commissioner 297-7881

Health

The Golden Rule Building, Suite 400
85 Seventh Place E., St. Paul 55101 215-5800
Jan Malcolm - Commissioner 296-8401

Housing Finance Agency

400 Sibley, Suite 300, St. Paul 55101 296-7608
Katherine G. Hadley - Commissioner 296-5738

Human Rights

Suite 700
Army Corps of Engineers Center
190 E. Fifth St., St. Paul 55101 296-5663
Janeen Rosas - Commissioner 296-5665

Human Services

Human Services Building
444 Lafayette Road, St. Paul 55155-3815 296-6117
Michael O'Keefe - Commissioner 296-2701

Labor & Industry

443 Lafayette Road, St. Paul 55155 296-6107
Gretchen Maglich - Commissioner 296-2342

Military Affairs

Fourth Floor, Veterans Service Building
20 W. 12th St., St. Paul 55155-2098 282-4662
Maj. Gen. Eugene R. Andreotti - Adjutant General 282-4666

Minnesota Planning

Third Floor, Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St., St. Paul 55155 296-3985
Dean Barkley - Director 297-2325

Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul 55155-4001 296-6157
Allen Garber - Commissioner 296-2549

Pollution Control Agency

520 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul 55155 296-6300
Karen Studders - Commissioner, Board Chair 296-7301

Public Safety

North Central Life Tower
445 Minnesota St., Suite 1000, St. Paul 55101 296-6642
Charlie Weaver - Commissioner 296-6642

Revenue

600 N. Robert St., St. Paul 55146 296-3781
Matt Smith - Commissioner 296-3403

Trade & Economic Development

500 Metro Square
121 Seventh Place E., St. Paul 55101-2146 297-1291
Gerald Carlson - Commissioner 296-6424
1-800-657-3858

Transportation

395 John Ireland Blvd., St. Paul 55155 296-3000
Elwyn Tinklenberg - Commissioner 296-3000

Veterans Affairs

Second Floor, Veterans Service Building
20 W. 12th St., St. Paul 55155 296-2562
Bernie Melter - Commissioner 296-2783

* and other major agencies
Area code 651 except where otherwise noted.

Boards & Agencies

Board of Pardons

Suite 200
1450 Energy Park Drive, St. Paul 55108-5219 642-0284
Jean Whitney - Secretary 642-0284

Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board

First Floor, Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St., St. Paul 55155 296-5148
Jeanne Olson - Executive Director 296-1721

Capitol Area Architectural & Planning Board

204 Administration Building
50 Sherburne Ave., St. Paul 55155 296-7138
Nancy Stark - Executive Secretary 296-1162

Higher Education Services Office (HESO)

Suite 350
1450 Energy Park Drive
St. Paul 55108-5227 642-0533/1-800-657-3866
Robert Poch - Director 642-0502

Iron Range Resources & Rehabilitation Board

P.O. Box 441, Eveleth 55734 (218) 744-7400
1-800-765-5043
John Swift - Commissioner

Law Library

Ground Floor Judicial Center
25 Constitution Ave., St. Paul 55155 296-2775
Marvin Roger Anderson - State Law Librarian 297-2084

Metropolitan Council

Mears Park Center
230 E. Fifth St., St. Paul 55101 602-1000
Ted Mondale - Chair 602-1554

Minnesota Historical Society

Minnesota History Center
345 Kellogg Blvd. W., St. Paul 55102-1906 296-6126
Nina M. Archabal - Director 296-2747

Minnesota State Colleges & Universities (MnSCU)

500 World Trade Center
30 E. Seventh St., St. Paul 55101 296-8012
Morrie Anderson - Chancellor 296-8012
Michael Vekich, St. Louis Park - Board Chair

Minnesota Tax Court

Minnesota Judicial Center
25 Constitution Ave., St. Paul 55155 296-2806
Diane Kroupa - Chief Judge

Minnesota Veterans Homes Board

122 Veterans Service Building
20 W. 12th St., St. Paul 55155 296-2073
Stephen O'Connor - Chair

Office of Environmental Assistance

520 Lafayette Road, Second Floor, St. Paul 55155 296-3417
Sherry Enzler - Director 215-0283

Public Utilities Commission

Metro Square Building, Suite 350
121 Seventh Place E., St. Paul 55101 296-7124
Burl Haar - Executive Secretary 296-7526
Gregory Scott - Chair

University of Minnesota

100 Church St. S.E.
202 Morrill Hall, Minneapolis 55455 (612) 625-5000
Mark Yudof - President (612) 626-1616
Patricia Spence, Rice - Board of Regents Chair

Workers' Compensation

Court of Appeals
Minnesota Judicial Center, Suite 405
25 Constitution Ave., St. Paul 55155 296-6526
Steven D. Wheeler - Chief Judge 297-1594

Area code 651 except where otherwise noted.

Constitutional Officers

Governor

Jesse Ventura
130 State Capitol
75 Constitution Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-3391

Lieutenant Governor

Mae Schunk
130 State Capitol
75 Constitution Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-3391

Attorney General

Mike Hatch
102 State Capitol
75 Constitution Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-6196

Secretary of State

Mary Kiffmeyer
180 State Office Building
100 Constitution Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-2803

State Auditor

Judith H. Dutcher
Suite 400
525 Park St.
St. Paul 55103 (651) 296-2551

State Treasurer

Carol Johnson
303 Administration Building
50 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-7091

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Informing the public about the issue was also a concern of some committee members.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) said the same poll that Sviggum referred to found that only 24 percent of the people felt that they had enough information to make an informed decision on the issue.

But the committee voted against an amendment that would have required the Office of the Secretary of State, along with the Office of the Attorney General, to prepare a voters guide that would explain the common arguments for and against the proposal.

That amendment had been added to the bill that had failed to advance out of the State Government Finance Committee.

"It is critical that if we put this on the ballot that voters be informed," said Rep. Mark Gleason (DFL-Mpls).

Kahn also stressed the importance of an impartial voters guide, especially due to a pamphlet that has been distributed by the governor's office and Minnesota Planning. According to the agency's Web site, its mission is to "provide policy-makers and the public with accurate information and analysis about emerging and critical issues, influence policy decisions for a better future through long-range planning and keep Minnesotans focused on the future."

Critics point out the pamphlet does not contain any of the arguments against a unicameral legislature.

The bill now heads to the House Rules Committee. When a bill is introduced and considered this late in the legislative session, the Rules Committee must determine whether it can bypass the normal committee process and deadlines and go straight to the floor for a vote. 🐾

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inheritance had to get an attorney and go through the probate process, he said. The attorney could immediately collect a percentage of the estate, while the heirs had to wait indefinitely for their share of the estate. Meanwhile, the money would sit in an account without drawing interest.

Haugerud talked to a judge about such an incident, and the judge said there was nothing he could do about it.

So when Haugerud began his career in the Legislature, he introduced several bills that sought to change state law related to estates and other judicial issues.

But he said his bills did not receive hear-

ings in the Judiciary Committee, a committee that entirely consisted of attorneys back then.

So Haugerud spoke to then-Speaker Martin Sabo, a DFLer from Minneapolis, and the two were instrumental in adding a new House rule regarding committee membership. That rule states that "a committee of the House must not have exclusive membership from one profession, occupation, or vocation."

He also accomplished some of his goals by attaching an amendment to a related bill. His amendment was to eliminate the attorneys' ability to collect their fee before resolving an estate.

He later served as chairman of the State Appropriations Committee, which at that time set the budgets for 41 state agencies. The committees were organized differently back then, so the departments under that committee's purview included the Highway Department, the State Supreme Court, and other agencies that are now under separate committees.

Haugerud also was instrumental in converting abandoned railroad tracks into recreational trails, which he said was controversial at the time. Farmers had wanted to buy that land, and Haugerud said he nearly lost an election due to the unpopularity of converting it to trails.

But now recreational trails such as those in the Fillmore County area, also known as bluff country, are becoming increasingly popular.

Haugerud said he plans to write another book in the same vein about the characters he met while working in the Legislature.

Jailhouse Stories was published by the Uni-

versity of Minnesota Press and is available in bookstores, or on the Internet (www.jailhousestories.com). 🐾

Continued from page 11

In Freeman's third inaugural address in 1959, he implored legislators to heed the words of the committee and pass some legislation to heal some of the rifts in the public trust.

"As elected representatives of a free people, we assume the responsibility of expressing, in our attitudes and our actions, the highest ethical aspirations of the people of our state," Freeman said. "The search for personal advantage or private gain has no place in our public service."

In 1971, a special committee on ethics to the House of Representatives noted in its report that there were no laws governing ethics. The committee noted that there should be such laws accompanied by a unit of state government to keep track of the information and field complaints of any kind.

That plan came to fruition in 1974 when the Legislature adopted the Ethics in Government Act. The act established the Ethical Practices Board, now the Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board, to govern lobbying and campaigning.

In addition, the act established reporting and registration requirements for lobbyists, as well as campaign staff.

The board estimates there are currently 1,300 registered lobbyists in the state. 🐾

UP IN THE ATMOSPHERE . . .



House employees Dick Newcomb, right, and Laurel Waldoch spend their lunch break flying a Gomberg Classic bi-plane stunt kite on the Capitol lawn April 28.

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill has passed both the House and Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor, who has several options when considering a bill, can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill;
- or do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium (even-numbered years), a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (Latin for adjournment "without a date certain"). If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes (save pocket vetoes) the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills

passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history—at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

This information is also available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "Legislative Initiatives" link, then click on "Legislative Log 2000."

Key:
CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
Res. 4	4060	2348*	Resolution for release of Americans held in North Korea, China, Russia and Vietnam.	4/3/00	
251	2980	2763*	Fishing season modified.	2/16/00	
252	2634	2411*	Northern Itasca hospital board membership requirements modified.	3/1/00	
253	2521	2320*	Lake Edwards township name change.	3/1/00	
254	76	86*	K-12 education technical changes provided.	3/7/00	
255	2067*	2071	Juvenile offenders modifications.	3/7/00	
256	2722*	2502	Kittson County town dissolution authority.	3/7/00	
257	2535*	2291	Shorewood authorized to elect city council members by wards.	3/13/00	
258	3039	2554*	Wadena County truth in taxation process advertisement requirement penalty exemption.	3/13/00	
259	3338*	2907	Scott County officials duties reorganized.	3/14/00	
260	2749*	2464	Revisor's bill.	3/14/00	
261	2642*	2552	Search firms surety bonding requirements modified.	3/14/00	
262	2774	2485*	Carisoprodol schedule IV controlled substance listing effective date delayed.	3/20/00	
263	2680	2465*	Political party treasurers authorized to sign political contribution refund receipt forms.	3/20/00	
264	3232	2692*	Business corporations and limited liability companies shareholder rights modified.	3/20/00	
265	2603	2346*	Permanently disabled hunters permit privileges modified.	3/20/00	
266	2723*	2528	McLeod County office authority extended.	3/23/00	
267	3236*	3236	Vital record certified copy issuance provisions modified.	3/23/00	
268	979*	2059	Landlords authorized to apportion utility payments among units.	3/23/00	
269	1865*	2094	Nursing mothers needs study by the Supreme Court Jury Reform Task Force required.	3/23/00	
270	2815*	2386	Hennepin County District Court fine proceeds distribution modified.	3/23/00	
271	3064	2776*	St. Louis County nursing home renovation approval deadline extended.	3/23/00	
272	3762	3355*	Port authority electronic funds disbursement authorized.	3/23/00	
273	2927*	2685	Metropolitan Inter-County Association group insurance protection authorized.	3/23/00	

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
274	3766*	3676	Pawnbrokers computerized records transmission format specified.	3/23/00	
275	2873*	2516	Anoka County department head time requirements clarified.	3/23/00	
276	3113*	3089	Pharmacies permitted an additional certified technician.	3/24/00	
277	118*	160	State agency commissioners acting service time limited.		3/24/00
278	2505*	2289	Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period.	3/24/00	
279	2502*	3207	C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway designated.	3/24/00	
280	2824*	2578	Collector motor vehicles license plate option.	3/24/00	
281	3156*	2709	I-35 designation as 34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division Highway.	3/24/00	
282	3132*	2890	Security deposit interest rates provided.	3/24/00	
283	2836*	2982	National Guard and organized militia membership eligibility clarified.	3/27/00	
284	3222*	3117	Health-related licensing boards reporting requirements modified.	3/27/00	
285	3332*	3120	Dairy research and promotion council alternative term expiration dates authorized.	3/27/00	
286	3433*	3292	St. Paul Port Authority recreational facilities and purposes authority modified.	3/27/00	
287	3475	2813*	State vehicle identification requirements modified.	3/27/00	
288	3142*	2844	Trunk Highway No. 4 designated as Richard J. Mathiowetz Memorial Highway.	3/28/00	
289	2687	2652*	Electric power generating plant siting act exemptions expanded.	3/28/00	
290	3016	2756*	Hospital districts annexation authority expanded.	3/28/00	
291	3003	3097*	Department of Corrections fugitive apprehension unit created.	3/28/00	
292	3421*	2779	Electric cooperatives' election to be regulated petition and balloting provisions modified.	3/28/00	
293	3053*	2508	Collector vehicles authorized to display a blue light as part of rear brakes.	3/28/00	
294	3196*	2978	Nursing facility employee pension benefit costs treated as PERA contributions.	3/28/00	
295	3375	3161*	Health care purchasing alliances modified.	3/28/00	
296	3188	3253*	Special transportation services medical assistance reimbursement study required.	3/28/00	
297	3281	2691*	State building energy code authority transferred to commissioner of administration.	3/28/00	
298	2909	2365*	Physician assistant supervisory requirement modified.	3/28/00	
299	3370	3330*	Department of Corrections housekeeping bill.	3/28/00	
300	3219	2903*	Omnibus gambling bill.	3/31/00	
301	1333	2193*	Wood sales contracts regulated.	3/31/00	
302	2785	2821*	Charitable organization annual report filing requirements modified.	3/31/00	
303	2883	2579*	Prescription drug discounts regulated.	3/31/00	
304	2675	2569*	Vicarious liability insurance coverage for punitive and exemplary damages authorized.	3/31/00	
305	3399	3145*	Minnetonka qualified newspaper designation priority variance.	3/31/00	
306	2588	2326*	Monarch designated as the state butterfly.	3/31/00	
307	3209*	2699	Health care cost containment major commitment expenditure report requirements modified.	4/3/00	
308	3352	3586*	Lighted fishing lures authorized.	4/3/00	
309	2719*	2436	Rental automobile insurance coverage regulated.	4/3/00	
310	2809*	2631	Ah-Gwah-Ching nursing center admissions criteria clarified.		4/3/00 ♦
311	2688*	2769	Omnibus crime prevention and judiciary finance bill.	4/3/00	
312	3226	2896*	Nursing home resident assistants authorized and survey process procedure developed.	4/3/00	
313	2994	2748*	Ambulance service and EMT requirements modified.	4/3/00	
314	3212	2734*	Home care and personal care provider transportation expense reimbursement studied.	4/3/00	
315	3048	2868*	New medical assistance case-mix system based on federal minimum data set transition timelines.	4/3/00	
316	3107	2634*	Civil commitment relative notification provided and minor voluntary treatment consent provisions modified.	4/3/00	
317	3306	3549*	Residential hospice program requirements modified.	4/3/00	
318	3023	2701*	Lawful gambling fraud defined and criminal penalties imposed.	4/3/00	
319	3365	2941*	Vulnerable adult neglect and medical error provisions modified.	4/3/00	
320	3220	2510*	Real property recording and redemption and common interest ownership provisions modified.	4/4/00	
321	3596	3369*	Special environmental purpose districts pilot projects.	4/4/00	

♦ veto overridden by Legislature

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
322	3310	3055*	Health plan contract stacking regulated and remedy provided.	4/4/00	
323	3290	2894*	Occupational safety and health discrimination complaint communications classified as privileged.	4/4/00	
324	3555	3283*	Snowmobile metal traction device sticker requirement civil enforcement provided.	4/4/00	
325	1590*	1952	Warrant authority of alcohol and gambling agents clarified.	4/4/00	
326	2819	2444*	Stearns County land conveyance authorized.	4/4/00	
327	3103	3005*	Human services licensing provisions modified.	4/4/00	
328	3152	2905*	Local government units purchase provisions modified.	4/4/00	
329	3169*	3167	Dakota County personnel board of appeals provisions modified.	4/4/00	
330	2670*	2566	Mental retardation community-based waived services modified.	4/4/00	
331	3868	3260*	Aquatic farm licensing requirements modified.	4/4/00	
332	4076	2653*	Internet state agency grant information required and uniform application developed.	4/4/00	
333	2940*	2735	Dry cleaner environmental response and reimbursement law modified.	4/4/00	
334	2936	2511*	Public and private property entry authorized for the purposes of examinations and surveys.	4/4/00	
335	3327	2676*	Local government authorization to petition to amend or repeal rules sunset modified.	4/6/00	
336	3571	2828*	Gambling regulated, specified activities prohibited, and shipment of gambling devices regulated.	4/6/00	
337	2559	2546*	Inland water sunken logs recovery and historical artifacts ownership provided.	4/6/00	
338	3342	3025*	Foster care providers medical equipment operation competency required.	4/6/00	
339	3134*	2857	Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission authority to enter specified state lands limited.	4/6/00	
340	3122*	2901	Medical Assistance, General Assistance, MinnesotaCare, and health care program provisions modified.	4/6/00	
341	3510*	3378	Taking two deer authorization extended in specified counties.	4/6/00	
342	2656*	3441	Auto glass repair and replacement regulated, and rebates and incentives limited.	4/6/00	
343	3806	3554*	Nonprofit organization re-employment compensation provisions modified.	4/6/00	
344	465	624*	Firefighter training and education board created.	4/6/00	
345	2803*	3119	Court reporters allowed to organize under the Public Employment Labor Relations Act.	4/10/00	
346	2969	2803*	Certified public accountant licensing requirements modified.	4/10/00	
347	3477	2499*	Speech language pathology and audiology services medical assistance clarified.	4/10/00	
348	2761	3379*	Omnibus tax-forfeited land bill.	4/10/00	
349	2643	2767*	Health plan companies and third party administrators clean health or home care services claims.	4/10/00	
350	2974	3203*	Insurance uniform accounting principles codification.	4/10/00	
351	2639	2397*	Employees bloodborne pathogens exposure reduction procedures.	4/10/00	
352	3584	3354*	Manufactured homes limited dealer license requirements clarified.	4/10/00	
353	3052	2850*	Itasca County medical assistance prepayment demonstration project participation extended.	4/10/00	
354	2751	3455*	Stolen or fraudulent checks provisions modifications.	4/10/00	
355	3347	2989*	Administrative law and workers' compensation judges conduct regulated.	4/10/00	
356	3795	3478*	Rochester firefighter probationary period rules modified.	4/10/00	
357	3119	2725*	Public defenders and court-appointed counsel minors juvenile court representation restriction.	4/10/00	
358	1267	1126*	Civil actions economic loss doctrine clarification.	4/11/00	
359	3457	2858*	Civilly committed sexual psychopaths or sexually dangerous persons transfer procedure.	4/11/00	
360	3202	2789*	Coroner compensation provisions clarified.	4/11/00	
361	947	1038*	Occupational therapist and assistant licensing requirements established.	4/11/00	
362	3208	2723*	Trust and probate provisions modified.	4/11/00	
363	3626	3428*	Psychologist supervisory and disciplinary requirements modified.	4/11/00	
364	3537	3198*	Nursing facilities closure plans and savings reallocation process established.	4/11/00	
365	3952	3533*	Claims against the state payments provided.	4/11/00	
366	3303	3566*	Criminal penalty for failure to remit motor vehicle sales taxes.	4/13/00	
367	3756	3423*	Holocaust victims insurance relief act established.	4/13/00	
368	3331*	2980	Prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault interagency task force created.	4/13/00	
369	1326*	1130	Community social services limited liability provided.	4/13/00	

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
370	3576*	3361	Solid waste and wastewater treatment facilities reporting requirements modified.	4/13/00	
371	3109*	3699	Uniform electronic transactions act adopted.	4/13/00	
372	3517	2742*	Expedited child support hearing notice to remove filing period modified.	4/13/00	
373	3613	3307*	Recreational vehicles personal injury claims.	4/13/00	
374	2807	2514*	Yellow perch limit rulemaking authority restricted.	4/13/00	
375	2613	2949*	Big Woods heritage forest established.	4/13/00	
376	3520	3290*	Environmental response and liability agreement grants provided.	4/13/00	
377	3950	3154*	Criminal and juvenile justice database access authorized for criminal defense purposes.	4/13/00	
378	2707	3348*	Organization sponsored potluck event requirements modified.	4/13/00	
379	3903	2987*	Cooperative income financing and distribution provisions modified.	4/13/00	
380	2822	2547*	Capitol area site selected for installation of Minnesota firefighters memorial.	4/13/00	
381	2888*	2573	Canoe and boating route marking authorized on a portion of the Chippewa River.	4/13/00	
382	1493	83*	Wetland regulation simplified and consolidated.	4/13/00	
383	262	76*	DWI motor vehicle forfeiture proceedings requirements modified.		4/13/00
384	3195	3701*	State designer selection board membership modified.	4/13/00	
385	3174	3195*	Dairy product adulteration penalties modified.	4/13/00	
386	3082	3150*	Higher education facilities authority bonding authority increased.	4/13/00	
387	2981	2848*	Public Employment Labor Relations Act supervisory or confidential employees list expanded.	4/13/00	
388	3566	3291*	Towed motor vehicles lien provisions clarified.		4/13/00
389	562	619*	Collection agencies regulated.	4/13/00	
390	3554	3138*	Veterans Affairs commissioner duties technical changes provided.	4/14/00	
391	3424	3346*	Electronic filing of real estate documents task force established.	4/14/00	
392	3597	2795*	State investments modified.	4/14/00	
393	3328	2877*	Iron Range off-highway vehicle recreation area addition in St. Louis County provided.	4/14/00	
394	3075	2655*	Insurance tax laws recodified.	4/14/00	
395	3066	2783*	Secretary of State fees and annual corporate registrations regulated.	4/14/00	
396	3260	2968*	Lake improvement district provisions modified.	4/14/00	
397	2229	884*	Reduced marriage license fee provided for couples who obtain premarital counseling.		4/14/00
398	3964	3626*	Comprehensive Health Association eligibility and coverage modified.	4/14/00	
399	1394	1495*	Uniform Commercial Code secured transactions provisions adopted.	4/14/00	
400	1662	1896*	Medical assistance programs and liens modified.	4/14/00	
401	3176	3410*	Neglect definition modified.	4/14/00	
402	3263	3082*	Duluth Human Rights Commission additional powers authorized.	4/14/00	
403	3519	2794*	Expedited child support process provisions modified.	4/14/00	
404	3318	3018*	Standby and alternate custodians of children designation provided.	4/14/00	
405	3577	3116*	Creditors' garnishments, executions, and levies regulated.	4/14/00	
406	304	173*	Possession of wild animals taken on the Red Lake Indian Reservation authorized.	4/14/00	
407	2570	3259*	Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.	4/13/00	
408	3512	3108*	Local and state correctional facility inmate telephone access regulated.	4/14/00	
409	2731*	2753	Motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors, and factory branches unfair practices regulated.	4/14/00	
410	2935	2363*	Dental benefit plans regulated.	4/14/00	
411	3825	3338*	Tribal police departments annual insurance cap established.	4/14/00	
412	3652	3387*	Abortion informed consent requirements modified.		4/14/00
413	1383	1231*	Optometrist licensing provisions modified.	4/14/00	
414	3633*	3550	Mighty Eighth Air Force Week designated.	4/14/00	
415	1947	1618*	Brewer and wholesaler judicial remedies modified.	4/17/00	
416	2791	2471*	Hennepin County Human Resources Board and department provisions modified.	4/17/00	
417	2846	3272*	Bleacher safety building code requirements modified.	4/17/00	

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
418	3234	3091*	Sales and use tax law recodified.	4/18/00	
419	1834	1699*	Electronic funds transfers and credit card payments to state agencies authorized.	4/18/00	
420	3495	2972*	State purchases open bidding authorized.	4/18/00	
421	2945	2615*	Persons leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms not prosecuted.	4/18/00	
422	1631	1202*	Protocol established for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens.	4/18/00	
423	2555	1733*	Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.	4/18/00	
424	3901*	3769	Housing finance agency community rehabilitation grants and loans authorized.	4/20/00	
425	3091	2484*	Motor vehicles required to be driven in the right-hand lane clarified.		4/20/00
426	2953	3023*	Vehicle registration and titling provisions modified.	4/20/00	
427	2973	2870*	Financial institution loan charges and payments regulated.	4/20/00	
428	2889	2683*	Bowfishing archery bows exempted from casing requirement.	4/20/00	
429	2671*	2567	Temporary census employee income excluded from public assistance eligibility determinations.	4/20/00	
430	2563*	2381	Mechanics' lien civil cause of action created.	4/20/00	
431	2830*	2771	Pimps and patrons of juvenile prostitution provided enhanced criminal penalties.	4/20/00	
432	3786	2456*	Wright County ditch conveyance to St. Michael and Albertville authorized.	4/24/00	
433	3274	2785*	Utility-owned vehicles exempted from specified weight restrictions.	4/24/00	
434	3292	2946*	Gasoline blended with the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether sale prohibited.	4/24/00	
435	3692*	3443	Feedlot permit provisions modified.	4/24/00	
436	2451*	2271	Legislative Electric Energy Task Force expiration date extended.	4/24/00	
437	1067	551*	Domestic abuse crime sentences and provisions modified.	4/24/00	
438	2713	2686*	Funeral acts and services regulated.	4/24/00	
439	3497*	3539	State of Minnesota attorney fees recovery regulated.	4/24/00	
440	3974	3581*	Omnibus liquor bill.	4/24/00	
441	2958	2830*	Crime of escape from custody expanded.	4/24/00	
442	2968	3139*	Veterans homes support test not to include sales tax rebates.	4/24/00	
443	2757*	2614	Biomass power mandate regulated.	4/24/00	
444	3311	3169*	Parenting plans provided, parenting time procedure clarified, and terminology modified.	4/27/00	
445	3550	3178*	Commissioner of public safety rule authority continued.	4/26/00	
446	3586	2951*	Alternative dispute resolution process use clarified.	4/26/00	
447	3960	3644*	Workers' compensation benefits increased.	4/27/00	
448	3629	2385*	Public hospital employees compensation limit exemption provided.		5/1/00
449	3020*	3199	Long-term care provisions modified.	5/1/00	
450	3047*	2944	Title insurance mortgage release certificate language modified.	5/1/00	

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

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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

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Toll free 1-888-234-1112

TTY, House 296-9896

Toll free 1-800-657-3550

Friday, April 28

HF4167—Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

State tax rate increases approval by voters through reverse referendum authorized, rescinded revenue increases refunded, money appropriated, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF4168—Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

Individual income tax limited.

HF4169—Tuma (R)

Health & Human Services Policy

Advising for abortions based on specified characteristics prohibited and criminal penalties imposed.

HF4170—Smith (R)

Health & Human Services Policy

Constitutional standard established relating to abortion and constitutional amendment proposed.

Monday, May 1

HF4171—Lenczewski (DFL)

Ways & Means

Public participation in the state budget process increased and public notification required.

Thursday, May 4

HF4172—Greiling (DFL)

Transportation Finance

Commuter rail line between Forest Lake and St. Paul constructed, and money appropriated.

HF4173—Dawkins (DFL)

Commerce

Computers under warranty repair, refund, or replacement by manufacturer required; and civil remedies provided.

HF4174—Orfield (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Unsterilized ballast water discharge prohibited and permit required.

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

MAY 8 - 12, 2000

MONDAY, May 8

No meetings have been announced.

TUESDAY, May 9

11 a.m.

The House meets in session.

WEDNESDAY, May 10

No meetings have been announced.

THURSDAY, May 11

No meetings have been announced.

FRIDAY, May 12

No meetings have been announced.

Reflections

If it were not for some well-known dignitaries' decisions during the early years of the nation's history and in the history of Minnesota's past, the state today would be a very different locale, guided by some unknown public policies.

Imagine! If Benjamin Franklin had not persisted in adopting the international border between Minnesota and Canada, most of the state, northern Wisconsin, and all of Lake Superior would have been lost to Great Britain.

Imagine that the nation's third president, Thomas Jefferson, was not a dreamer who followed his vision by defying critics of his Louisiana Purchase for future expansion of the country.

What if he had not sent the Lewis and Clark expedition into French territory, or approved a trek by Zebulon Pike to explore and set up a government fort at the con-junction of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers?

It is highly likely that Minnesota would not be the state it is today. It could have become a part of Missouri, based on a very exclusive wording to its original constitution.

Just imagine if Jefferson did not add to the Declaration of Independence, "that all men are created equal," and have the rights to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Would members of the Minnesota constitutional convention have written Article I, Sec. 2, that states "No member of this state shall be disenfranchised or deprived of any of the rights or privileges secured to any citizen thereof"?

What if the state's lawmakers in 1895 did not extend parameters for legislative policy by heeding the words of Gov. Cushman Davis that "The best constitution . . . is that one which, while it secures the essential and primary rights of the people [but] leaves

the greatest possible power to legislative action"?

And what if the 1899 Legislature ignored Gov. John Lind's unparalleled speech to lawmakers when he called for taxation reform, support for education, and his acknowledgment of society's acceptance of individuals suffering from social ills beyond their control?

Minnesota and its government are a direct outgrowth of national and regional visionaries. As the 81st Legislative Session comes to a close, Minnesota's 201 lawmakers have made some difficult decisions for the state's system of government by which to function. Likely, the compromises and conclusions they make are the correct ones for Minnesotans.

Imagine [that] all the people [are truly] living for today.

-LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

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Sources: *Crosstown Connections: Academic Plan for the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area*, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, November 1999; *Fiscal Year 2000 Budget Update*, MnSCU, April 2000; MnSCU Web site (www.mnscu.edu); University of Minnesota Web site (www.umn.edu).

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SESSION

Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

MAY 12, 2000
VOLUME 17, NUMBER 15



In this issue:

MAJOR BILLS PASSED

MARATHON SESSION AS END NEARS

HF4175-HF4177

SESSION Weekly

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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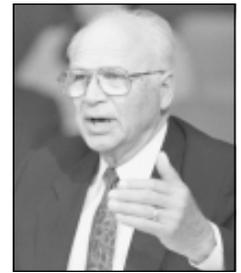
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On the cover: Rep. Barb Sykora rests her head in her hands while listening to weary legislators continue to debate as the sun rises early May 10, as seen through a window on the east side of the House chamber.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Ready to break ground

House and Senate members settle on bonding priorities to split the difference between original proposals emerging from the bodies

By JON FURE

The House and Senate agreed to a bonding bill May 9 that would spend \$640.3 million for repairs to state facilities and new construction projects. The two bodies reached a compromise late in the game after their original proposals of \$532 million from the House and \$762 million from the Senate.

That final amount includes \$470.9 million in general obligation bonding, and \$98 million in direct spending from the state's general fund. Nearly \$30 million would be saved by canceling funds for capital projects approved in previous years.

The bill would spend about \$100 million more than earlier proposals by the House and the governor. Part of the increase is attributable to Gov. Jesse Ventura's requirement that \$44 million be spent from the general fund to pay for transit in the metropolitan area — a proposal that had not been in his capital budget plan or in the House or Senate versions of the bonding bill.

That provision was part of an end-of-session agreement that would allow the governor, House, and Senate to each decide how to spend a portion of the projected ongoing budget surplus. Ventura's portion includes reductions in license tab fees for motor vehicles and the transit spending. Ventura has repeatedly said that the Legislature should focus on bonding this year, and that he opposes any supplemental spending.

Of that \$44 million, \$25 million would be spent in fiscal year 2001 and \$19 million would be spent in fiscal year 2002. That money would mainly pay for designing and building an exclusive bus transitway, including the costs of acquiring land and right-of-way. The bill does not stipulate where such a transitway would be built, but the speculation is that it would run between downtown St. Paul and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

The bill would prohibit that money from being spent on light-rail transit or commuter rail.

In addition, the bill includes one of

Ventura's top priorities, bond funds for a \$58 million Bureau of Criminal Apprehension building.

A policy change related to the sale of bonds also is included in the bill. Current law that gives the governor leeway in issuing bonds would be repealed. That law allows a governor to refuse to sell bonds, thereby causing a project to languish.

The bill would give that authority instead to the commissioner of the state Department of Finance. The commissioner would be required to sell bonds based on funding needs of capital projects.

The decision on when to sell the bonds only could be based on specific factors: taking advantage of favorable interest rates, managing cash flow requirements for making debt payments, and other financial or legal factors.

Here are some other highlights of the bill (HF4078), sponsored by Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud) and Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls).

U of M facilities

Overall spending for higher education would be \$231 million, \$176.3 million of which would come from general obligation bonding. For most projects, the college or university pays one-third of the payments on the debt, or they are partially funded through matching non-state funds.

Total bonding for the University of Minnesota would be about \$100.2 million.

The largest expense would be \$35 million for a Molecular Cellular Biology building.

A proposed new Art Building would receive \$18.5 million, which would be spent if the university raises \$23 million in non-state matching funds.

A \$10 million Microbial and Plant Genomics building at the U of M campus in St. Paul also would be funded, which would require \$10 million in non-state matching funds.

The Duluth campus would receive \$6.1 million for a music performance center, but it would not receive funding for a proposed sports center.

Other U of M projects that would receive funding include \$8 million for a science and math building in Morris, \$6.5 million for a



Rep. Jim Knoblach, right, and Sen. Linda Berglin take a closer look at a provision of the bonding bill during a May 8 meeting.

building renovation and addition in Crookston, and \$6 million for greenhouses in St. Paul.

The bill would provide \$9 million for maintenance and repair projects on all U of M campuses.



MnSCU construction

Projects in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system would receive \$131 million, \$96.8 million of which would be in general obligation bonding.

Anoka-Hennepin Technical College would receive \$12.5 million under the House bill for roof repairs; improvements to the heating, ventilating, and air conditioning system; and other necessary repairs. The MnSCU Board of Trustees had voted to close the school, but the bonding bill would make the repairs necessary to keep it open.

An \$11.7 million information technology center at Minneapolis Community and Technical College would be funded.

The bill would provide \$6.9 million for construction of athletic and academic facilities at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The money would be part of the Taylor Center project, which benefited from a \$9.2 million donation from Minnesota Timberwolves owner and Mankato businessman Glen Taylor.

Maintenance and repair projects throughout the MnSCU system would receive \$30 million. MnSCU requested \$100 million for maintenance and repair, and officials said at least \$56 million would be needed to prevent the system's \$500 million maintenance backlog from growing even larger.

The bill specifies that the maintenance and repair money would pay for several projects that were line-item vetoed by Ventura last year, including a new boiler system for Winona State University and the completion of a heating and air conditioning project at the Hutchinson campus of Ridgewater College.

A project that would demolish old homes on property owned by Moorhead State University and expand parking would receive \$3.6 million in direct spending from the state's general fund.

Other MnSCU projects slated for funding under the bill include \$11.4 million for a science building at Normandale Community College in Bloomington, \$11 million for general renovation at North Hennepin Community College in Brooklyn Park, and \$8 million for a remodeling project at St. Cloud Technical College.

Several other MnSCU campuses would receive funding under the House bill, including Northwest Technical College in Bemidji, St. Cloud State University, Northland Community Technical College in Thief River Falls, Winona State University, Itasca Community College in Grand Rapids, and Rochester Community and Technical College.

Continued on page 23

First winter for first lady

Anna Ramsey found frontier life less than pleasant during her early days in Minnesota

The first woman to be Minnesota's first lady wasn't always enamored with her adopted home, and she let her husband know about it.

Anna Ramsey, wife of the first governor of the Minnesota Territory, found things difficult during her first Christmas season in the frontier town of St. Paul.

Her husband, Alexander Ramsey, had left Anna, who was busy with one child and another on the way, in St. Paul while he was away on travels that kept him from home for the holidays.

In a letter written on Christmas day of 1849, Anna showed little cheer.

"Oh, Alex, could [you] be here and know how we suffer with cold, [you] would never want to winter again in St. Paul," Anna wrote. "I know I will not. I nearly froze to death in bed as well as out."

Anna was 19 when she married Alexander in 1845. He was 30 and already building a political career as a congressman from Pennsylvania.

Alexander became a dominant figure in early Minnesota history. He was appointed governor of the new Minnesota Territory in 1849, and he later served as the state's second governor, mayor of St. Paul, U.S. senator, and U.S. secretary of war.

Anna's life was dominated by the arc of her husband's political career. She followed him to St. Paul, Washington, D.C., and elsewhere.

And she lived within the confines of her era — when women in her position were expected to be subservient to their husbands, to handle domestic concerns, and to function as the head of the family's presence in religious and social circles.

She kept up a proper public face and

filled her role well, but Anna lived a sometimes stifling existence that limited public expressions of her personal opinions.

Things were different in private. Letters exchanged between Anna and Alexander show that the pair communicated openly and frankly, for better or worse.

The letter written on that cold Christmas Day was among the unhappiest of those that survive the family's papers held

by the Minnesota Historical Society, according to a 1977 article in Minnesota History magazine.

"My health is not very good. I suffer so much with headaches," Anna continued in that 1849 correspondence. "I do hope [you] will hasten. It is such forlorn living alone in a horrid place such as this. I think it intolerable."

She closed her letter by telling her husband that he "shall never leave me again so long. I will not stay."

Of course, she did stay. And if Anna's first months in Minnesota were unhappy and difficult, her outlook improved with time. She made her home in St. Paul until her death in 1884, although she spent long stretches away from the city over the years.

Even in unhappy times, Anna maintained a sense of humor.

Her 1849 letter included a description of her attempts to enjoy the outdoors during a northern winter. Anna said she found a sleigh ride along the river to be "splendid," as did her toddler son, Alexander Jr.

"Sonny enjoys it amazingly if mama will hold him and not let him get cold. Unfortunately, mama is losing her lap," the pregnant 23-year-old wrote.

(N. HEALY)



Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

★ AGRICULTURE

Omnibus policy bill passes

The House passed an omnibus agriculture policy bill May 9 that would bring uniformity to the state's meat inspection program and update state references to federal food law regulations. The vote was 115-16.

The bill (HF3312), sponsored by Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus), would bring poultry up to par with other meats and meat products for purposes of inspection. Inspections of poultry, however, would not be required during the slaughter of one's own animals or at a custom processing plant, under the bill.

Poultry products would also be allowed to carry the "Minnesota Approved" label.

The omnibus policy bill also would add several new activities to those that would qualify for a Department of Agriculture grant of up to \$50,000 for the development of new farm products, as well as business and marketing plans for the products.

Corporate farm law changes included in the bill would allow nonprofit groups such as scout troops, churches, and sports clubs to retain ownership of agricultural land rented to a neighboring farmer. Limited liability companies would be able to own farmland and engage in farming, as well.

Certain corporations would be permitted to own up to 40 acres of farmland so long as they earn no more than \$150 per acre per year from the land.

In addition, a non-qualifying entity could apply for a "commissioner's exemption" (renewable annually) for permission to retain title to farmland.

Under the bill, the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture would be required to team with the University of Minnesota, the Department of Trade and Economic Development, and the Board of Animal Health to develop a pilot program for verifying claims made by agricultural producers and businesses.

Finally, the bill would make relatively minor changes to fertilizer and grain warehouse provisions in current law.

The bill now heads to the governor.

Clarifying agriculture contracts

The House gave final passage to a bill May 9 that would establish minimum standards of both readability and content for



FILL 'ER UP

Pages Betty Byrne, left, Art Jones, center, and Diane Ranallo begin to dump overflowing wastebaskets of paper in a recycling bin after the House recessed in the early morning hours May 10.

contracts between agricultural producers and contractors. The vote was 130-0.

Under the bill, any potential agricultural contract would be required to contain a clear statement of the risks the producer faces by entering into the contract, and producers would be allowed to review the contract for up to three days before signing it.

Sponsored by Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson), the measure (HF3534) would also require that the contract be legible, clearly laid out, and contain a cover sheet with an index to the contents of the contract and a warning to producers to "read your contract carefully."

Under the bill, a producer would be allowed to ask the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture to review a contract and certify that language in the proposed contract complies with requirements contained in the measure.

The bill would allow a court to change the terms of a contract if it found a lack of clarity or readability had confused the producer and resulted in financial harm.

Finally, the bill would specify certain kinds of agricultural contracts that would not be subject to minimum standards, and would establish limits on the extent to which producers and contractors could use the format of a contract to claim damages against one another.

The bill now goes to the governor.

★ BUSINESS

Gas station franchises

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law May 5 that regulates franchise agreements between gas stations and fuel providers.

Fuel providers generally enter into a franchise agreement with stations operated by individuals but owned by the gas company.

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), House sponsor of the measure, said it clarifies what can be written in marketing agreements. The law protects small businesses, Haas said.

The key aspect of the law allows the gas station management the right to purchase the station before the gas provider decides to sell the store to another gas provider.

For example, if a company were going to sell a Texaco station to a provider for Amoco, Texaco would have to offer the station to the local management first.

That section expires in one year. Officials say the repealer is intended to allow both parties to find a better working arrangement and continue negotiations if initial offers are unacceptable.

Haas said the first right of refusal is necessary because fuel providers can sell the station to another fuel provider. The new owner may attempt to close service centers to open convenience stations.

Without the first right of refusal, a

neighborhood mechanic could suddenly lose his or her job when the station's ownership changes hands, Haas said.

Other states, such as California, have enacted similar legislation to protect franchisees, Haas said.

When a gas supplier enters into a marketing agreement with a person to operate a station, the supplier is required to submit a history of how much fuel was sold, any possible adjustments to property or surrounding infrastructure, and the names of the people who operated the station for the past three years, under the law.

For example, if the city where the station is located plans to close down streets surrounding the station, thereby affecting business and profit, the gas company is obligated to inform the station management of those situations.

A variety of items can be included in franchise agreements. Gas suppliers can require stations to be open a certain number of hours a day. A fuel supplier is not prohibited from remodeling or altering a full-service station.

Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) sponsored the Senate version. The law is effective May 6, 2000.

HF1748/SF1870*/CH456

★ CRIME

Study on felony DWI

Legislators have agreed to study possible felony penalties for repeat drunken driving offenders, but no felony penalties would be implemented this session, under a bill the House passed May 10. The vote was 125-6.

Previously, legislators had sought to make it a felony for a person to accumulate four DWI convictions in a 10-year span. Under an earlier proposal, violators could have served seven years in prison, with a minimum of a 180 days stayed sentence in jail. The maximum fine would have been \$14,000.

In the bill's current form, a working group would be created. The group would include legislators from both houses, the commissioners of corrections, public safety, and finance, county attorneys, and public defenders.

The working group would study and recommend how to implement felony penalties. It would determine the most cost-effective manner, the number of offenses needed to reach a felony-level, the length of incarceration, and whether a penalty should have mandatory prison time.

"It assumes there will be a felony DWI, and this is how to best implement it," said Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center), who served on the conference committee.

It is still unclear what the total cost would



Public Safety Commissioner Charlie Weaver, right, talks with Rep. Doug Fuller as they wait for Senate members to arrive for a May 5 conference committee hearing on a DWI bill.

be to incarcerate repeat drunken driving offenders, although one report estimated it would add 1,100 people to the corrections system.

"The governor said he would veto the bill if there were unfunded local costs, and state costs were unfunded," Carruthers said. "The issue of costs has to be handled, and next year in a budget year would be the time to do it."

Because of the cost issue, the original House bill had offered to delay implementation until 2001 to give legislators time to find a funding source. The original Senate bill would have created felony drunken driving offenses this year, but eliminated the offense in 2001 if no funds were available for additional corrections costs.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji) and Sen. Dave Johnson (DFL-Bloomington) are chief sponsors of the legislation.

The bill (HF2995/SF2677*) now heads to the governor's desk.

Statute of limitations extended

Domestic abuse victims would have more time to consider filing civil charges against the perpetrator, under a bill the House passed May 9. The vote was 130-0.

The bill (HF47/SF11*) would extend the statute of limitations in domestic abuse cases from two years to six years. A victim could sue another person for assault, battery, false imprisonment, or personal injury, as defined by the statutes on domestic abuse.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), who sponsored the legislation, said the statute of limitations would begin at the point of the last incident.

"So many times, these domestic abuse wrongs are covered up or delayed," Bishop

said. "It doesn't surface for a long time."

The bill also would allow Ramsey County to establish a pilot project domestic abuse unit.

The unit would aim to prosecute cases, recognize interests of children in abuse cases, and reduce the exposure of domestic abuse for victims.

If Ramsey County chooses to create the program, the county would be required to report its results to the Legislature next year.

The bill now heads to the governor's desk.

Hearing harassment complaints

Judges would have more discretion in hearing harassment cases, under a bill the House passed May 9. The vote was 129-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound), the bill (HF2516*/SF3580) would redefine harassment to include a single incident that has a "substantial adverse effect." Current law requires repeated incidents for an act to be considered harassment.

Smith said the key provision of the bill is that it does not require judges to hear every harassment complaint.

"It gives the court the flexibility they wanted after 10 years of looking at this statute," Smith said.

A judge could throw out frivolous harassment complaints, such as name-calling, Smith said. The judges would then have more time to hear serious harassment matters, he added.

The state began tracking restraining order filings in 1992, when 4,800 were filed. Last year, 8,800 restraining orders were filed.

A victim must allege a clear and present danger of harassment before the court may issue a temporary restraining order, according to the bill.

However, the bill does not eliminate a fee waiver on restraining orders. In certain

circumstances of financial hardship, men and women who file for restraining orders can still attempt to have all costs and fees for filing the order waived.

The bill now heads to the governor's desk.

Sharing juvenile information

School officials will be required to share information about delinquent juveniles with the juvenile justice system, under a law signed May 5 by Gov. Jesse Ventura. The law also allows information about delinquent juveniles to be shared within the school, as deemed necessary.

If school officials catch a student who is on probation using alcohol, tobacco, or controlled substances, or being threatening or bringing a weapon onto the school grounds, the officials must notify the juvenile justice system that the student has failed probation, the law states.

Schools also must notify juvenile justice officials if the student engages in theft or vandalism.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights), who sponsored the measure in the House, said it seeks to balance the rights of student's privacy and protecting the public.

"It's a start toward the responsible sharing of information between the juvenile justice system and the schools," McGuire said. "The goal is really to help the student. All the people involved with the student would have the history."

A school official must notify the student's parents or guardian that the juvenile justice system has been notified, the law states.

Currently, the juvenile justice system gives schools a disposition order that states a child has been delinquent and is on probation.

The new law requires the disposition order to be placed in the student's permanent record. Disposition orders follow a student if he or she transfers schools.

A school counselor also must be notified of the disposition order.

The law further clarifies which school officials would know that a student is on probation. The principal may notify district officials from employees to substitutes or volunteers who are "in direct contact with the student" that he or she is on probation.

Disposition orders are considered private information. Teachers, counselors, or staff members may not disseminate the information to school personnel who are not in contact with the student.

The school must destroy disposition orders once the student graduates or when that person reaches age 23.

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) also carried the legislation in the Senate. The new law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2833*/SF2891/CH451

False ID measure passes

The House passed a false identification confiscation bill May 9 that strengthens penalties for people under age 21 who attempt to purchase alcohol by using a fake ID. The vote was 84-43.

It took a third try for the House to finally pass the plan, after sending it back to conference committee two previous times.

The bill would allow alcohol providers — from liquor store clerks to bartenders — to confiscate what they believe to be false identification cards. The person confiscating the identification would be required to turn it over to the police within 24 hours.

The bill also would make it a gross misdemeanor on a second offense for a person under age 21 to attempt to buy alcohol.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) is sponsoring the bill (HF2655/SF2845*). She said the bill is necessary to enforce the state's laws on selling alcohol to minors.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Brainerd) spoke in favor of the bill, saying there has to be consequences for using false identification.

"If we don't pass this, we will be sending a message to our kids that it is ok to have fake IDs to purchase alcohol and tobacco," Hasskamp said.

The House rejected the bill and sent it back to conference committee last month, saying there were too many concerns about personal safety. Many of those legislators voiced their opposition again when the bill returned to the floor again with few alterations.

"It gives bouncers authority that virtually no one else in the state has," said Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls).

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) noted that the penalty would be lower if underage people stole alcohol instead of purchasing it illegally, under the bill.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said she fears for the safety of women who might be bullied by a bouncer.

One change made in conference committee would lessen the penalty for clerks who mistakenly sell tobacco to minors. The penalty would be reduced from a gross misdemeanor to a misdemeanor for the first offense, under the bill.

The clerk could be charged with a gross misdemeanor on a second conviction within five years of selling tobacco to minors, under the bill. The five-year provision was added

during the recent conference committee, decreasing the possible charges against clerks.

"It makes it better for the real victims, the store clerks," said Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont.)

The bill would allow the commissioner of public safety to suspend a minor's driver's license for up to 90 days if the minor attempted to purchase alcohol with a false identification.

The bill goes to the governor.

★ EDUCATION

Agreement on Profile

Legislators were able to tentatively agree May 9 on modifications to the Profile of Learning and to allow districts to choose between continuing its use or implementing the prescribed alternative called the North Star Standard.

Last minute talks about fine-tuning the often-criticized Profile delayed House votes on four important spending bills. In a night of talks between the House and Senate, major spending bills were put on hold until legislators could agree on changes to the Profile.

However, neither the House nor the Senate has officially passed the compromise bill yet.

The Profile of Learning is a companion to the state's other graduation requirement — the basic skills tests.

A year ago, legislators failed to reach an agreement on how to improve the initiative, and for a while, it looked as if both houses would adjourn again this year without a solution.

The Profile has been criticized by teachers and school districts for excessive paperwork and problems with implementation.

It was created to shift learning away from textbooks and lectures and move it in the direction of experiments, teamwork, research, and independent projects.

Under the Profile, students are required to perform various tasks in core learning areas that have practical applications for life beyond the classroom.

The agreement would allow school boards to vote to choose whether to use the Profile, a revised version of the Profile, or the new North Star Standard. Teachers would serve advisory roles in the decision-making process.

"Teachers won. They're now going to have some say in what's going on in the classroom," said Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls).

Representatives of Education Minnesota (the teachers union) and others also expressed pleasure that the Legislature was able to finally take action to change the Profile, and for the flexibility that the agreement allows districts.

Part of that flexibility would be the ability to abandon the Profile altogether in favor of the North Star Standard.

The North Star Standard was designed as a knowledge-based alternative to the Profile. It would ease the Profile's practical skills orientation. It would also spell out rewritten standards in such basics as science, math, English, and history.

Under the North Star Standard, students would have to complete credits in up to 10 learning areas. Teachers would still be able to assign projects designed to test a student's ability to understand and apply subject matter, but such hands-on demonstrations would no longer be a standard requirement.

Districts that would choose to stay with the Profile would vote on a school-by-school basis on the number of Profile tasks required for high school graduation.

This year's ninth- and tenth-graders would be excused from Profile requirements. Educators have said this session they were worried that some students would be denied diplomas because implementation problems put completion of the Profile's 24 content standards out of reach for some. The class of 2002 would be the first to be held to the Profile of Learning or North Star Standard as a measure for graduation.

A vote on the Profile of Learning agreement is expected during House and Senate floor sessions May 17.

★ ELECTIONS

Elections bill advances

The House gave final passage to a bill May 9 that would make minor changes in state election laws. The vote was 132-0.

The bill (HF2826), sponsored by Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), would modify the beginning dates of terms of offices, among other minor changes.

Names of candidates could be printed on both sides of a primary ballot, which Seifert said would allow counties to save money in printing costs. He estimated that Hennepin County, for example, would save \$145,000 per election.

Terms of office for soil and water conservation district supervisors, school board members, town officers, and hospital district officers would begin the first Monday in January, instead of Jan. 1, following an election.

Also, current law allows county, state, and federal candidates to file for office if they are away from the state during the filing period, and the bill would extend that to apply to candidates for municipal offices.

The bill also would extend the time period for a candidate to withdraw his or her name from the ballot.

The secretary of state would be required to notify each minor political party by the first Monday in January of each odd-numbered year of the conditions necessary for the party to participate in programs involving campaign money from income tax and property tax forms.

The bill now goes to the governor.

★ GAME & FISH

Major changes in store

A bill that would increase fees for hunting and fishing licenses, establish a state plan for managing the wolf population, and allocate a portion of revenue from lottery ticket sales to pay for natural resources projects was passed May 9 by the House. The vote was 87-44.

The bill (HF3046), sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), had once contained only the license fee increases. But as action for the session wound down, three other prominent natural resource issues were included in the measure.

License fee increases first passed the House April 13, and the Senate added the provisions related to the wolf management plan and lottery ticket revenue. The bill also includes a minor change in a law that was signed April 3 allowing lighted fishing lures to be used in the state.

The fee increases would send more money to the game and fish fund, which pays for projects that improve water quality, stock fish and enhance aquatic vegetation, increase public water access, and other such projects.

Money from the license fee increases would be matched with revenue from the state's general fund.

Under the bill, \$2 of revenue from the fee increase would be matched by \$1 from the general fund. The fee increases are projected to raise about \$3.1 million in revenue for the 2002-03 biennium, and the general fund match would be slightly more than \$1.5 million.

The bill also would include a \$500,000 general fund appropriation to pay for walleye stocking.

The lottery ticket revenue provision that was added to the bill would further increase funding for game and fish projects, as well as projects for state parks, recreational trails, and zoos.

Those projects would receive 97 percent of the money that the state collects as a payment in lieu of sales tax on lottery tickets. Of the proceeds from lottery tickets, 16 cents per dollar goes to the state's general fund, which includes 6.5 cents per dollar that is considered a payment in lieu of sales tax.

The wolf management plan under the bill is nearly identical to a plan that was approved April 11 by the House (in the form of a separate bill, HF1415).

The Senate had clarified part of the bill that

STATEHOOD WEEK



As part of Minnesota Statehood Week, historic interpreter David Geister dressed in 1850s period costume to play Lewis McKune, a farmer from Waseca and delegate to the Minnesota Constitutional Convention in 1857. He displays a map of the territory to sixth-graders from Onamia Elementary School, who traveled to the Capitol May 10.

would allow a person to shoot a wolf that is attacking livestock or domestic animals. The bill would specify that the person could shoot the wolf only on the person's property.

A certified predator controller could be hired to trap wolves in an area where a wolf has destroyed livestock or domestic animals. The trapping could be done on the farmer's property and in a one-mile radius of the site of the attack for 60 days.

A person could shoot a wolf in defense of a human life, and guard animals could be used to repel or destroy wolves.

People could "harass" a wolf that they actually see within 500 yards of people, buildings, livestock, or domestic animals to discourage wolves from getting too close to homes or farms.

Any incident where a wolf is killed would have to be reported within 48 hours to the Department of Natural Resources or a University of Minnesota extension agent.

Compensation for a livestock owner who has an animal that is killed by a wolf would be based on fair market value instead of the current maximum of \$750 per animal.

No hunting season for wolves would be allowed for five years after the wolf is removed from the federal list of endangered species. But the bill would allow the commissioner of the DNR to prescribe open seasons and restrictions for taking wolves after the five years and after receiving comments from the public.

Violating the laws related to killing wolves would be a gross misdemeanor, under the bill.

The bill now goes to the governor.

Fishing contests, hunting laws

A bill that would limit the number of fishing contests in the state and make other changes to hunting and fishing laws was passed by the House May 9. The vote was 131-0.

People who want to have fishing contests would need a permit unless several criteria are met: the number of participants would be fewer than 30 for open water and fewer than 150 for ice fishing; the entry fee is \$25 per person or less; the total prize value is \$25,000 or less; the contest is not limited to trout species only; the contest is not limited to specifically named waters; and all the contest participants are age 18 years or under.

If those criteria are not met, the person could apply for a permit from the Department of Natural Resources.

The bill (HF866/SF1288*) would limit the number of permits that could be issued during the fishing season. And on all waters 55,000 acres or less, the DNR commissioner could set aside at least two weekends per month with no permitted fishing contests.

A contest for a species on its opening day would not be allowed.

The commissioner would be allowed to specify restrictions as part of the permit to prevent undue loss of fish or to accommodate other concerns regarding large fishing contests.

Another provision in the bill would improve some people's chances of getting a license to hunt moose. Minnesotans who have applied for and failed to get a license at least 10 times would be able to apply in a separate selection process.

The separate process would make 20 percent of all moose-hunting licenses available to those applicants who have repeatedly failed to win a license.

The state issues a limited number of such licenses every other year, through a lottery system that includes all applicants in one pool. In 1999, 189 licenses were issued to hunt in northeastern Minnesota. There will not be a moose hunt in 2000.

A new deer license would be established under the bill, which would allow the holder to take one antlered buck throughout the state, rather than from a particular area. The license would cost \$66. Deer licenses currently cost \$22, and a separate bill would increase that to \$25.

Another provision would allow a person with mental retardation or a related condition to receive a provisional firearms safety certificate and hunting license.

The bill would require the person to complete the classroom portion of the firearms safety course.

The person would be able to hunt only while accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other adult who possesses a firearms safety certificate. The bill would not apply if the person were otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law.

The bill also would attempt to resolve questions about state lands within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

The state owns about 100,000 acres of land, known as school trust land, in that area. Most of the land was donated from the federal government when Minnesota became a state.

The state-owned land is located on various parcels and is surrounded by federal land. Revenue from the land, through leases and the sale of logging rights, goes to the state's permanent school fund.

The University of Minnesota, Duluth would conduct an inventory and appraisal of the state lands.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said the inventory would determine exactly how many acres of land belong to the state and provide other detailed information about the land.

Rukavina said that information would allow the state to negotiate a land exchange with the federal government, so that the state-owned parcels would be separate from the federal land.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), now goes to the governor.

DNR enforcement bill

The House passed a bill May 9 that would modify some of the procedures used by the state Department of Natural Resources regarding DWIs, forfeited vehicles, or property.

The bill (HF2962/SF3036*), sponsored by Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), was altered by a House-Senate conference committee after the House had objected to provisions in an earlier version of the bill.

One would have expanded the authority of DNR conservation officers to give blood-alcohol tests under the state's implied consent laws, and the other would have allowed the DNR to keep proceeds from the sale of a forfeited vehicle. Both provisions were removed by the conference committee.

The bill would allow the DNR to administer forfeiture procedures in some situations that currently are done by the county sheriff's office.

Under current law, conservation officers can seize firearms from hunters who are violating certain laws, such as those prohibiting shooting at deer from a road or possessing too many game birds. In some instances, the officer later finds out that the person illegally possessed a firearm because of prior criminal convictions or other reasons.

In that kind of situation, current law requires the officer to send the firearm to the county sheriff's office, even though that office was not involved in the original incident.

The bill would allow the DNR to follow forfeiture procedures without involving the sheriff's office.

Also, the commissioner of natural resources would be required to develop plans for dealing with gross violations of game and fish laws. A report for defining and determining penalties for gross violations must be completed by the department and delivered to the House and Senate committees on natural resources policy and finance by Feb. 1, 2001.

The bill now goes to the governor.

GOVERNMENT



Dead, alive, and dead again

A proposal to switch to a one-chamber, or unicameral, legislature was approved May 8 by the House Rules Committee, but even the bill's sponsor says it is unlikely to advance to



Former Gov. Al Quie testifies in favor of a unicameral form of state government during a May 8 hearing of the House Rules Committee.

a vote on the House floor before the session adjourns.

The bill (HF4147) was sent to the House floor, but members then voted to send the bill to the House Ways and Means Committee May 9. The vote was 76-54.

The bill would allow voters to decide if the Minnesota Constitution should be amended to replace the state House of Representatives and Senate with a single legislative body called the Legislature, beginning in 2003.

The Rules Committee voted against an amendment that would require the Office of the Secretary of State, along with the Office of the Attorney General, to prepare a voters guide that would explain the common arguments for and against the proposal.

"This issue will bring a lot of people out to vote, and they will be informed," said House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), sponsor of the bill, at the Rules Committee hearing.

Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center), a co-sponsor of the proposal, said that most other proposed constitutional amendments have not had voters guides.

"I don't know if we need the government to lay out the pros and cons on this issue," he said.

Sviggum, who has supported the unicameral concept for several years, said it would enable citizens to understand the lawmaking process better and it would make lawmakers more accountable for their votes.

Some committee members criticized the proposal's lack of details. If the voters were to approve the constitutional amendment, the people who take office in 2001 would have the task of re-drawing district boundaries and establishing specific rules for those who would

later be elected to the unicameral legislature in 2003.

But Carruthers said lawmakers could make the decisions about the specific committee process and other details if the voters approve the overall concept.

"The big issue clearly would be before the people — should we switch to a unicameral system or should we stick with bicameral?" Carruthers said.

If that question makes it onto the 2000 election ballot, and if a majority of voters were to support the measure, the one-house legislature would consist of 135 districts. Currently, there are 67 Senate districts, each of which is divided to make 134 House districts.

The proposed terms would be four years, and they would be staggered — half of the members' terms would expire every two years. The entire Legislature would be up for election the year after districts are redrawn, which is done every 10 years, following a census, to accommodate shifts in population.

To achieve the staggered terms, half of the legislators would serve an initial term of two years. The other half would serve a two-year term at the beginning of a decade, just before the redistricting takes place.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) said he does not oppose Sviggum's bill, but that two-year terms would be a better idea. The longer terms make it easier to avoid "change-of-mood years," he said. The state Senate, for example, has not been up for election in some recent years where major political tides have changed, he said.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) said that lawmakers benefit from running for office every two years by participating in

various community events and knocking on doors before the election.

"It keeps you more in tune with the people in your district," she said.

Sviggum countered by saying that the unicameral system would make it easier for citizens to follow pending legislation, so that people would likely participate more during the lawmaking process instead of waiting for the election season.

With only two official days left for the Legislature to conduct business, the bill only could become law if it is approved by the Ways and Means Committee, then gets a majority of votes before the entire House and Senate, and is signed by the governor.

Data practices revisions

The House passed a bill May 9 that would clarify the state's laws regarding government data practices. The vote was 129-0.

The bill (HF3501), sponsored by Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), would clean up laws relating to how government agencies collect and disseminate information, as well as public access to that data.

Holberg said the bill would allow the Department of Labor and Industry and the Department of Revenue to exchange information relating to employees for tax administration purposes.

The bill also would establish an administrative process for people who believe that a government agency is not complying with laws governing public access to data. Such a complaint would be filed with the commissioner of the state Department of Administration, who would then be required to conduct an investigation to determine whether the complaint is valid.

The bill also would require every government entity to appoint or designate a person as its data practices compliance official. That official would be the one who will answer questions and concerns regarding problems in obtaining access to data.

Government agencies would also be required to make public data stored on computers available in an electronic format if the government entity can reasonably make the copy or have a copy made. The government entity may require the requesting person to pay for the cost of the copy.

The bill also allows counties to approve a system in which a notice is included on property tax statements notifying taxpayers that their name and other information may be disclosed for non-government purposes including surveys, marketing, and solicitation.

The county would be required to allow

citizens to request that their name be excluded from lists generated by the county and disclosed to non-government entities.

The bill also would limit tort liability against municipalities in claims based on alleged or actual inaccuracies in geographic information systems data arising from the public's use of that data. Such data is used by municipalities for mapping, districting, and zoning purposes.

The bill calls for the municipality to provide a disclaimer of the accuracy of the information. The bill aims to clarify that geographic information systems data is accurate for its intended use by a municipality and may be inaccurate for other uses.

The bill now goes to the governor.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Setting pay for MnSCU officials

A new law signed by Gov. Jesse Ventura May 5 will change the way the salary is determined for the chancellor of the state's largest higher education organization.

Currently, the board sets a specific salary amount that is then approved by the Legislature. The current salary for the chancellor is \$185,000.

Under the new law, the Board of Trustees of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) will be allowed to establish a salary range for the chancellor position. The board will then submit the proposed salary range to the Legislature for approval.

The new law also will allow the board more flexibility in the contracts they offer to presidents and other non-classified positions within the MnSCU system.

Under current law, the board is allowed to propose a salary range for its presidents, which the Legislature approves. The new law will allow the board to submit to the Legislature proposed contracts with other incentives to attract candidates.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), the House sponsor of the measure, said that increasing competition from other states has made retaining and recruiting quality people in the positions more difficult. He said he aims to give MnSCU more options to attract qualified candidates.

Sen. LeRoy Stumpf (DFL-Thief River Falls) was the Senate sponsor. The new law is effective August 1, 2000.

HF3726/SF3386*/CH453

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Protecting vulnerable adults

The House passed a bill May 9 that would create a panel to review decisions made by lead agencies regarding cases of potential maltreatment of vulnerable adults.

The vote was 129-0.

Sponsored by Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), the bill (HF3250/SF3028*) would provide a vulnerable adult or individual acting on behalf of such a person the opportunity to challenge an agency's decision before an impartial body.

Currently, Greenfield said, a vulnerable adult or person acting on his or her behalf has no other place to appeal but to the agency that produced the decision.

The board created by the bill would consist of representatives from the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health, the ombudsman for older Minnesotans, and the ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation.

A request for a review, the bill states, would be taken up at the panel's next quarterly meeting.

Greenfield referred to the measure as a "quality assurance approach" to reviewing decisions in cases of potential maltreatment when the bill was first considered by the House in April.

The bill would require that within 30 days of the panel's review, it must notify the lead agency and the person who requested the review of its decision. The panel may decide whether it agrees with the agency's decision or require the agency to reconsider its ruling.

If the panel were to decide that the agency must reconsider its disposition, the bill would require the agency reconsider and report back to the panel with its determination within 30 days.

Furthermore, the panel would be required to report to the Legislature each January the number of requests for review it received, the number of cases where the panel required the lead agency to reconsider its decision, the number of times when the final disposition was changed, and any recommendations to improve the review or investigative process.

A provision in the bill adopted by a House-Senate conference committee would require that the commissioner of the Department of Human Services offer medically necessary psychiatric and dental services to developmentally disabled clients in the Faribault service area, which would extend 100 miles around the city.

The bill now heads to the governor's desk.

Minnesota State Agencies

(Area code 651)

Administration	296-6013
Agriculture	297-2200
Children, Families and Learning	582-8200
Commerce	296-4026
Corrections	642-0200
Economic Security	296-3644
Employee Relations	297-1184
Job Information	296-2616
Finance	296-5900
Health	215-5800
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
Pollution Control Agency	296-6300
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
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

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

175 State Office Building
(651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550

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

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

Clarification

A story in the April 21 issue of *Session Weekly* discussed a new law that regulates phone use by inmates in jails and prisons. The law deals primarily with conversations involving inmates and their attorneys, rather than person-to-person calls. It will ensure that inmates have the ability to call their attorneys as often as necessary without the inmate or the attorney being billed for such calls.

School spending

Omnibus bill provides \$184 million of new education funding and seeks to keep Internet porn out of the classroom

By **MIKE DE LARCO**

The House gave final approval to a \$184 million education spending package May 9 that includes one-time spending and permanent funding for several K-12 efforts including special education, teacher training, and high-speed Internet access.

The bill also would provide money to school districts for vocational education and building improvements, and fix a funding problem for charter schools that would allow them to lease buildings more easily.

The measure is larger than the two previous non-budget year funding measures. However, both the law in 1998, spending \$124 million, and the measure from 1996, allocating \$31.7 million, dealt only with K-12 education. This year's bill also includes higher education and early childhood and family education items.

Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington), sponsor of the spending measure (HF3800), said the special education money districts would receive under the bill and the training and experience money would especially help districts that are facing budget cuts.

Under the bill, the state's special education funding cap would be increased by \$83 million, she said. A boost in cross-subsidy special education aid would allow districts to free up money to spend elsewhere, perhaps restoring some cuts made in past years.

Some of those cuts came in the form of teacher layoffs.

The growing problem of teacher shortages and the decline — especially in rural areas — of experienced instructors in Minnesota classrooms is addressed in the bill by a provision that makes it easier for districts to bring in

teachers from other states.

Minnesota's Board of Teaching would be required under the bill to issue a temporary teaching license to a person holding both a bachelor's degree and an out-of-state teaching license requiring such a person to have completed a teacher preparation program, which included field-specific teaching methods and student teaching.

The bill also would provide \$30.8 million to districts for teacher training, and experience replacement. The provision is designed to fill the vacancies left by a great number of teacher retirements and other factors with high quality classroom leaders.

In addition, the bill proposes \$31 million to soften the phase-out of a program that gave money to districts having large numbers of teachers with extensive experience or advanced degrees.

increases in enrollment.

The money — \$5.8 million in the current fiscal year and \$5.8 million in fiscal year 2001 — would come from the state's general fund.

The bill also would spend \$9.8 million in federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds in 2001, with future TANF spending of \$23.7 million in 2002-03, for programs such as male responsibility and fatherhood grants, child care services, transitional housing and citizenship grants.

Approximately \$12 million dollars for secondary vocational aid is part of the proposal. The additional aid for high school programs would be spread out over a two-year period.

The omnibus education spending bill also makes an attempt to protect students from Internet material considered obscene or harmful to minors.

All public school and public library computers with access to the Internet available for use by children under the age of 17 would need to be equipped with up-to-date software filtering technology or other methods to restrict student viewing of inappropriate material.

A public library would not be required to purchase filtering technology if the library would incur more than incidental expense in making the purchase, however.

If behavioral problems arise in a classroom, the bill would allow teachers and certain other school employees to use "reasonable" force to discipline a student. The provision would include language pertaining to the legal defenses teachers and district agents have against prosecution for using force to discipline students.

The bill would permit reasonable force to correct or restrain a student or to

prevent bodily harm to another.

Furthermore, districts would be required to indicate in school discipline policy the circumstances under which teachers, school employees and school bus drivers may use force to discipline students.

One-time deferred maintenance aid — to



Cynthia Coronado Templin, House fiscal analyst, Rep. Alice Seagren, chair of the education conference committee and Greg Crowe, House fiscal analyst, left to right background, work out compromises with Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller, right foreground, during a recent meeting of the group.

"I'm proud to vote in support of this bill because we, as a body, are finally making the necessary commitment to education," said Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul). "We're showing that education is our top priority."

The bill would provide about \$11.6 million to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system to address unexpected

The big bill

Human services items dominate state government appropriations bill, though environmental, judicial, and economic development programs are in the mix

By CHRIS VETTER

The \$185 million state government appropriations bill, which contains new funding for courts, natural resources, and jobs and housing programs across the state, passed the House on May 9. The vote was 110-21.

The version of the bill originally passed in the House called for a cost savings to the general fund of about \$42 million. After a conference committee compromise, the final version of the plan actually allocates \$79.9 million in new general fund spending, primarily to health and human services programs.

Nearly every major area of state government spending jumped in the final product passed by both the House and Senate.

Several noteworthy policy provisions once included in the House bill (HF2699) were taken out during the previous weeks and acted on individually after concerns were raised that the omnibus bill might violate the Minnesota

Constitution's requirement that laws be limited to a single subject.

Constitution's requirement that laws be limited to a single subject. The omnibus bill would spend \$79.9 million from the general fund and another \$105 million from other accounts, including \$100 million in federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) sponsored the bill, which now goes to the governor.

Health and human services

The largest portion of the bill deals with health and human services programs, where it would spend a total of \$138 million — \$26 million from the general fund, \$12 million in forecast changes, and \$100 million in TANF dollars.

Proposals to increase sanctions for people who fail to meet work requirements of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) were dropped in conference committee. Previously, the House sought tougher sanctions — a stoppage in benefits — for recipients who were out of compliance a sixth time.

The bill would pump \$26 million into improving salaries for certain health care providers, creating a 3 percent cost-of-living increase. There also was a cost-of-living increase last year.

This provision applies to staff in nursing homes and group homes, and for care providers who serve people with disabilities.

Eligibility for the state's senior citizen drug program would be expanded, under the measure.

Beginning later this year, the income limits for seniors would be increased to allow more people to receive aid under the program. In 2002, the program would be expanded further to include people with permanent disabilities who meet the same income limits.

MFIP programs would receive \$20 million in TANF money for county-level intervention to provide family employment grants. Money would be used to help hard-to-employ individuals, who face barriers such as transportation problems, chemical dependency, lack of education, or the inability to speak English.

Jobs, development, and housing

The bill would provide \$6.6 million toward economic development programs.

Among the highlights are \$1 million in grants that would be used to expand Internet services in rural towns. Another provision would provide \$1 million to boost tourism in northern Minnesota.

The Job Skills Partnership Board could offer grants for distance-work projects, under the bill. Grants could be used to train rural workers in new technology or purchase equipment such as telecommunications infrastructure, computer upgrades, or software.

Among the policy measures, the Department of Economic Security would be required to develop a 10-year plan for locating workforce centers near campuses in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system.

The bill also would increase penalties for businesses that violate child labor laws. Many of the fines have not been updated in several years.

And the bill would appropriate \$50 million to the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. Approximately \$30 million would go toward building and financing affordable housing units. It is estimated that 1,163 units will likely be developed and maintained by this money. The remaining \$20 million is an interest-free loan to Habitat for Humanity.

Continued on page 23



Jim Chase, left, Deb Wegne, and Kathie Henry, right, all of the Department of Human Services, huddle over portions of the state appropriations bill as they wait for the conference committee to resume its May 8 meeting.

Constitution's requirement that laws be limited to a single subject.

Those items included proposals related to felony drunken driving charges, a waiting period for abortion, and establishing an of-

All-nighter

Legislators meet for 20-hour marathon session

Members of the House and Senate met in their respective chambers for about 20 hours beginning at 11 a.m. May 9 and going all the way up to the official end of the legislative day at 7 a.m. May 10 to wrap up all the major spending bills for the session.

Legislators set the self-imposed deadline to leave enough time to attempt to override any vetoes of the major spending provisions.

Late in the game, House leaders upheld votes on the education bill, the bonding bill, and the state government appropriations until an agreement was reached on modifications to the Profile of Learning.

Ultimately, both bodies passed all the major bills by 7 a.m.



House Speaker Steve Sviggum gives 4-year-old Megan Danaher Wright a chance to pound the gavel during the early hours of the long session May 9. Megan is the daughter of Jeanne Danaher, executive director of the House Republican Caucus.



Nearing the end of a 20-hour work day May 10, pages, left to right, Andrea Crawford, Matt Haggerty, Suzan Koroglu, Kelly Jo Tungland, and Scott Gregory, wait patiently for the 7 a.m. deadline for adjournment.



Alone in the House chamber in the early morning hours of May 10, after many hours of debate, Rep. Ted Winter, one of the last to exit the House chamber, removes some needed items from his desk.



Rep. John Dorn, left, noon May 9 as the H



and Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba talk in the retiring room late in the after-
house debates a major conference committee report.



Rep. Alice Seagren, center, carries a blanket, several bills, and a bouquet of flowers
as she makes her way out of the House chamber early in the morning May 10, after
members spent about 20 hours debating and voting on major bills.



Legislators trudge down the Capitol steps after 7 a.m.
May 10.

A fat load of tax cuts

House passes tax bill including \$142 million in income tax cuts and license tab fee reductions and a \$685 million sales tax rebate



House Tax Conference Committee chair, Rep. Ron Abrams, *right*, smiles at his Senate counterpart, Sen. Doug Johnson, as they discuss who will most benefit from a tax rebate during a recent hearing.

By DAVID MAEDA

The omnibus tax bill that nearly killed the session won final passage in the House May 9 on a 124-6 vote.

The House and Senate had been deadlocked for weeks over the amount available for tax cuts.

“The process we got here is not one that covers any of us with a great deal of glory,” said Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the bill’s sponsor and chair of the House Taxes Committee. “The bill that is before us probably does not satisfy the Republicans. It probably does not satisfy the DFL members. The only one who may be totally happy here is Gov. Ventura.”

Abrams words were a reflection on the agreement designating a third of the \$525 million available for permanent tax cuts and spending measures to the House, Senate, and the governor for each to decide how to use.

The original House omnibus tax bill would have provided income tax cuts of about \$501 million for 2000. The final version of the bill calls for income tax cuts of about \$142 million for that period.

The bill (HF4127) incorporates the governor’s proposal to reduce license tab fees in the state. Under the measure, the maximum

tab fee would be set at \$189 in the second year of a car’s life and \$99 in the third through tenth years. The fee in the first year would remain unchanged, as would the minimum \$35 tax that applies to all cars older than 10 years.

For the second year in a row, income tax rates in all three brackets would be provided. Here’s how the proposed cuts break down.

- In the lowest bracket (paid on income up to \$25,680 for married couples and up to \$17,570 for individuals), the rate would be reduced from 5.5 percent to 5.35 percent.

- In the middle bracket (paid on income up between \$25,680 and \$102,030 for married couples and between \$17,570 and \$57,710 for individuals), the rate would be reduced from 7.25 percent to 7.05 percent.

- The upper bracket rate would be reduced from 8 percent to 7.85 percent for income over \$102,030 for couples and over \$57,710 for individuals.

For an unmarried head of household, the lower bracket rate of 5.35 percent would be applied to income up to \$21,630, the middle rate of 7.05 percent would be applied to income up to \$86,910, and the upper rate of 7.85 percent would be for any income over \$86,910.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) criticized the rate reduction for the upper bracket, saying that the state’s wealthy stand to benefit from the cuts in all three brackets. He said the state’s lower wage earners pay the highest percentage of their income in taxes.

But House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) said that those who pay the most taxes should get the most relief.

“Fairness is based on getting back what you pay in,” Pawlenty said. “This (bill) is a modest step in the right direction. It is fair, proportional, and weighted toward the middle class.”

The bill also would provide a one-time \$635 million sales tax rebate, based on 1998 receipts. Abrams said the rebate is similar to last year’s, though it is smaller.

Rebates for married couples and heads of households would be at least \$168 and could go as high as \$2,400. For other filers, the minimum would be \$95 and the maximum would be \$1,200.

Taxpayers could expect a check of about 40 percent to 45 percent of what they received last year and the rebate checks would be mailed out in August, he said.

People eligible for the automatic rebate would be those who had income tax liability in 1998, those who filed a claim for the 1998 property tax rebate, and those who had social security income in 1998. Unlike last year’s rebate, dependents would be eligible for a rebate equal to 35 percent of the amount a non-dependent would receive.

Abrams said that the bill would provide agricultural assistance for farms located in 31 counties that were declared disaster counties in 1999 by President Clinton or were contiguous to a disaster county. Farmers in those counties would receive a payment equal to \$4 for each acre covered under crop insurance in 2000.

The bill also would increase the percentage of earnings used in calculating the state’s working family credit. That credit is similar to the federal earned income credit that provides a wage supplement equal to a percentage of the earnings of low-income individuals.

The bill would increase the percentage of earnings used in calculating the working family credit so that for all claimants, the credit equals at least 25 percent of the federal earned income tax credit.

The bill now goes to the governor. 

Funding bill on track

House passes \$600 million package that saves light rail and returns emphasis to neglected infrastructure, backers say

By CHRIS VETTER

A \$600 million transportation funding package passed by the House May 9 reflects a number of changes from the original version passed last month.

The original House bill would have cancelled remaining funding for the Hiawatha light-rail transit project and would have bonded for bridge and building improvements.

The new bill preserves light-rail funding and appropriates cash for nearly all transportation items.

“This is a well-balanced bill,” said Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska), sponsor of the House bill. “It finally puts an emphasis on transportation. It’s one of the best opportunities we’ve had in transportation in a long time.”

The bill (HF2891) won final passage on a 96-35 vote.

The bill features \$405 million in cash spend-

ings on Twin Cities highways and another \$177 million on rural interregional corridors, which are major roadways that connect urban and rural areas.

Another \$100 million for transportation will come from trunk highway bonds.

The bill does not include any new funding for Capitol Security or increases in the number of troopers assigned to the governor’s security team. The Senate had sought \$232,000 for more troopers at the Capitol.

Transit debate

During negotiations over the weekend of May 6 and 7, House members on the bill’s conference committee agreed to drop their stance of repealing \$92 million in bonds for light-rail transit.

“Without the support of the Senate and governor, we really didn’t have a choice,” Molnau

said. “You have to know where reality is.”

Provisions in two other bills that might have halted light rail have also been removed because of a veto threat.

It is unclear if the transportation bill has the support of Gov. Jesse Ventura, who sought about \$60 million for public transit.

Sen. Dean Johnson (DFL-Willmar) suggested the governor use a portion of the \$175 million he could allocate for permanent spending toward transit needs.

The governor, House, and Senate leaders agreed last week to split available money three ways — giving the House, Senate and

governor each \$175 million to spend however they wanted.

“If there is more money for transit, it must come from other sources,” Johnson said during conference committee negotiations.

The transportation finance bill faced opposition from some metro legislators, who also said it would not adequately fund transit programs. Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park) noted that only \$20 million of the funds would go toward transit.

“The emphasis on transit is missing,” Johnson said. “It’s a very shortsighted manner in dealing with transportation.”

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) agreed that the bill is far from balanced.

“It is an absolutely perfect bill, for the 1950s,” Wagenius said. “It’s not perfect for now or the future.”

The governor succeeded in getting some of his desired transit funding elsewhere. He pushed to get \$44 million to pay for transit in the metropolitan area included in this year’s capital projects bill (HF4078). That’s short of his original request, and it left him with less money to devote to cutting fees for license plate tabs.

While the bill would not strip funding for light rail, a provision remains that would not allow the Department of Transportation to seek federal funds for the Hiawatha line unless the money is available to the state only because of light rail. In other words, if the money could be used for roads or bridges in Minnesota, the department could not seek the money for light rail.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) spoke against this provision, saying the language would limit money coming into the state from Washington, D.C., and the money will be re-directed to other states considering rail projects.

The bill also would allow the Metropolitan Council to sell or lease naming rights to the 14 transit stations that are planned along the 11-mile Hiawatha line.

Department spending

The omnibus transportation bill calls for \$39 million in cash for bridge improvements or replacements. The House had sought \$44 million in bonds. However, the House accepted the Senate position to pay for the upgrades with cash.

Continued on page 24



Reps. Steve Wenzel, Bernie Leider, Michelle Rifenberg, and Tom Workman pour over each section of the omnibus transportation bill during a long day in conference committee May 8.

ing for road improvements. House leaders have said it’s important to take advantage of the \$1.8 billion projected surplus for the biennium and fund areas that have been underfunded in recent history.

The Department of Transportation would spend \$177 million for eliminating bottle-

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill has passed both the House and Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor, who has several options when considering a bill, can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill;
- or do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium (even-numbered years), a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (Latin for adjournment "without a date certain"). If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes (save pocket vetoes) the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills

passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history—at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

This information is also available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "Legislative Initiatives" link, then click on "Legislative Log 2000."

Key:

CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
Res. 4	4060	2348*	Resolution for release of Americans held in North Korea, China, Russia and Vietnam.	4/3/00	
251	2980	2763*	Fishing season modified.	2/16/00	
252	2634	2411*	Northern Itasca hospital board membership requirements modified.	3/1/00	
253	2521	2320*	Lake Edwards township name change.	3/1/00	
254	76	86*	K-12 education technical changes provided.	3/7/00	
255	2067*	2071	Juvenile offenders modifications.	3/7/00	
256	2722*	2502	Kittson County town dissolution authority.	3/7/00	
257	2535*	2291	Shorewood authorized to elect city council members by ward		3/13/00
258	3039	2554*	Wadena County truth in taxation process advertisement requirement penalty exemption.	3/13/00	
259	3338*	2907	Scott County officials duties reorganized.	3/14/00	
260	2749*	2464	Revisor's bill.	3/14/00	
261	2642*	2552	Search firms surety bonding requirements modified.	3/14/00	
262	2774	2485*	Carisoprodol schedule IV controlled substance listing effective date delayed.	3/20/00	
263	2680	2465*	Political party treasurers authorized to sign political contribution refund receipt forms.	3/20/00	
264	3232	2692*	Business corporations and limited liability companies shareholder rights modified.	3/20/00	
265	2603	2346*	Permanently disabled hunters permit privileges modified.	3/20/00	
266	2723*	2528	McLeod County office authority extended.	3/23/00	
267	3236*	3236	Vital record certified copy issuance provisions modified.	3/23/00	
268	979*	2059	Landlords authorized to apportion utility payments among units.	3/23/00	
269	1865*	2094	Nursing mothers needs study by the Supreme Court Jury Reform Task Force required.	3/23/00	
270	2815*	2386	Hennepin County District Court fine proceeds distribution modified.	3/23/00	
271	3064	2776*	St. Louis County nursing home renovation approval deadline extended.	3/23/00	
272	3762	3355*	Port authority electronic funds disbursement authorized.	3/23/00	
273	2927*	2685	Metropolitan Inter-County Association group insurance protection authorized.	3/23/00	

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
274	3766*	3676	Pawnbrokers computerized records transmission format specified.	3/23/00	
275	2873*	2516	Anoka County department head time requirements clarified.	3/23/00	
276	3113*	3089	Pharmacies permitted an additional certified technician.	3/24/00	
277	118*	160	State agency commissioners acting service time limited.		3/24/00
278	2505*	2289	Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period.	3/24/00	
279	2502*	3207	C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway designated.	3/24/00	
280	2824*	2578	Collector motor vehicles license plate option.	3/24/00	
281	3156*	2709	I-35 designation as 34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division Highway.	3/24/00	
282	3132*	2890	Security deposit interest rates provided.	3/24/00	
283	2836*	2982	National Guard and organized militia membership eligibility clarified.	3/27/00	
284	3222*	3117	Health-related licensing boards reporting requirements modified.	3/27/00	
285	3332*	3120	Dairy research and promotion council alternative term expiration dates authorized.	3/27/00	
286	3433*	3292	St. Paul Port Authority recreational facilities and purposes authority modified.	3/27/00	
287	3475	2813*	State vehicle identification requirements modified.	3/27/00	
288	3142*	2844	Trunk Highway No. 4 designated as Richard J. Mathiowetz Memorial Highway.	3/28/00	
289	2687	2652*	Electric power generating plant siting act exemptions expanded.	3/28/00	
290	3016	2756*	Hospital districts annexation authority expanded.	3/28/00	
291	3003	3097*	Department of Corrections fugitive apprehension unit created.	3/28/00	
292	3421*	2779	Electric cooperatives' election to be regulated petition and balloting provisions modified.	3/28/00	
293	3053*	2508	Collector vehicles authorized to display a blue light as part of rear brakes.	3/28/00	
294	3196*	2978	Nursing facility employee pension benefit costs treated as PERA contributions.	3/28/00	
295	3375	3161*	Health care purchasing alliances modified.	3/28/00	
296	3188	3253*	Special transportation services medical assistance reimbursement study required.	3/28/00	
297	3281	2691*	State building energy code authority transferred to commissioner of administration.	3/28/00	
298	2909	2365*	Physician assistant supervisory requirement modified.	3/28/00	
299	3370	3330*	Department of Corrections housekeeping bill.	3/28/00	
300	3219	2903*	Omnibus gambling bill.	3/31/00	
301	1333	2193*	Wood sales contracts regulated.	3/31/00	
302	2785	2821*	Charitable organization annual report filing requirements modified.	3/31/00	
303	2883	2579*	Prescription drug discounts regulated.	3/31/00	
304	2675	2569*	Vicarious liability insurance coverage for punitive and exemplary damages authorized.	3/31/00	
305	3399	3145*	Minnetonka qualified newspaper designation priority variance.	3/31/00	
306	2588	2326*	Monarch designated as the state butterfly.	3/31/00	
307	3209*	2699	Health care cost containment major commitment expenditure report requirements modified.	4/3/00	
308	3352	3586*	Lighted fishing lures authorized.	4/3/00	
309	2719*	2436	Rental automobile insurance coverage regulated.	4/3/00	
310	2809*	2631	Ah-Gwah-Ching nursing center admissions criteria clarified.		4/3/00 †
311	2688*	2769	Omnibus crime prevention and judiciary finance bill.	4/3/00	
312	3226	2896*	Nursing home resident assistants authorized and survey process procedure developed.	4/3/00	
313	2994	2748*	Ambulance service and EMT requirements modified.	4/3/00	
314	3212	2734*	Home care and personal care provider transportation expense reimbursement studied.	4/3/00	
315	3048	2868*	New medical assistance case-mix system based on federal minimum data set transition timelines.	4/3/00	
316	3107	2634*	Civil commitment relative notification provided and minor voluntary treatment consent provisions modified.	4/3/00	
317	3306	3549*	Residential hospice program requirements modified.	4/3/00	
318	3023	2701*	Lawful gambling fraud defined and criminal penalties imposed.	4/3/00	
319	3365	2941*	Vulnerable adult neglect and medical error provisions modified.	4/3/00	
320	3220	2510*	Real property recording and redemption and common interest ownership provisions modified.	4/4/00	
321	3596	3369*	Special environmental purpose districts pilot projects.	4/4/00	

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
322	3310	3055*	Health plan contract stacking regulated and remedy provided.	4/4/00	
323	3290	2894*	Occupational safety and health discrimination complaint communications classified as privileged.	4/4/00	
324	3555	3283*	Snowmobile metal traction device sticker requirement civil enforcement provided.	4/4/00	
325	1590*	1952	Warrant authority of alcohol and gambling agents clarified.	4/4/00	
326	2819	2444*	Stearns County land conveyance authorized.	4/4/00	
327	3103	3005*	Human services licensing provisions modified.	4/4/00	
328	3152	2905*	Local government units purchase provisions modified.	4/4/00	
329	3169*	3167	Dakota County personnel board of appeals provisions modified.	4/4/00	
330	2670*	2566	Mental retardation community-based waived services modified.	4/4/00	
331	3868	3260*	Aquatic farm licensing requirements modified.	4/4/00	
332	4076	2653*	Internet state agency grant information required and uniform application developed.	4/4/00	
333	2940*	2735	Dry cleaner environmental response and reimbursement law modified.	4/4/00	
334	2936	2511*	Public and private property entry authorized for the purposes of examinations and surveys.	4/4/00	
335	3327	2676*	Local government authorization to petition to amend or repeal rules sunset modified.	4/6/00	
336	3571	2828*	Gambling regulated, specified activities prohibited, and shipment of gambling devices regulated.	4/6/00	
337	2559	2546*	Inland water sunken logs recovery and historical artifacts ownership provided.	4/6/00	
338	3342	3025*	Foster care providers medical equipment operation competency required.	4/6/00	
339	3134*	2857	Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission authority to enter specified state lands limited.	4/6/00	
340	3122*	2901	Medical Assistance, General Assistance, MinnesotaCare, and health care program provisions modified.	4/6/00	
341	3510*	3378	Taking two deer authorization extended in specified counties.	4/6/00	
342	2656*	3441	Auto glass repair and replacement regulated, and rebates and incentives limited.	4/6/00	
343	3806	3554*	Nonprofit organization re-employment compensation provisions modified.	4/6/00	
344	465	624*	Firefighter training and education board created.	4/6/00	
345	2803*	3119	Court reporters allowed to organize under the Public Employment Labor Relations Act.	4/10/00	
346	2969	2803*	Certified public accountant licensing requirements modified.	4/10/00	
347	3477	2499*	Speech language pathology and audiology services medical assistance clarified.	4/10/00	
348	2761	3379*	Omnibus tax-forfeited land bill.	4/10/00	
349	2643	2767*	Health plan companies and third party administrators clean health or home care services claims.	4/10/00	
350	2974	3203*	Insurance uniform accounting principles codification.	4/10/00	
351	2639	2397*	Employees bloodborne pathogens exposure reduction procedures.	4/10/00	
352	3584	3354*	Manufactured homes limited dealer license requirements clarified.	4/10/00	
353	3052	2850*	Itasca County medical assistance prepayment demonstration project participation extended.	4/10/00	
354	2751	3455*	Stolen or fraudulent checks provisions modifications.	4/10/00	
355	3347	2989*	Administrative law and workers' compensation judges conduct regulated.	4/10/00	
356	3795	3478*	Rochester firefighter probationary period rules modified.	4/10/00	
357	3119	2725*	Public defenders and court-appointed counsel minors juvenile court representation restriction.	4/10/00	
358	1267	1126*	Civil actions economic loss doctrine clarification.	4/11/00	
359	3457	2858*	Civilly committed sexual psychopaths or sexually dangerous persons transfer procedure.	4/11/00	
360	3202	2789*	Coroner compensation provisions clarified.	4/11/00	
361	947	1038*	Occupational therapist and assistant licensing requirements established.	4/11/00	
362	3208	2723*	Trust and probate provisions modified.	4/11/00	
363	3626	3428*	Psychologist supervisory and disciplinary requirements modified.	4/11/00	
364	3537	3198*	Nursing facilities closure plans and savings reallocation process established.	4/11/00	
365	3952	3533*	Claims against the state payments provided.	4/11/00	
366	3303	3566*	Criminal penalty for failure to remit motor vehicle sales taxes.	4/13/00	
367	3756	3423*	Holocaust victims insurance relief act established.	4/13/00	
368	3331*	2980	Prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault interagency task force created.	4/13/00	
369	1326*	1130	Community social services limited liability provided.	4/13/00	

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
370	3576*	3361	Solid waste and wastewater treatment facilities reporting requirements modified.	4/13/00	
371	3109*	3699	Uniform electronic transactions act adopted.	4/13/00	
372	3517	2742*	Expedited child support hearing notice to remove filing period modified.	4/13/00	
373	3613	3307*	Recreational vehicles personal injury claims.	4/13/00	
374	2807	2514*	Yellow perch limit rulemaking authority restricted.	4/13/00	
375	2613	2949*	Big Woods heritage forest established.	4/13/00	
376	3520	3290*	Environmental response and liability agreement grants provided.	4/13/00	
377	3950	3154*	Criminal and juvenile justice database access authorized for criminal defense purposes.	4/13/00	
378	2707	3348*	Organization sponsored potluck event requirements modified.	4/13/00	
379	3903	2987*	Cooperative income financing and distribution provisions modified.	4/13/00	
380	2822	2547*	Capitol area site selected for installation of Minnesota firefighters memorial.	4/13/00	
381	2888*	2573	Canoe and boating route marking authorized on a portion of the Chippewa River.	4/13/00	
382	1493	83*	Wetland regulation simplified and consolidated.	4/13/00	
383	262	76*	DWI motor vehicle forfeiture proceedings requirements modified.		4/13/00
384	3195	3701*	State designer selection board membership modified.	4/13/00	
385	3174	3195*	Dairy product adulteration penalties modified.	4/13/00	
386	3082	3150*	Higher education facilities authority bonding authority increased.	4/13/00	
387	2981	2848*	Public Employment Labor Relations Act supervisory or confidential employees list expanded.	4/13/00	
388	3566	3291*	Towed motor vehicles lien provisions clarified.		4/13/00
389	562	619*	Collection agencies regulated.	4/13/00	
390	3554	3138*	Veterans Affairs commissioner duties technical changes provided.	4/14/00	
391	3424	3346*	Electronic filing of real estate documents task force established.	4/14/00	
392	3597	2795*	State investments modified.	4/14/00	
393	3328	2877*	Iron Range off-highway vehicle recreation area addition in St. Louis County provided.	4/14/00	
394	3075	2655*	Insurance tax laws recodified.	4/14/00	
395	3066	2783*	Secretary of State fees and annual corporate registrations regulated.	4/14/00	
396	3260	2968*	Lake improvement district provisions modified.	4/14/00	
397	2229	884*	Reduced marriage license fee provided for couples who obtain premarital counseling.		4/14/00
398	3964	3626*	Comprehensive Health Association eligibility and coverage modified.	4/14/00	
399	1394	1495*	Uniform Commercial Code secured transactions provisions adopted.	4/14/00	
400	1662	1896*	Medical assistance programs and liens modified.	4/14/00	
401	3176	3410*	Neglect definition modified.	4/14/00	
402	3263	3082*	Duluth Human Rights Commission additional powers authorized.	4/14/00	
403	3519	2794*	Expedited child support process provisions modified.	4/14/00	
404	3318	3018*	Standby and alternate custodians of children designation provided.	4/14/00	
405	3577	3116*	Creditors' garnishments, executions, and levies regulated.	4/14/00	
406	304	173*	Possession of wild animals taken on the Red Lake Indian Reservation authorized.	4/14/00	
407	2570	3259*	Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.	4/13/00	
408	3512	3108*	Local and state correctional facility inmate telephone access regulated.	4/14/00	
409	2731*	2753	Motor vehicle manufacturers, distributors, and factory branches unfair practices regulated.	4/14/00	
410	2935	2363*	Dental benefit plans regulated.	4/14/00	
411	3825	3338*	Tribal police departments annual insurance cap established.	4/14/00	
412	3652	3387*	Abortion informed consent requirements modified.		4/14/00
413	1383	1231*	Optometrist licensing provisions modified.	4/14/00	
414	3633*	3550	Mighty Eighth Air Force Week designated.	4/14/00	
415	1947	1618*	Brewer and wholesaler judicial remedies modified.	4/17/00	
416	2791	2471*	Hennepin County Human Resources Board and department provisions modified.	4/17/00	
417	2846	3272*	Bleacher safety building code requirements modified.	4/17/00	

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
418	3234	3091*	Sales and use tax law recodified.	4/18/00	
419	1834	1699*	Electronic funds transfers and credit card payments to state agencies authorized.	4/18/00	
420	3495	2972*	State purchases open bidding authorized.	4/18/00	
421	2945	2615*	Persons leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms not prosecuted.	4/18/00	
422	1631	1202*	Protocol established for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens.	4/18/00	
423	2555	1733*	Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.	4/18/00	
424	3901*	3769	Housing finance agency community rehabilitation grants and loans authorized.	4/20/00	
425	3091	2484*	Motor vehicles required to be driven in the right-hand lane clarified.		4/20/00
426	2953	3023*	Vehicle registration and titling provisions modified.	4/20/00	
427	2973	2870*	Financial institution loan charges and payments regulated.	4/20/00	
428	2889	2683*	Bowfishing archery bows exempted from casing requirement.	4/20/00	
429	2671*	2567	Temporary census employee income excluded from public assistance eligibility determinations.	4/20/00	
430	2563*	2381	Mechanics' lien civil cause of action created.	4/20/00	
431	2830*	2771	Pimps and patrons of juvenile prostitution provided enhanced criminal penalties.	4/20/00	
432	3786	2456*	Wright County ditch conveyance to St. Michael and Albertville authorized.	4/24/00	
433	3274	2785*	Utility-owned vehicles exempted from specified weight restrictions.	4/24/00	
434	3292	2946*	Gasoline blended with the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether sale prohibited.	4/24/00	
435	3692*	3443	Feedlot permit provisions modified.	4/24/00	
436	2451*	2271	Legislative Electric Energy Task Force expiration date extended.	4/24/00	
437	1067	551*	Domestic abuse crime sentences and provisions modified.	4/24/00	
438	2713	2686*	Funeral acts and services regulated.	4/24/00	
439	3497*	3539	State of Minnesota attorney fees recovery regulated.	4/24/00	
440	3974	3581*	Omnibus liquor bill.	4/24/00	
441	2958	2830*	Crime of escape from custody expanded.	4/24/00	
442	2968	3139*	Veterans homes support test not to include sales tax rebates.	4/24/00	
443	2757*	2614	Biomass power mandate regulated.	4/24/00	
444	3311	3169*	Parenting plans provided, parenting time procedure clarified, and terminology modified.	4/27/00	
445	3550	3178*	Commissioner of public safety rule authority continued.	4/26/00	
446	3586	2951*	Alternative dispute resolution process use clarified.	4/26/00	
447	3960	3644*	Workers' compensation benefits increased.	4/27/00	
448	3629	2385*	Public hospital employees compensation limit exemption provided.		5/1/00
449	3020*	3199	Long-term care provisions modified.	5/1/00	
450	3047*	2944	Title insurance mortgage release certificate language modified.	5/1/00	
451	2833*	2891	Specified student behavioral data disclosed to the juvenile justice system.	5/5/00	
452	3997	3300*	Second judicial district streamlined dissolution procedure pilot project extended.	5/5/00	
453	3726	3386*	Minnesota State Colleges and Universities chancellor separate salary subdivision created.	5/5/00	
454	3378	2570*	St. Louis County unclassified service position authorized number increased.	5/5/00	
455	2673	2521*	Political subdivision corporation creation standards established.	5/5/00	
456	1748	1870*	Motor vehicle fuel franchises and marketing agreements regulated.	5/5/00	
457	3445	3257*	Legislative employment provisions modified.	5/5/00	

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

TTY, Senate 296-0250

Toll free 1-888-234-1112

TTY, House 296-9896

Toll free 1-800-657-3550

Continued from page 4

K-12 education

The Department of Children, Families and Learning would receive \$80.7 million for improvement projects in schools.

The East Metro Magnet School would receive \$16 million for a new middle school building.

School districts that would receive funding through the state's Maximum Effort Loan Program include Caledonia, Laporte, Red Lake, Cass Lake, and Ulen-Hitterdahl. The program is designed to help school districts in areas where declining enrollment, economic changes, or other conditions have made it difficult for the local taxpayers to support the school district's needs.

The department also would receive \$5 million from the state's general fund to pay for youth enrichment grants. Local governments apply for those grants to build or improve parks and recreation facilities near schools, or to pay for arts and cultural activities, clubs, athletic programs, or other recreational or academic enrichment programs for children.

Environment and natural resources

The Department of Natural Resources would receive \$73.2 million for improvements to parks, recreational trails, conservation easements, and other projects.

Como Park would receive \$16 million for a new educational resource center, which would include a visitors' reception area and meeting rooms.

And \$14 million would be available for flood hazard mitigation grants in the Red River Valley area.

A proposal to build a new DNR office building in Fergus Falls would receive \$3.3 million.

The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program would receive \$20 million. The program establishes easements along the Minnesota River to prevent soil and chemicals from eroding into the river. The program is matched by federal funds, which are available through September 2002.

Programs to reduce water pollution and improve wastewater systems would receive \$33.2 million.

The Department of Agriculture would receive \$20 million for Rural Finance Authority Loans, and \$1.7 million for other loan programs.

Other funding projects

Several other projects across the state received funding through the bill.

Two key projects originally received no support in the House bill, but the most recent version includes some funding. The new Guthrie Theater project in Minneapolis would receive

\$3 million under the measure, and the bill includes \$3 million for public safety training facilities statewide.

In addition, the Heritage Center at St. Anthony Falls would receive \$3 million. It originally was allocated \$1 million in bonds by both the House and the Senate.

Other projects include \$8.8 million for a Minneapolis Great Lakes Center, \$7.5 million for sewer repairs at the state prison in Faribault, \$7 million for the Gillette Children's Hospital in St. Paul, and \$7 million for a Veterans' Home in Hastings. 

Continued from page 13

Criminal justice

Fines for petty misdemeanors and misdemeanors would climb, under the bill. The maximum penalty for a petty misdemeanor would increase from \$200 to \$300, while the maximum fine for a misdemeanor would move from \$700 to \$1,000.

The bill features \$6.5 million in new spending for the Department of Public Safety, \$3 million for courts, and \$1.2 million for the Center for Crime Victims Services.

District courts would receive \$2.7 million to reduce judge vacancies across the state. Some salaries for judges could be paid through this appropriation.

While the bill provides no funding for Capitol Security, it would establish a committee to recommend plans for improving security at the Capitol.

Funding for the Automobile Theft Prevention Board would be cut by \$1.89 million. The funding cut includes money for a computer-controlled driving simulator.

Corrections

One of the larger changes in the bill would require the state to pay 35 percent of per diem costs for juveniles housed at the Red Wing Juvenile Correctional Facility, while counties would pay the other 65 percent. Currently, counties pay 100 percent of the costs. Costs to the Department of Corrections would be repealed on June 30, 2001.

The bill aims to increase the population at the Red Wing center. It would prohibit delinquent juveniles from being placed in out-of-state facilities unless it is for the safety of the child or if another center is closer to the child's home.

Juveniles could be placed in private juvenile detention centers or non-state facilities if they are located in Minnesota, the bill states.

The Department of Corrections would receive \$2.25 million in the bill, which includes \$500,000 for designing a joint headquarters

for the departments of Corrections and Public Safety.

Environment and Agriculture

The Department of Natural Resources would obtain \$5.4 million, under the bill. Approximately \$4 million would go toward settling legal costs incurred from litigation involving several Indian tribes.

The other \$1.4 million would be used as grants for northern counties that have wildfire concerns this year. Grants could be used to purchase emergency communications and response equipment or used for training to prepare for wildfires.

About \$1.73 million would be allocated to the Department of Agriculture under the bill. The state meat inspection program would receive \$500,000 to expand its program.

Another \$200,000 in grants would be available for farmers interested in growing short-rotation woody crops. These plants, which are grown for their fiber, would be harvested within 15 years of being planted. The bill outlines the agroforestry program and states how loans can be offered to farmers who convert agriculture land for agroforestry purposes.

The Pollution Control Agency would receive \$307,000 to administer its wastewater infrastructure fund. Agency officials could also issue citations to persons who fail to report any discharges. The current law says agency officials can only issue citations if the discharge is oil or hazardous substances.

New state recreation areas also would be created through the bill. The Big Bog recreational area would be established in Beltrami County, while the Red River recreational area would be established in Polk County.

Immigration measures

The bill would provide \$150,000 to the Department of Economic Security for alien labor certification. The bill states that the department should have a goal of certifying permanent alien laborers within 60 days of receiving an application.

The Department of Human Services would be required to use the federal Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlement (SAVE) program to conduct immigration verifications.

SAVE would be used when an immigrant applies for food assistance programs, including both state and federal programs, and when an immigrant applies for general assistance, such as Minnesota supplemental aid or group residential housing.

The human services commissioner would be required to report to the Immigration and Naturalization Service all undocumented persons identified by the use of SAVE. 

Continued from page 17

Four of the state's large highway department facilities would be upgraded or replaced at a cost of \$25.7 million, under the bill. Renovations at the Transportation Department headquarters in St. Cloud would run \$10.3 million and upgrades to the Detroit Lakes Headquarters would cost \$8.7 million. Like the bridge funding, the buildings would be funded through cash rather than with bonds.

The bill also calls for a new Regional Transportation Management Center in Roseville. The House did not support funding for the center. The bill would require the department to sell the current center within three years of completion of the new center.

The bill also includes \$15 million for a revolving loan fund, which can be used for state highway projects. The governor vetoed \$10 million for the fund last year.

Ramp meter study

A study of the ramp meter system in the Twin Cities highlights the non-funding portions of the bill. The Transportation Department would perform the study at no cost to the state.

Meters would be turned off for a period of time determined by the department to evaluate the effectiveness of the ramps. Department officials could not further specify when the

study would be done and how many days the lights would be inactive.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) wanted an independent contractor to perform the study, but Molnau said that plan was found to be infeasible.

New road commission

The bill would also establish a commission dealing with major transportation projects. The commission would hear project proposals that exceed \$5 million and have a significant role in the overall transportation system. The commission would also require environmental impact surveys to help evaluate the project.

The commission would only review and comment on projects — it would not be given final approval authority.

The commission would include seven state senators, seven members of the House, the governor or his or her appointee, and four citizens appointed by the governor.

Proper use of funds

The state attorney general and Department of Finance would be asked to examine the constitutionality of using trunk highway fund money for non-highway projects, under the bill. Molnau said money used for Office of Tourism kiosks and tort claims has been improperly spent

from the trunk highway fund, when it should have come from the general fund.

Molnau said using those funds inappropriately has cut the money available for transportation projects.

The bill would move funding for kiosks, tort claims, and other non-highway related projects from the trunk highway fund to the general fund. 

Continued from page 12

the tune of \$23 million dollars — would be available to school districts under the bill. This aid must be applied toward making accessibility improvements, or to make fire, safety, or health repairs, according to the bill.

Approximately \$16 million would be available to districts under the bill for reimbursement of certain telecommunications costs. School districts would need to submit ongoing or recurring telecommunications costs — subject to examination by officials from the Department of Children, Families and Learning — before schools could be reimbursed for the costs.

Furthermore, school districts also would be required to inform parents and staff about any use of pesticides.

The bill now heads to the governor. 

Minnesota Senate 2000 Members

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-
66 Anderson, Ellen R. (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	5537	8 Lourey, Becky (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	0293
41 Belanger Jr, William V. (R)	113 SOB	5975	54 Marty, John (DFL)	326 Cap.	5645
13 Berg, Charles A. (IND)	G-51 SOB	5094	39 Metzen, James P. (DFL)	303 Cap.	4370
61 Berglin, Linda (DFL)	309 Cap.	4261	2 Moe, Roger D. (DFL)	208 Cap.	2577
48 Betzold, Don (DFL)	306 Cap.	2556	29 Murphy, Steve (DFL)	301 Cap.	4264
64 Cohen, Richard J. (DFL)	317 Cap.	5931	25 Neuville, Thomas M. (R)	123 SOB	1279
28 Day, Dick (R)	147 SOB	9457	52 Novak, Steven G. (DFL)	322 Cap.	4334
20 Dille, Steve (R)	103 SOB	4131	43 Oliver, Edward C. (R)	121 SOB	4837
14 Fischbach, Michelle L. (R)	15 SOB	2084	34 Olson, Gen (R)	119 SOB	1282
62 Flynn, Carol (DFL)	120 Cap.	4274	19 Ourada, Mark (R)	145 SOB	5981
49 Foley, Leo (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	4154	65 Pappas, Sandra L. (DFL)	120 Cap.	1802
23 Frederickson, Dennis R. (R)	139 SOB	8138	37 Pariseau, Pat (R)	109 SOB	5252
50 Hanson, Paula E. (DFL)	328 Cap.	3219	27 Piper, Pat (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	9248
58 Higgins, Linda I. (DFL)	227 Cap.	9246	59 Pogemiller, Lawrence J. (DFL)	235 Cap.	7809
24 Hottinger, John C. (DFL)	120 Cap.	6153	57 Price, Leonard R. (DFL)	235 Cap.	297-8060
5 Janezich, Jerry R. (DFL)	328 Cap.	8017	63 Ranum, Jane B. (DFL)	306 Cap.	297-8061
40 Johnson, Dave (DFL)	111 Cap.	9261	18 Ring, Twyla (DFL)	G-9 Cap.	5419
15 Johnson, Dean E. (DFL)	124 Cap.	3826	45 Robertson, Martha R. (R)	125 SOB	4314
6 Johnson, Douglas J. (DFL)	205 Cap.	8881	35 Robling, Claire A. (R)	151 SOB	4123
46 Junge, Ember R. (DFL)	205 Cap.	2889	53 Runbeck, Linda (R)	107 SOB	1253
44 Kelley, Steve (DFL)	321 Cap.	297-8065	11 Sams, Dallas C. (DFL)	328 Cap.	297-8063
67 Kelly, Randy C. (DFL)	323 Cap.	5285	12 Samuelson, Don (DFL)	124 Cap.	4875
32 Kierlin, Bob (R)	127 SOB	5649	31 Scheevel, Kenric J. (R)	129 SOB	3903
4 Kinkel, Anthony G. "Tony" (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	4913	47 Scheid, Linda (DFL)	317 Cap.	8869
30 Kiscaden, Sheila M. (R)	135 SOB	4848	7 Solon, Sam G. (DFL)	303 Cap.	4188
16 Kleis, Dave (R)	143 SOB	6455	60 Spear, Allan H. (DFL)	120 Cap.	4191
36 Knutson, David L. (R)	133 SOB	4120	17 Stevens, Dan (R)	105 SOB	8075
51 Krentz, Jane (DFL)	235 Cap.	7061	1 Stumpf, LeRoy A. (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	8660
56 Laidig, Gary W. (R)	141 SOB	4351	42 Terwilliger, Roy (R)	115 SOB	6238
9 Langseth, Keith (DFL)	122 Cap.	3205	22 Vickerman, Jim (DFL)	226 Cap.	5650
10 Larson, Cal (R)	153 SOB	5655	38 Wiener, Deanna L. (DFL)	303 Cap.	297-8073
21 Lesewski, Arlene J. (R)	131 SOB	4125	55 Wiger, Charles W. (DFL)	325 Cap.	6820
3 Lessard, Bob (DFL)	111 Cap.	4136	26 Ziegler, Don (R)	149 SOB	5713
33 Limmer, Warren (R)	25 SOB	2159			

Minnesota House of Representatives 2000 Members

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-
49A Abeler, Jim (R)	581	1729	33A Lindner, Arlon (R)	417	7806
45A Abrams, Ron (R)	585	9934	47A Luther, Darlene (DFL)	371	3751
19B Anderson, Bruce (R)	411	5063	67A Mahoney, Tim (DFL)	223	4277
3A Anderson, Irv (DFL)	343	4936	55A Mares, Harry (R)	401	5363
6A Bakk, Thomas (Tom) (DFL)	345	2190	65B Mariani, Carlos (DFL)	209	9714
59A Biernat, Len (DFL)	303	4219	57B Marko, Sharon (DFL)	221	3135
30B Bishop, Dave (R)	453	5073	55B McCollum, Betty (DFL)	239	1188
25B Boudreau, Lynda (R)	473	8237	36B McElroy, Dan (R)	437	4212
30A Bradley, Fran (R)	559	9249	54A McGuire, Mary Jo (DFL)	259	4342
53B Broecker, Sherry (R)	533	7153	39B Milbert, Bob (DFL)	243	4192
35B Buesgens, Mark (R)	415	1072	35A Molnau, Carol L. (R)	443	8872
46B Carlson, Lyndon R. (DFL)	283	4255	21B Mulder, Richard (R)	515	4336
47B Carruthers, Phil (DFL)	217	3709	58A Mullery, Joe (DFL)	387	4262
10B Cassell, George (R)	421	4317	8A Murphy, Mary (DFL)	357	2676
52A Chaudhary, Satveer (DFL)	311	4331	20A Ness, Robert "Bob" (R)	509	4344
23A Clark, James T. (R)	583	9303	10A Nornes, Bud (R)	471	4946
61A Clark, Karen (DFL)	307	0294	19A Olson, Mark (R)	501	4237
11A Daggett, Roxann (R)	439	4293	16A Opatz, Joe (DFL)	279	6612
31B Davids, Gregory M. (R)	367	9278	60B Orfield, Myron (DFL)	377	9281
65A Dawkins, Andy (DFL)	215	5158	29B Oskopp, Mike (R)	449	9236
14A Dehler, Steve (R)	491	7808	66A Osthoff, Tom (DFL)	273	4224
29A Dempsey, Jerry (R)	549	8635	11B Otremba, Mary Ellen (DFL)	393	3201
27A Dorman, Dan (R)	579	8216	37A Ozment, Dennis (R)	479	4306
24A Dorn, John (DFL)	201	3248	42B Paulsen, Erik (R)	445	7449
64A Entenza, Matt (DFL)	213	8799	38B Pawlenty, Tim (R)	459	4128
42A Erhardt, Ron (R)	591	4363	64B Paymar, Michael (DFL)	211	4199
17A Erickson, Sondra (R)	407	6746	32A Pelowski Jr., Gene (DFL)	295	8637
1B Finseth, Tim (R)	517	9918	13B Peterson, Doug (DFL)	287	4228
44A Foliard, Betty (DFL)	281	3964	39A Pugh, Thomas W. (DFL)	267	6828
4A Fuller, Doug (R)	525	5516	46A Rest, Ann H. (DFL)	277	4176
36A Gerlach, Chris (R)	531	5506	28A Reuter, Doug (IND)	567	5368
63B Gleason, Mark S. (DFL)	313	5375	44B Rhodes, Jim (R)	409	9889
9A Goodno, Kevin (R)	563	5515	32B Rifenberg, Michelle (R)	423	1069
58B Gray, Gregory (DFL)	229	8659	18A Rostberg, Jim (R)	545	5364
62A Greenfield, Lee (DFL)	207	0173	5A Rukavina, Tom (DFL)	375	0170
54B Greiling, Mindy (DFL)	253	5387	17B Schumacher, Leslie J. (DFL)	327	5377
26A Gunther, Bob (R)	379	3240	41A Seagren, Alice (R)	477	7803
52B Haake, Barb (R)	429	0141	57A Seifert, Jim (R)	577	7807
48A Haas, Bill (R)	569	5513	21A Seifert, Marty (R)	593	5374
50A Hackbarth, Tom (R)	575	2439	2B Skoe, Rod (DFL)	321	4265
22B Harder, Elaine (R)	487	5373	62B Skoglund, Wes (DFL)	251	4330
12A Hasskamp, Kris (DFL)	353	4333	34A Smith, Steve (R)	503	9188
66B Hausman, Alice (DFL)	245	3824	3B Solberg, Loren A. (DFL)	309	2365
8B Hilty, Bill (DFL)	241	4308	33B Stanek, Rich (R)	543	5502
37B Holberg, Mary Liz (R)	433	6926	14B Stang, Doug (R)	597	4373
56A Holsten, Mark William (R)	381	3018	24B Storm, Julie (R)	527	7065
4B Howes, Larry (R)	431	2451	28B Sviggum, Steve (R)	463	2273
6B Huntley, Thomas (DFL)	351	2228	7A Swapinski, Dale (DFL)	331	4282
7B Jaros, Mike (DFL)	291	4246	23B Swenson, Howard (R)	539	8634
18B Jennings, Loren Geo (DFL)	237	0518	43B Sykora, Barb (R)	403	4315
48B Johnson, Alice M. (DFL)	349	5510	50B Tingelstad, Kathy (R)	507	5369
15A Juhnke, Al (DFL)	329	6206	5B Tomassoni, David J. (DFL)	233	0172
59B Kahn, Phyllis (DFL)	255	4257	67B Trimble, Steve (DFL)	289	4201
26B Kalis, Henry J. (DFL)	317	4240	25A Tuma, John (R)	369	4229
60A Kelliher, Margaret Anderson (DFL)	231	0171	1A Tunheim, Jim (DFL)	335	9635
20B Kielkucki, Tony (R)	521	1534	34B Van Dellen, Henry Todd (R)	571	5511
16B Knoblach, Jim (R)	451	6316	51B Vandever, Ray (R)	529	4124
49B Koskinen, Luanne (DFL)	301	4231	63A Wagenius, Jean (DFL)	227	4200
53A Krinkie, Philip (R)	365	2907	61B Wejcman, Linda (DFL)	203	7152
15B Kubly, Gary W. (DFL)	315	4346	12B Wenzel, Stephen G. (DFL)	389	4247
31A Kuisle, William (R)	565	4378	51A Westerberg, Andrew (R)	523	4226
56B Larsen, Peg (R)	551	4244	9B Westfall, Robert L. (Bob) (R)	553	6829
40A Larson, Dan (DFL)	225	7158	13A Westrom, Torrey (R)	557	4929
27B Leighton, Rob (DFL)	261	4193	38A Wilkin, Tim (R)	413	3533
40B Lenczewski, Ann (DFL)	337	4218	22A Winter, Ted (DFL)	247	5505
45B Leppik, Peggy (R)	485	7026	41B Wolf, Ken (R)	359	5185
2A Lieder, Bernie L. (DFL)	323	5091	43A Workman, Tom (R)	537	5066

Note: Room numbers are subject to change.

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

Tuesday, May 9

HF4175—Buesgens (R)
**Governmental Operations &
Veterans Affairs Policy**

Regular legislative sessions confined to odd-numbered years.

HF4176—Broecker (R)
Health & Human Services Policy

MSAs; Congress memorialized to remove medical savings account restrictions.

HF4177—Paulsen (R)
Taxes

Sales tax deduction provided to retailers for collections cost compensation.

COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

MAY 15 - 19, 2000

MONDAY, May 15

No meetings have been announced.

TUESDAY, May 16

No meetings have been announced.

WEDNESDAY, May 17

10:45 a.m.

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

123 State Capitol
Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty
Agenda: Calendar for the Day for May 17.

11 a.m.

The House meets in session.

THURSDAY, May 18

No meetings have been announced.

FRIDAY, May 19

No meetings have been announced.

Anne Wilson Schaefer, in her book, *Women's Reality*, stated that for ages, people have spent a lot of time and energy speculating on the existence of a dualistic world of good and evil, right and left, up and down, black and white. She called it an "Either-Or Syndrome."

Schaefer noted that the "Either-Or," concept becomes more efficient when an alternative is introduced, and more effectual if the concept is "Either and Or."

For the Queen of Hearts, in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*, rarely was there an "either-or" situation. The Queen's decision for her subjects' actions was limited — whether it was during a game of croquet, or because roses in the garden were painted red. Invariably, her verdict was, "Off with his head" for anyone whose actions she disliked.

While the King of Hearts quietly deferred to the Queen's demands, which clearly lacked any thought of compromise, unknown to her, he would pardon many of the potential victims.

But Alice was bold and outspoken. She offered ideas and alternatives to the Mad Hatter, the Gryphon, the White Rabbit, and even to the Queen. Conversely, the Queen's arbitrary decision was final, or so she thought.

Reflections

Minnesota's legislative process is directly the opposite. Based on diverse reasoning and compromise, the process is a coming together of ideas that get debated and are usually improved by amendments for positive results. When this happens, changes may be added or deleted for striking some kind of balance among lawmakers.

The Legislature is comprised of two major parties in a two-body system. In recent history, it has been in the forefront of other states for introducing new ideas. Thus, laws in the state are implemented by unique, innovative, and ingenious methods through change and exchange of ideas, though not always amicably.

Now there is an augmentation to that process of compromise — the addition of another set of ideas through a third party in the executive branch. Its introduction provides different ingredients to add to the final mix of legislative decisions that will effect the lives of citizens in the state.

For those unfamiliar with proceedings "on the hill" in St. Paul, some of the information they encounter may resemble the confusing poem, "Jabberwocky" from Carroll's *Alice's Adventures*.

The first two lines, "Twas brillig and the slithy tove, did gyre and gimble in the wabe..." are small examples of what appear to be paragraphs full of nonsense and devoid of meaning. Activity at the Capitol is much less confusing and easier to understand — more than a newcomer to the legislative process might realize.

In some ways, it's like Alice's conversation with the Cheshire Cat on seeking information about her travel destination. "That depends on where you want to get to," said the Cat. "So long as I get somewhere," said Alice. "Oh, you're sure to do that," said the Cat, "if only you walk long enough."

Lawmakers do not and cannot go as far in making final decisions as did the Queen of Hearts. Yet, for some onlookers this year, their willingness to even compromise seemed impossible. But as expected, the 2000 Legislature and the executive branch now have pooled their ideas and struck a balance to bring the 81st Legislative Session to its conclusion.

In the words of Benjamin Franklin, one of the nation's founding fathers, "No democratic government can last long without conciliation and compromise."

—LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

Order a free copy of *New Laws 2000*

Complete this form to receive your copy of *New Laws 2000*, a publication describing the new laws passed this year. The publication will provide brief, easy-to-read summaries of the bills that were passed by both the House and Senate and signed or vetoed by the governor. *New Laws 2000* will be available a few months after the session ends. Copies will be mailed without charge to those who order them.



Do you want to receive a copy of *New Laws 2000*? Yes No

Please place this form (with the mailing label on the back) in an envelope.

Mail it by May 15, 2000, to:

New Laws 2000, House Public Information Office, 175 State Office Building, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298.

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Please take a moment to tell us what you think of *Session Weekly*. Your opinions will help us plan for next year.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Highlights | <input type="checkbox"/> News Features (First Reading, At Issue) | <input type="checkbox"/> Historical Features |
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5. Please rate the following aspects of the *Session Weekly* by checking one answer in each set.

- | | | | |
|--------------|---|--|---|
| Writing | <input type="checkbox"/> Hard to understand | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat understandable | <input type="checkbox"/> Easy to understand |
| Story Length | <input type="checkbox"/> Too short | <input type="checkbox"/> Too long | <input type="checkbox"/> Just right |
| Layout | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent |
| Photographs | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor | <input type="checkbox"/> Average | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent |

6. Do you have any suggestions for improving the magazine? _____

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

Major 2000 spending bills

Total new spending in 2000 capital investment (or bonding) bill, in millions ...	\$640.3
Amount funded through general obligation bonds, in millions	\$470.9
Amount funded through general fund cash, in millions	\$98
User-financed bonds, in millions	\$71.3
Total bonds allocated to the University of Minnesota, in millions	\$100.2
Funding for the Art Building on the Twin Cities campus, in millions	\$18.5
Total bonds allocated for the MnSCU system, in millions	\$131
Funding for Anoka-Hennepin Technical College improvements, in millions	\$12.5
Funding for the athletic facility at Minnesota State University, Mankato, in millions	\$6.9
Funding for a library at Metro State University	\$0
Amount of funds allocated in capital investment bill for metropolitan bus-only transitways, fiscal years 2001-02, in millions	\$44
Bond funds for the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension lab, in millions	\$58
Total transportation spending in omnibus bill, in millions	\$600
Amount for road improvements, in millions	\$405
Amount for bridge improvements, in millions	\$39
Income tax cuts for 2000 provided in the omnibus tax bill, in millions	\$142
Percent decrease for the lower and upper brackets	0.15
Percent decrease for the middle bracket	0.2
Maximum license tab fees for a car in its second year, under the omnibus tax plan	\$189
Maximum tab fees for a car in years three to 10	\$99
For cars more than 10 years old	\$35
Total sales tax rebate package, based on 1998 receipts, in omnibus tax plan, in millions	\$635
Minimum rebate for married couples and heads of households	\$68
Maximum rebate for married couples	\$2,400
Minimum rebate for all other filers	\$95
Maximum rebate for all other filers	\$1,200
New spending in any measure for Capitol police and security	\$0
Health and human services funding in state government appropriations bill, in millions	\$97.3
Allocations from Health Care Access Fund, in millions	\$4.66

Sources: HF2699 (omnibus state government finance), HF3800 (omnibus education), HF4078 (capital investment), HF4127 (omnibus taxes), HF2891 (omnibus transportation), House Fiscal Analysis Department.

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LATEST NEW LAWS AND VEToes

HF4178-HF4181

SESSION Weekly

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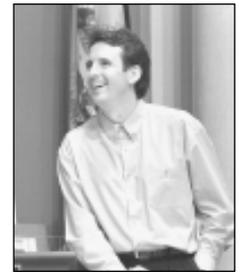
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On the cover: Illuminated only once a year, the great chandelier above the rotunda can be seen shining through the windows of the Capitol dome May 11, Minnesota statehood day.

—Photo by Andrew Von Bank



Down to the wire

Legislators end grueling session with long nights, veto overrides, and heartfelt goodbyes to departing colleagues

By DAVID MAEDA

It took 118 out of the 120 legislative days allowed, but the 2000 Legislature has finally completed its work.

Officially the longest session since the Legislature began meeting annually in the early 1970s, many of this year's major bills were passed during a marathon 20-hour session that began 11 a.m. May 9 and ended at 7 a.m. May 10.

Among the measures passed during the marathon session were bills providing tax cuts and rebates, further transportation and education spending, and a bonding bill that spends \$639.5 million for repairs to state facilities and new construction projects.

For a time, it appeared that the 2000 session would be known only as the year the state's butterfly was officially designated in law (the monarch butterfly) and also the year a law was passed loosening the state's regulations on community potluck dinners.

- In addition, the 2000 Legislature:
- Approved a measure allowing desperate mothers to drop off unwanted newborn babies at any hospital in the state;
 - Provided higher compensation to injured workers while reducing premiums to employers;
 - Approved a study to look at the establishment of a felony DWI penalty in the state;
 - Toughened penalties for minors caught using false identification to purchase alcohol and tobacco;
 - Provided approximately \$50 million to the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency for building and financing affordable housing units;
 - Approved an increase in game and fish licenses to help bolster natural resources; and
 - Passed a wolf management plan for the state.

The roadblock to the major spending and tax cut legislation was a disagreement between the House and Senate over the amount of money available that would be sustainable in the future. The impasse was finally broken with a unique arrangement allowing each legislative body and the governor to decide how to use a third of the \$525 million surplus.

The House used most of its third to provide permanent income tax cuts. Along with rate reductions in all three income tax brackets and a reduction in vehicle registration fees, there will be a \$635 million rebate to taxpayers. The Department of Revenue has indicated those checks, which will average \$377 for married couples and \$187 for single filers, will be mailed out in August.

Major capital improvement projects include \$58 million for a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension building, \$44 million for transit in the metropolitan area, \$35 million for a Molecular Cellular Biology building at the University of Minnesota, \$33.2 million for programs to reduce water pollution and improve wastewater systems, \$20 million for conservation easements along the Minnesota River, \$20 million for Rural Finance Authority Loans, and \$18.5 million for a new Art Building at the U of M.

The \$600 million transportation bill spends \$405 million in cash for road improvements, with \$177 million used to eliminate bottlenecks in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Another \$39 million will be spent on roads and bridges throughout the state.

The \$184 million education bill increases

spending for high-speed Internet access for schools and teacher training.

With most of its major work out of the way, the Legislature sent 32 bills to Governor Jesse Ventura on May 11. Apprehensive over a repeat of last year, when the governor caught members by surprise with a number of vetoes after they had adjourned, time was left to act upon any vetoes this session.

The governor ended up line-item vetoing only a handful of appropriations. And on Wednesday, May 17, both the House and Senate once again held all-night marathon floor sessions to consider veto overrides and debate the Profile of Learning bill.

Four of the governor's vetoes were overridden. They were \$1 million for a Lanesboro arts center, \$3 million for a new Guthrie Theater, \$135,000 for an organ donor mobile unit, and \$1.5 million for multicultural library grants in St. James and Pelican Rapids.

The House voted on 10 other attempted overrides, but those measures fell short of the necessary two-thirds majority.

The four veto overrides were historic — never before has a governor had so many of his vetoes overridden.

Last year, the Legislature overrode Ventura's veto of a bill allowing court evidence about allegedly defective seat belts in product liability lawsuits. Earlier this session the Legislature overrode another Ventura veto, of a bill aimed to prevent closure of a state-run nursing facility in Walker.

Prior to the Ventura administration there had only been a combined total of four veto overrides since 1939.

Having completed the overrides, the Legislature turned its attention to one final piece of work. In the waning hours of the session, the House and Senate struggled to find a compromise on the Profile of Learning bill.

Following weeks of talks between House and Senate leadership over what to do about the Profile, the Legislature passed a measure that would allow schools to ease requirements under the show-what-you-know initiative.



House Speaker Steve Sviggum and Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty share a light moment as the House worked into the night May 17.

Legislators also agreed to discard a second proposal that would have allowed school boards the choice between the Profile and a back-to-basics alternative proposed earlier in the session called the North Star Standard.

Thus came a unique end to a long and at times difficult session. With much focus throughout the session devoted to the unicameral debate, rarely has there been as much attention on the lawmaking process itself.

(Bills calling for a constitutional amendment allowing voters to decide on whether or not the state should adopt a one-house legislature stalled in committee in both the House and Senate.)

Twelve members of the House took their last votes early May 18. Some of them are leaving to pursue higher office, while others are returning to a more private life.

The departing members are Reps. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada), Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center), Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park), Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland), Betty McCollum (DFL-North St. Paul), Myron Orfield (DFL-Mpls), Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope), Doug Reuter (Ind.-Owatonna), Jim Rostberg (R-Isanti), Steve Trimble (DFL-St. Paul), and Linda Wejcman (DFL-Mpls).

Now as the new laws take effect, more and more attention may be directed toward their long-term effects and impact on everyday life across the state.

Therefore, it seems appropriate that when House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) moved that the House adjourn its 81st session "sine die," many Minnesotans were just beginning to wake up for another workday. 🐾

(Writer Jon Fure contributed to this report.)

Editor's note: This section includes summaries of many key laws passed during the 2000 Legislative Session. For a full listing of all bills passed this year, see the Governor's Desk section, beginning on page 35.

★ **AGRICULTURE**

Feedlot rules relaxed

A new law will relax new feedlot rules proposed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

Effective April 25, 2000, the law gives specific instructions to the agency on how the rules should be amended before their final adoption.

The law also prohibits the agency from imposing additional conditions as part of a feedlot permit after the proposed rules are finally adopted.

Under the law, state livestock operations will be allowed to grow, and regulation by the agency will be restricted.

Agency officials want farmers to prevent the flow of animal waste from lots into rivers, streams, and ground water. The agency is also concerned about air pollution caused by feedlots.

The MPCA's new plan would put limits on hydrogen sulfide gas found in manure and require that manure spills on roads be treated as serious problems. Sloppy handling of manure could result in fines if the revised agency rules were to go into effect.

The commissioner of the Department of Agriculture will be required by the law to work with the University of Minnesota to develop educational and training programs addressing manure applicator concerns, including water quality protection and the development of manure management plans.

If violations are found, the law requires that they be remedied in a timely manner.

A feedlot operator with less than 300 animal units, however, could not be required to spend more than \$3,000 to upgrade a lot unless assistance totaling at least 75 percent of the cost is available, under the law.

The law exempts livestock production facilities from state standards governing air quality in the area surrounding feedlots while manure is being removed from the site and up to seven days following the transfer.

The measure also requires the MPCA to remove several provisions from its proposed



A new law eases rules proposed by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency on animal feedlots. The rules will govern manure storage pools, like the one pictured here, and the air pollution often associated with them.

rules and allow the agency to submit a report to the commissioner of the Department of Finance if it is unable to accomplish timely response to feedlot permit applications.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) and Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the legislation.

HF3692*/SF3443/CH435

Requirements for contracts

A law that will establish minimum standards of both readability and content for contracts between agricultural producers and contractors was signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Under the new law, any potential agricultural contract will be required to contain a clear statement of the risks the producer faces by entering into the contract, and producers will be allowed to review the contract for up to three days before signing it.

The measure will also require that the contract be legible, clearly laid out, and contain a cover sheet with an index to the contents of the contract and a warning to producers to "read your contract carefully."

A producer will be allowed under the law to ask the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture to review a contract and certify that language in the proposed contract complies with requirements contained in the measure.

The law also will allow a court to change the terms of a contract if it found a lack of clarity or readability had confused the producer and resulted in financial harm.

Finally, the law specifies certain kinds of agricultural contracts that will not be subject to minimum standards, and establishes limits on the extent to which producers and contractors can use the format of a contract to claim damages against one another.

Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson) and Sen. Dennis Frederickson (R-New Ulm) sponsored the legislation. The law takes effect Jan. 1, 2001.

HF3534*/SF3070/CH470

Ag policy changes

A new law that will bring uniformity to the state's meat inspection program and update state references to federal food law regulations was signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law will bring poultry up to par with other meats and meat products for purposes of inspection. Inspections of poultry, however, will not be required during the slaughter of one's own animals or at a custom processing plant.

Poultry products will also be allowed to carry the "Minnesota Approved" label.

The measure will add several new activities to those that would qualify for a Department of Agriculture grant of up to \$50,000 for the development of new farm products, as well as

business and marketing plans for the products.

Corporate farm law changes included as part of the new law will allow nonprofit groups such as scout troops, churches, and sports clubs to retain ownership of agricultural land rented to a neighboring farmer. Limited liability companies will be able to own farmland and engage in farming, as well.

Certain corporations will be permitted to own up to 40 acres of farmland so long as they earn no more than \$150 per acre per year from the land.

In addition, an entity that previously did not qualify could now apply for a "commissioner's exemption" (renewable annually) for permission to retain title to farmland, under the new law.

Furthermore, the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture will be required to team with the University of Minnesota, the Department of Trade and Economic Development, and the Board of Animal Health to develop a pilot program for verifying claims made by agricultural producers and businesses.

Finally, the law will make relatively minor changes to fertilizer and grain warehouse provisions in existing law.

Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus) and Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the legislation. The law is effective Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3312*/SF3223/CH477

★ BONDING

Capital projects bill signed

A \$639.5 million capital projects law will fund repairs to state facilities and new construction projects. Gov. Jesse Ventura signed the measure May 15.

The House and Senate had reached a compromise after original proposals of \$532 million from the House and \$762 million from the Senate.

Ventura had line-item vetoed eight projects from the bill, but the Legislature successfully overrode four of those vetoes May 17. The vetoes that were not overridden amount to a reduction of \$750,000.

That final amount includes \$470.2 million in general obligation bonding, and \$98 million in direct spending from the state's general fund. Nearly \$30 million will be saved by canceling funds for capital projects approved in previous years.

Major funding areas include \$131 million for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system, \$100.2 million for the University of Minnesota, \$80.7 million for

K-12 schools, \$73.2 million for improvements to parks and other environmental projects, \$58 million for a new Bureau of Criminal Apprehension building, and \$44 million for transit in the metropolitan area.

The \$44 million for transit was backed by Ventura as part of an end-of-session agreement that would allow the governor, House, and Senate to each decide how to spend a portion of the projected ongoing budget surplus. Ventura's portion includes reductions in license tab fees for motor vehicles and the transit spending.

The transit money will mainly pay for designing and building an exclusive bus transitway, including the costs of acquiring land and right-of-way. The law does not stipulate where such a transitway would be built, but the speculation is that it would run between downtown St. Paul and the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

The law prohibits that money from being spent on light-rail transit or commuter rail.

A previous law that gives the governor leeway in issuing bonds was repealed. That law allowed a governor to refuse to sell bonds, thereby causing a project to languish.

The new law gives that authority instead to the commissioner of the state Department of Finance. The commissioner is required to sell bonds based on funding needs of capital projects.

The decision on when to sell the bonds only can be based on specific factors: taking advantage of favorable interest rates, managing cash flow requirements for making debt payments, and other financial or legal factors.

Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud) and Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the capital projects legislation.

HF4078*/SF3811/CH492

★ BUSINESS

Sales of funeral goods

A new law will regulate the solicitation and sale of funeral goods and services.

The law, effective Aug. 1, 2000, will prohibit solicitation at a hospital, gravesite, nursing home, or wake, without a specific request from the family of the deceased to do so.

The new law also will prohibit an individual



The new bonding law includes Gov. Jesse Ventura's \$58 million request for a new St. Paul facility for the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. Original plans in the House would not have provided full funding for the project.

from offering goods and services to a person whose death is impending, or to an individual responsible for funeral arrangements of a deceased person within 10 days of that individual's death. Such acts, however, will be allowed if the deceased or a relative had made arrangements to discuss plans for the funeral or burial before death occurred.

The measure will not apply to communication between an individual and a funeral provider related by blood, adoption, or marriage.

In cases when the deceased handled his or her own arrangements in advance, the law will require that the funeral provider produce a copy of the agreement and give the copy to the person controlling the disposition of the remains. A copy of the arrangements will be required to change hands no later than 24 hours after first contact between the provider and the individual in charge of the remains.

The law also contains new requirements for pre-death arrangements and a provision allowing a person who makes an advance burial arrangement to cancel plans.

Furthermore, the law will require that all funeral establishments and providers clearly state who owns the establishment in all business literature, contracts, and correspondence. That provision takes effect Jan. 1, 2001.

Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope) and Sen. Claire A. Robling (R-Prior Lake) sponsored the legislation.

SF2686*/HF2713/CH438

Electronic pawn records

A law effective March 24, 2000, requires pawnbrokers who use computerized tracking of items to use a uniform electronic format.

Several Minnesota communities already track items by computer. The law ensures all pawnbrokers use the same computerized system. It also enables police to access the uniform system to check on possible stolen goods.

Most pawnshops keep track of records with

paper receipts, though more and more of them are moving to electronic tracking systems. The law will not require the shops to use electronic tracking, but it does require that all the systems in use be compatible.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), sponsor of the measure in the House, said with thousands of transactions each year, law enforcement is not able to track all of them. A uniform system for those shops that are computerized would help if law enforcement had access to those records, he said.

While only a handful of cities require computerized tracking of pawn items now, Skoglund said he thinks more cities will follow, as they realize it is a better way to catch thieves and return stolen property to rightful owners.

Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the law in the Senate.

HF3766*/SF3673/CH274

Liquor license law

A new law that takes effect Aug. 1, 2000, will change the requirements for fraternal and charitable clubs attempting to obtain liquor licenses.

The omnibus liquor law will only require clubs to have 30 members to obtain a license. In addition, the law will allow specific liquor contracts for special events in several towns, including Anoka, Duluth, Eveleth, and Springfield.

Those items in reference to special events take effect upon action by local communities.

The law reduces the number of club members needed to obtain a liquor license from 50 to 30. The provision addresses the dropping population in some rural areas, said Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie), House sponsor.

The law also will allow a commercial establishment to make wine on the premises for personal or family use only. Individuals under age 21 will be forbidden from helping make wine.

Liquor stores will be able to offer wine-tasting events on their premises, under the law. A wine-tasting event will be defined as an activity that does not last beyond four hours, and patrons would not pay for each individual glass of wine.

The state agriculture society also will be allowed to sell alcohol at state fairgrounds events that are not held during the normal 12-day run of the fair.

Sen. Sam Solon (DFL-Duluth) sponsored the Senate version.

HF3974/SF3581*/CH440

LONGTIME LEADER



Former House Speaker Phil Carruthers has accepted a position with the Ramsey County Attorney's Office. He is leaving after 14 years in the House.

Economic loss doctrine replaced

A new law will repeal the state's existing economic loss doctrine and replace it with a new provision.

Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the law will confine commercial legal disputes to those prescribed by the Uniform Commercial Code. The code provides a shorter statute of limitations.

House sponsor, Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), said the law will clarify who can sue and when they can sue regarding commercial transactions.

The law will apply to claims where a buyer is dissatisfied with a seller's product, usually when the product is damaged, but no injuries have occurred, Pawlenty said. If an injury occurred, a person could sue under tort laws, Pawlenty said.

The law is the result of an agreement between several interest groups that met during the past year to hammer out the compromise. The provision is seen as an improvement to the previous law, which passed during a special session in 1998. That legislation was prompted by concerns over a case involving Marvin Windows, a Warroad-based company.

The bill is not retroactive, and would have no effect on pending litigation.

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

HF1267/SF1126*/CH358

Limits on dealership owners

A new law bars auto manufacturers from buying car dealerships in Minnesota.

The law, effective April 15, 2000, forbids manufacturers from buying a dealership and competing with other dealerships in the area.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), who sponsored the law in the House, said his primary concern is that without this law, manufacturers could own dealerships and would have unfair advantage in competition within the local market.

The law was introduced after General Motors announced last fall it planned to purchase several car dealerships across the United States, Davids said.

Eleven states already have laws barring manufacturers from owning local dealerships, and more states pursued the issue this year, he added.

The law also specifically lists certain unfair market practices that are prohibited, such as refusing to offer all models manufactured in a line to a franchised dealership.

The law does grandfather in one Rochester Saturn dealership, which is already owned by the manufacturer.

Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton) sponsored the Senate measure.

HF2731*/SF2753/CH409

★ CONSUMERS

Auto glass rebate limit

A new law effective April 7, 2000, limits rebates from auto glass companies to \$35. It also establishes a new standard for determining reasonable costs for glass replacement.

The law will require insurance companies to pay an average cost for windshield replacement based on a study of auto glass replacement costs from regions around the state. (That study provision takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.)

The study will be funded voluntarily through insurance and glass companies. If the companies don't voluntarily contribute, they will have violated the law and the Legislature will revisit the issue next year.

The Department of Commerce will coordinate the study. Cost of the study is estimated at \$35,000 a year. There is expected to be no cost to the state.

According to an insurance company study last year, Minnesota's auto glass replacement costs are 69 percent higher than the national average and are the highest in the nation. Many Minnesota auto glass dealers previously offered boxes of steaks, rebates of \$200 to customers, or other costly incentives to lure customers.

Rep. Ken Wolf (R-Burnsville) and Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the law. HF2656*/SF3441/CH342

Penalties for unscrupulous contractors

A new law that takes effect Aug. 1, 2000, will subject contractors, who fail to complete work on house projects, to new criminal and civil penalties.

A tornado that hit St. Peter in spring 1998 devastated much of that area. Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter) sponsored the legislation after the disaster because of evidence that an unscrupulous contractor hired to fix damaged homes did not follow through on commitments.

The contractor collected money from homeowners, then did not pay subcontractors. The subcontractors then placed liens on the homes, whose owners thought they had finished paying for the repairs. The contractor eventually went bankrupt, but the liens were already placed on the homes.

That contractor was later ordered to serve two months in jail and repay the homeowners.

A builder, material supplier, or subcontractor can place a lien on a property if they are not paid for work done on the property. Contractors should receive a lien-waiver from a subcontractor once that subcontractor has been paid, Storm said.

A felony penalty for theft will also be established under the law. The maximum penalty for theft in state statute is 20 years in prison and a \$100,000 fine.

Under the previous law, the maximum theft charge available for such situations was a gross misdemeanor, with a maximum penalty of one year in jail and a \$3,000 fine.

The law also will allow homeowners to seek civil penalties against contractors, which were not previously available.

Shareholders, officers, and directors of the contracting company who are aware of the theft could also face criminal and civil penalties, under the law.

The law will require that money for a construction project be kept in a trust fund. Proceeds can be kept separate within the trust. Contractors would then pay subcontractors from the trust.

Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) sponsored the Senate version.

HF2563*/SF2381/CH430

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

★ CRIME

Katie's Law on books

A new law, most of which is effective Aug. 1, 2000, will stiffen laws regulating sex offenders and will provide start-up money for new criminal justice information systems.

The law will provide \$12 million to implement a statewide criminal justice information system, which officials estimate could cost as much as \$100 million before completion.

One goal of the information system is better tracking of registered sex offenders in the state. It also would integrate probation and arrest information from local law enforcement agencies, so law enforcement officers around the state have access to the most up-to-date information about offenders.

The law will also spend \$5 million to increase the number of probation officers handling sex offender cases. The intent is to reduce the number of cases each officer must handle so they can keep better track of their sex offenders. Appropriations in the bill take effect July 1, 2000.

Further provisions change who is required to register, adding certain penalties to that list. In addition, it extends the period of registration for many offenses, including a requirement that some offenders register for life.

The law will also authorize the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension to establish a Web site where it will post all the names of level 3 registered sex offenders in the state.



A new law that increases restrictions and registration requirements for sex offenders was passed this session. The law was due in part to the lobbying efforts of Pam and Steve Poirier, pictured above, whose daughter Katie was kidnapped and presumed murdered last year. A six-time convicted sex offender is charged with the crime.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) and Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the legislation. Many of its provisions were included as a result of the lobbying efforts of Pam Poirier.

Poirier's 19-year-old daughter Katie was abducted from a Moose Lake convenience store last May and was apparently murdered.

Donald Blom, a six-time convicted sex offender, is charged with the crime.

In his statement upon signing the law, Ventura said the measure takes a step to improve public safety in Minnesota.

HF2688*/SF2769/CH311

Domestic violence prevention

A new law will establish a new state office to prevent domestic violence and sexual assault.

Effective July 1, 2000, the law will create the office of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, establish a director position, and establish an interagency task force on domestic abuse and sexual assault prevention.

The office will be placed within the Department of Public Safety.

The law will create guidelines for putting together the task force, including representatives from the departments of Corrections, Health, Human Services, Economic Security, and Children, Families and Learning. The task force also must have a county attorney, city attorney, and a judge.

The director of the new domestic violence office would serve as chair of the task force.

The law outlines the director's duties, which include advocating victims' rights, increasing education and awareness, supporting litigation, initiating policy changes, and building partnerships with law enforcement and the courts.

The task force will evaluate the progress of the director and the office. In addition, the task force will establish a strategic plan for the director.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope) sponsored the measure. HF3331*/SF2980/CH368

Penalties for assaulting officers

A person who physically assaults an officer during an arrest will be subject to gross misdemeanor charges even if the attack does not cause any "demonstrable bodily harm," under a law effective April 25, 2000.

The law also provides for a felony charge if someone escapes from police custody for a felony-related action, even if that person has not yet been charged or convicted of a crime. The violator could face a maximum penalty

of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Previous law allowed for a felony only if the person fled after being charged or convicted of a felony.

The new law will establish that officials no longer have to prove demonstrable harm in a situation involving an assault against an officer. They merely need to prove that an assault took place.

Previously, there was no additional penalty if an assault did not result in visible harm.

That provision stems from a case in which an officer was struck in the groin by someone who was resisting arrest. The action did not result in demonstrable bodily harm, so no additional penalties could be brought against the assailant.

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) and Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the legislation.

HF2958/SF2830*/CH441

Statute of limitations extended

Domestic abuse victims will have more time to consider filing civil charges against the perpetrator, under a law signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The bill will extend the statute of limitations in domestic abuse cases from two years to six years. A victim could sue another person for assault, battery, false imprisonment, or personal injury, as defined by the statutes governing domestic abuse.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), who sponsored the legislation, explained that the statute of limitations will begin at the point of the last incident.

The law also will allow Ramsey County to establish a pilot project domestic abuse unit. Once created, the unit will prosecute cases, recognize interests of children in abuse cases, and reduce the exposure of domestic abuse for victims.

If Ramsey County chooses to create the program, the county will be required to report its results to the Legislature next year.

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF47/SF11*/CH471

Felony DWI study

Legislators have agreed to study possible felony penalties for repeat drunken driving offenders, but no felony penalties will be implemented this session.

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law May 15 that creates a "driving while impaired working group." The working group becomes effective May 16.

TAX POLICY EXPERT



Rep. Ann H. Rest says goodbye to her friends in the House on May 17. Rest, a former chair of the House Taxes Committee, decided to leave the House to make a run for the state Senate. She is seeking the seat currently held by Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge, who will not seek reelection.

Previously, legislators had sought to make it a felony for a person to accumulate four drunken driving convictions in a 10-year span. Currently, 35 other states have some form of felony DWI laws.

However, legislators eventually agreed to examine the issue further this year. Many legislators were concerned about the corrections costs that would be created down the line.

The working group will include legislators from both houses, the commissioners of corrections, public safety, and finance, county attorneys, and public defenders.

The law will require the working group to study and recommend by Dec. 1, 2000, how to implement felony penalties. The group will determine the most cost-effective manner, the number of offenses needed to reach a felony-level, the length of incarceration, and whether a penalty should have mandatory prison time.

"It assumes there will be a felony DWI, and this is how to best implement it," said Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center), who served on the conference committee.

It is still unclear what the total cost would be to incarcerate repeat drinking and driving offenders, although one report estimated it would add 1,100 people to the corrections system.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji) and Sen. Dave Johnson (DFL-Bloomington) were the sponsors of the legislation.

HF2995/SF2677*/CH478

Fake ID measure signed

Penalties will increase for people under age 21 who attempt to purchase alcohol, under a law signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law also will allow alcohol providers — from liquor store clerks to licensed retailers — to confiscate what they believe to be false identifications.

The law will make it a gross misdemeanor on a second offense for a person under age 21 to attempt to buy alcohol. Minors who attempt to purchase tobacco with false identification also could have their driver's license suspended, under the law.

The person confiscating the identification would be required to turn it over to the police within 24 hours.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), who sponsored the measure in the House, said the measure is necessary to enforce state laws on selling alcohol to minors.

"The intent is to create a meaningful deterrent to using false IDs," Leppik said. "To many people, it is worth the risk because the consequences are few."

The House rejected the measure last month, sending the bill back to conference committee, although it had passed the Senate without a dissenting vote. The legislation returned from conference committee took further steps to de-criminalize clerks who mistakenly sell tobacco to minors.

Previously, state law called for a gross misdemeanor charge against a clerk who sells

tobacco to minors for a first offense. The new law provides for a gross misdemeanor only if the clerk is caught selling tobacco to minors twice in a five-year period.

The new law will allow the commissioner of public safety to suspend a minor's driver's license for up to 90 days if the minor attempted to purchase alcohol with false identification.

Sen. David Knutson (R-Burnsville) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2655/SF2845*/CH472

Cracking down on pimps

A new law that takes effect Aug. 1, 2000, will expand penalties for people who lure teens into prostitution.

Sponsored in the House by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), the law aims to curb solicitors, or pimps, from pushing young children, both boys and girls, into prostitution.

The law will make it a felony for a person to solicit a juvenile under age 18 into prostitution. The maximum penalty is 20 years in prison and a \$40,000 fine.

Under previous law, a juvenile had to be under age 16 for a felony charge.

The hike in age from 16 to 18 means more pimps will go to prison, rather than facing jail time or probation, Clark said.

A task force report submitted to the House Crime Prevention Committee earlier this session estimated that 1,000 Minnesota teens are currently involved in prostitution.

The law also will require the commissioner of public safety to study and make recommendations on training officers to combat prostitution. The study will include information on ways to increase penalties and prosecution of solicitors. The study provision takes effect July 1, 2000.

State law already says that luring adults into prostitution is a gross misdemeanor.

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

HF2830*/SF2771/CH431

Falsely reporting stolen checks

Falsely claiming that blank checks or debit cards have been stolen will bring misdemeanor charges, under a law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The law will make it a misdemeanor crime for someone to falsely tell his or her financial institution the items are missing or stolen.

The law would cover scenarios where individuals write several bad checks and then report to the bank that those checks were stolen.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) and Sen. Dave Johnson (DFL-Bloomington) sponsored the legislation.

HF2751/SF3455*/CH354

Drug change delayed

A new law will delay the classification of the prescription painkiller Carisoprodol as a controlled substance for at least one more year.

The law, effective Aug. 1, 2000, represents the third consecutive year the Legislature has delayed the effective date for classifying the painkiller and muscle relaxant. It was originally set to be scheduled in August 1998.

Under the law, Carisoprodol will become a schedule IV controlled substance on Aug. 1, 2001. The previous law would have made the drug a controlled substance on Aug. 1 of this year.

Officials say they needed to delay the action another year while the U.S. Food and Drug Administration examines the painkiller to determine its effects.

Under Minnesota law, a schedule IV controlled substance is a drug that has a low potential for abuse and it is currently accepted for medical treatment in the United States. However, abuse may lead to physical or psychological dependence.

Doctors can prescribe drugs in schedule II to schedule V, but cannot prescribe drugs in schedule I. Classifying a drug like Carisoprodol as a controlled substance would make it more difficult for doctors to prescribe.

Scheduling is done on the state level, which is usually consistent with federal drug regulations. Carisoprodol is not a controlled substance on the federal level.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) and Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the legislation.

HF2774/SF2485*/CH262

Fugitive apprehension unit

A new law, effective Aug. 1, 2000, will create a formal fugitive apprehension unit in the Department of Corrections.

The unit will have limited police powers to investigate and arrest Department of Corrections escapees and parole violators.

There is currently an apprehension unit with 13 employees. However, that unit does not have police powers, and the workers cannot carry firearms. Under the law, those employees will be trained by law enforcement to become officers.

House sponsor Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove) said there were three things he wanted to accomplish with this law. First, he wanted to give the workers the adequate tools to do their job, which includes the right to carry firearms. The law will also allow the unit to attend deadly force training.

Second, the law establishes the flow of information between corrections officials working inside a prison and police officers working

the street. The information exchange is necessary because some inmates still have ties to illegal gang and drug activity, Stanek said.

Finally, the police powers were limited to hunting the fugitives and parole violators, so the unit could concentrate on its task.

Under the law, the unit will be required to inform a city's police force when they enter a town to conduct surveillance or to make arrests.

The law will also give the fugitive apprehension unit initial processing power of the fugitive — such as taking the person's fingerprints and photos — unless directed differently by the law enforcement agency with primary jurisdiction.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

HF3003/SF3097*/CH291

Attorney-client phone calls

Officials at state prisons are exempt from civil and criminal penalties for restricting inmate telephone access with attorneys, under a law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

State law allows persons detained by law enforcement the ability to speak with a lawyer free of charge at any reasonable time.

Previously, if corrections personnel at a state prison or local detention facility refused to allow a person telephone access to an attorney, state law provided for fine of \$100 and a misdemeanor charge against the official.

The new measure keeps the civil and criminal penalties in place at local correctional facilities, such as county jails and workhouses, but eliminates the penalties at state prisons.

The law will pertain to all detained people at local facilities, regardless of whether they have been convicted or charged of a crime. The only exceptions where local corrections officials can restrict telephone access without facing criminal or civil penalties is when officials believe the detained person may attempt to escape or cause injury.

Neither the detained person nor the attorney will be responsible for the cost of a phone call, according to the law. A detained person can speak with an attorney or a person he or she "may desire to consult with" about an upcoming proceeding involving pending charges.

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township) and Sen. Arlene Lesewski (R-Marshall) sponsored the law.

HF3512/SF3108*/CH408

Serving court orders

A new law will allow law enforcement officers to serve any court order.

The law, most of which takes effect Aug. 1, 2000, will create a shortened notification process that officers can use to serve court documents to people at any time.

The idea behind the law is that many defendants and parties to a court case are hard to find, and this measure will allow them to be formally served if an officer encounters them in a routine traffic stop or other police action.

For instance, if an officer pulls over a car for speeding, and the officer learns that a court is trying to contact that person to serve court orders, such as a subpoena or protection order, the officer will be able to give a notification form to that person, under the law.

An officer could serve paperwork at any time, including Sundays or legal holidays, the law states.

The notification form will include the names of the parties involved, the county that served the order, the name of the judge, and the date of a hearing.

The short order form will direct the recipient to report to the sheriff's office or courthouse where the proceeding is set to take place to pick up the full copy of service.

The officer could also detain the person as long as necessary in order to fill out and serve the person with the short form, under the law.

According to the law, a scheduled hearing can take place if the papers were served at least 12 hours before the hearing, and the person receiving the papers must appear. However, the person who received the papers may request a continuance of up to five days.

Previously, the hearing could not begin until five days had passed after the court papers were served. That new provision is effective April 25, 2000.

The law also will allow an officer to arrest a person who violates a pretrial no-contact order, even if the officer wasn't present at the time of the violation. The orders, often issued in domestic abuse cases, require that the defendant have no contact with whoever is named in the order, typically the victim and their family.

The law also will create a felony for a person who causes malicious punishment of a child. The law says the violator may be charged with a felony if the child is under age 4 and has sustained bodily harm to the head, eyes, or neck, or has suffered multiple bruises. The maximum penalty for the felony would be five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Rep. Doug Fuller (R-Bemidji) and Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope) sponsored the legislation.

HF1067/SF551*/CH437

Treating sex offenders

A new law effective April 12, 2000, will send sex offenders back to prison instead of treatment programs if they refuse to participate in treatment.

The sex offender will also no longer be able to plead his or her case to a special review board, under the law.

The cost of keeping an offender in treatment is three times the cost of correctional facilities, said Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), House sponsor.

She said the law gives offenders incentive to choose treatment given the alternative of prison.

To be a predatory sex offender, someone has committed aggravated and repeated offenses, as well as sex offenses while committing such crimes as murder, manslaughter, or robbery.

About 15 predatory offenders are committed each year in the state, and none have ever been released, Holberg said. The law will require a study examining sex offender policy and management.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the law in the Senate.

HF3457/SF2858*/CH359

★ EDUCATION

Spending bill becomes law

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a \$184 million education spending package May 15 that includes one-time spending and permanent funding for several K-12 efforts including special education, teacher training, and high-speed Internet access.

The new law will provide money to school districts for vocational education and building improvements and will fix a funding

problem for charter schools that will allow them to lease buildings more easily.

The measure is larger than the two previous non-budget year funding measures. However, both the law in 1998, spending \$124 million, and the measure from 1996, allocating \$31.7 million, dealt only with K-12 education. This year's package also includes higher education and early childhood and family education items.

The special education money districts will receive under the law along with money for training and experience, should especially help districts that are facing budget cuts.

Under the law, the state's special education funding cap will be increased by \$83 million. A boost in cross-subsidy special education aid will allow districts to free up money to spend elsewhere, perhaps restoring some cuts made in past years.

Some of those cuts came in the form of teacher layoffs.

The growing problem of teacher shortages and the decline — especially in rural areas — of experienced instructors in classrooms is addressed in the measure by a provision that makes it easier for districts to bring in teachers from other states.

Minnesota's Board of Teaching will be required under the law to issue a temporary teaching license to a person holding both a bachelor's degree and an out-of-state teaching license requiring such a person to have completed a teacher preparation program, which included field-specific teaching methods and student teaching.

The law also will provide \$30.8 million to districts for teacher training and experience replacement. The provision is designed to fill the vacancies left by a great number of teacher retirements and other factors with high quality classroom leaders.

THE LONE INDEPENDENT



Rep. Doug Reuter says goodbye to House colleagues this week with plans to move to Texas. Reuter was elected to the House in 1996 as a Republican, but declared himself an independent at the close of the 1999 session.

In addition, the spending package will provide \$31 million to soften the phase-out of a program that gave money to districts having large numbers of teachers with extensive experience or advanced degrees.

Approximately \$11.6 million will be available under the law to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) system to address unexpected increases in enrollment.

The money — \$5.8 million in the current fiscal year and \$5.8 million in fiscal year 2001 — will come from the state's general fund.

The law also will spend \$9.8 million in federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds in 2001, with future TANF spending of \$23.7 million in 2002-03, for programs such as male responsibility and fatherhood grants, child care services, transitional housing and citizenship grants.

Approximately \$12 million for secondary vocational aid is part of the measure. The additional aid for high school programs will be spread out over a two-year period.

The new law will also protect students from Internet material considered obscene or harmful to minors.

All public school and public library computers with access to the Internet available for use by children under the age of 17 will need to be equipped with up-to-date software filtering technology or other methods to restrict student viewing of inappropriate material.

A public library will not be required to purchase filtering technology if the library would incur more than incidental expense in making the purchase, however.

If behavioral problems arise in a classroom, the measure will allow teachers and certain other school employees to use "reasonable" force to discipline a student. The provision includes language pertaining to the legal defenses teachers and district agents have against prosecution for using force to discipline students.

Reasonable force will be permitted to correct or restrain a student or to prevent bodily harm to another.

Furthermore, districts will be required to indicate, in school discipline policy, the circumstances under which teachers, school employees, and school bus drivers may use force to discipline students.

One-time deferred maintenance aid — to the tune of \$23 million dollars — will be available to school districts under the new law. This aid must be applied toward making accessibility improvements, or to make fire, safety, or health repairs.

Approximately \$16 million will be available to districts for reimbursement of certain telecommunications costs. School districts will need to submit ongoing or recurring telecom-



The \$184 million omnibus education bill increases spending for high-speed Internet access for K-12 schools, and provides funds for teacher training.

munications costs — subject to examination by officials from the Department of Children, Families and Learning — before schools can be reimbursed for the costs.

Furthermore, school districts also will be required to inform parents and staff about any use of pesticides.

Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington) and Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the legislation.

Many sections of the law are effective May 16, 2000. Other portions become effective July 1, 2000, or after the beginning of the 2000-2001 school year.

HF3800*/SF3559/CH489

★ EMPLOYMENT

Workers' compensation law

A new law will reduce workers' compensation rates while increasing benefits for injured workers.

The law, most of which takes effect Aug. 1, 2000, represents recommendations from the Workers' Compensation Advisory Council. The council is composed of representatives from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, the state's AFL-CIO, and the Legislature.

The law provides an increase in the maximum weekly compensation an injured worker can receive for wage loss benefits. Under previous law, that amount was capped at \$615 per week, but the new law will increase that benefit to \$750. The minimum amount per week will go from \$104 to \$130.

In the case of a worker who is killed in a work-related accident, the minimum amount

of compensation for the dependents will be \$60,000.

Under the law, there will be a transfer of \$325 million in surplus funds from the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Assigned Risk Plan to the compensation fund's second injury and supplemental benefits program.

The assigned risk plan aids in the operation of the workers' compensation system by providing a source of insurance for employers unable to obtain such coverage from the private insurance market.

Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls) and Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton) sponsored the measure.

HF3960/SF3644*/CH447

★ ENERGY

Powered by poultry litter

A new law changes the definition of biomass energy to include poultry litter and plants grown specifically for fuel.

The law, effective April 25, 2000, could lead the way to construction of an electricity generating facility that uses turkey litter as fuel.

Legislation in 1994 relating to the Prairie Island nuclear power facility required public utilities that operate nuclear power plants in the state to develop 125 megawatts of electric energy generated by biomass.

The new law allows 50 of the 125 megawatts to be provided by a facility that uses poultry litter as its primary fuel source.

Fiberwatt, a company based in Great Britain, is proposing to build the poultry litter plant in Minnesota. The company owns and operates three similar power plants in Great Britain.

Those facilities produce energy by burning the litter at 1,500 degrees Fahrenheit, producing steam that drives a turbine. Officials from the company testified that they are interested in building the plant in Minnesota because the state is the second largest turkey producing state in the nation.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) and Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton) were the sponsors.

HF2757*/SF2614/CH443

★ ENVIRONMENT

Gasoline additives banned

A new law limits and ultimately bans gasoline additives that have caused severe water pollution in some states.

Effective July 1, 2000, gasoline in the state can contain only trace amounts of methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) and ethyl tertiary butyl ether (ETBE). Both compounds are alternative fuel additives to ethanol.

Currently, those additives are not used in Minnesota's gasoline supply. But Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea), House sponsor of the measure, said that as other states ban the chemicals, gasoline with those additives could be sent to Minnesota unless it is banned here.

After July 1, 2000, gasoline cannot contain more than one-third of 1 percent of the chemicals. But after July 1, 2005, no traces of the chemicals will be allowed in gasoline, under the new law.

Gasoline is moved through common pipelines throughout the country, so traces of those chemicals can be found in almost all gasoline.

Research shows the additive is responsible

for several incidents of soil and water contamination, including municipal wells as nearby as Alvor and Ida Grove, Iowa.

Minnesota's legislators are not alone in their concern over the effects of MTBE usage in gasoline. Recent developments in other states are driving a national reconsideration of using MTBE as an oxygenate in fuel.

California Gov. Gray Davis issued an executive order — supported by a University of California study — in March 1999 to phase out MTBE from the California gasoline supply by December 31, 2002.

Twenty-three states have established regulatory guidelines or standards for MTBE contamination in groundwater or drinking water.

Experts say eight ounces of the additive can contaminate five million gallons of drinking water. Spillage from a car accident could threaten an entire aquifer.

Water contaminated by MTBE has a bitter taste and detectable odor. Research has shown it causes tumors in rats.

Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) was the Senate sponsor of the measure.

HF3292/SF2946*/CH434

Underwater lumber recovery

A new law will allow a person or company to salvage logs that have been submerged on lake and river bottoms.

Effective June 1, 2000, the new law will allow a person or company to apply for a lease through the state Department of Natural Resources to salvage the logs. Applications for leases will be published in the State Register, and the DNR will approve or deny the application within 60 days, after allowing 30 days for public comments.

The fee for a lease will be \$500 for Minnesota residents and \$2,500 for those who live outside the state. Terms of a lease are negotiable.

Logs can be salvaged only if they are submerged at depths of 20 feet or more. A lease will require that precautions be taken to avoid disturbing the bottom of the lake or river, protect public rights in boating or recreation areas, and comply with federal laws.

The person or company with a lease will have to notify the Minnesota Historical Society if they find a historical artifact, such as a sled that was used to carry logs across a frozen lake. Also, if a log is found that contains an American Indian brand or marking, the nearest tribal government must be notified.

The state will receive 25 percent of the money from the sale of the logs, based on the weighted average selling price.

The application fees from the leases will go to the state's general fund. Money from the sale of lumber that is recovered will go to the game and fish fund, except that if the lake or river is on school trust fund lands, the money will go into the permanent school fund.

A person or business cannot hold more than three leases at a time.

Permission for mosquito spraying

The Metropolitan Mosquito Control District will need the approval of the commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources before spraying state lands, under a law effective April 7, 2000.

Previously, state law allowed a landowner to refuse to allow Mosquito Control to spray his or her land with insecticides. The new law gives the DNR that same right with regard to state parks, wildlife management areas, or other publicly owned lands.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) sponsored the measure because Mosquito Control sprayed chemicals at Fort Snelling State Park in July 1999 despite objections from the department.

Ozment said the DNR should have jurisdiction over the decision to spray chemicals in wildlife management areas because the department has the expertise in the chemicals' effects on vegetation, water quality, wildlife habitat, and related issues.

He also said that current law gives the Department of Health authority over the DNR or landowners to authorize spraying for mosquitoes that are known to carry diseases.

The Senate sponsor of the measure was Sen. Bob Lessard (DFL-Int'l Falls).

HF3134*/SF2857/CH339



A new law will restrict the use of the gasoline additive methyl tertiary butyl ether (MTBE) in Minnesota and eventually ban it. The additive has contaminated groundwater in states such as Iowa and California.

Parenting plans become law

A new law will allow parents who are getting a divorce to create a parenting plan agreement.

The law, most of which is effective Aug. 1, 2000, will allow divorced couples to make agreements on splitting parenting time. Plans could specify anything from where a child lives during the day to which parent can teach religious philosophy. Child support issues are not included in the law.

If both parents agree to a parenting plan, the court must accede unless the court determines the plan is not in the best interest of the child.

If neither parent agrees to a parenting plan, the court may create one on its own, under the law.

Sponsored in the House by Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), the law is similar to a proposal that came from a task force that studied the issue during the interim.

The court cannot require a parenting plan if one adult has been accused of domestic assault or sexual abuse, under the law. In addition, judges must ask individuals if they agreed to the parenting plan voluntarily.

The law also replaces the word "visitation" in statute with the phrase "parenting time." Dawkins said non-custodial parents find the word "visitation" to be offensive.

Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester) sponsored the Senate version. Nearly all provisions of the new law are effective Jan. 1, 2001.

HF3311/SF3169*/CH444

Involuntary commitment

A new law will give parents more control in admitting mentally ill children to hospitals.

The law, which takes effect Aug. 1, 2000, will add mental illness to previous law governing involuntary admission and treatment. The law currently allows parents to admit a child age 16 or 17 to a hospital only if the child is mentally retarded or chemically dependent.

The previous law allowed parents to admit children to hospitals for a mental illness up to age 16. The law will now extend that provision to age 18. Even if the 16- or 17-year-old child refuses treatment, the parents will be able to admit the child to a hospital.

The law also will require hospital officials to inform the patient that a family member has made an inquiry about the patient's health. The patient would then have to authorize the release of any information.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) and Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the legislation.

HF3107/SF2634*/CH316

HEALTH CARE LEADER

Rep. Lee Greenfield has been a House member since 1978 and is stepping down this year. He is known for his work in reforming the state's health care system, most notably the creation of MinnesotaCare, the state's health insurance program for low-income residents.

Investigating child abuse cases

A new law, effective April 15, 2000, will repeal a 1999 domestic abuse law defining neglect and will replace it with language redefining counties' responsibilities in domestic violence cases affecting children.

The law eliminates language that required counties to investigate cases where there is any child abuse, including verbal or other non-physical abuse. The repealed law also required an investigation if a child was within sight or sound of any attempted abuse.

Several groups, representing those advocating for domestic violence victims and county social service administrators, joined together asking legislators to repeal the law because of its costs. County administrators estimated the old law would cost \$30 million statewide if fully implemented.

The \$30 million projection is based on the additional workers needed to investigate all the new mandated cases.

The new language requires county investigation only when the parent "endangers the child's mental or physical health," the parent engages in "repeated domestic assault," or the child "witnessed repeated incidents" of domestic violence. Specific guidelines for investigations do not take effect until July 1, 2001.

The new law also states that the local welfare agency shall consider the safety of the child and the victim when determining action.

Under the repealed law, a victim might have chosen to not report an abusive situation out of fear that he or she would be found in

neglect if that person kept living with or moved back in with the abuser.

The new law also requires homeless shelter employees to attempt to contact the parents of a runaway within 72 hours. The employee must tell the parents or guardian the runaway's location and status, unless there are compelling reasons to withhold that information.

Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault) and Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the law.

HF3176/SF3410*/CH401

Designating custodians for children

A new law effective April 15, 2000, allows parents the authority to designate a temporary custodian for their children.

The law repeals the previous designated caregiver statute and replaces it with the temporary and standby custodian language. The new law makes it clearer what should happen to children in cases where the parent suddenly is not available or is incapable of caring for them, said House sponsor Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park).

"It gives parents an opportunity to file with the court a guardian of the child if there was a tragic accident or if they are going out of the country for an extended period," Luther said. "It helps families plan ahead and reduce an unnecessary burden on governmental child protection or foster care resources."

The law provides more options than the repealed statute, such as outlining standby,

temporary, and co-custodian guidelines.

Standby custodians would assume permanent custody in the event of a parent's inability to care for the child. A temporary custodian would have the child or children for two years, up from one year in previous law. A co-custodian shares parenting duties with a parent when that parent has extended illnesses.

The new law also gives a non-custodial parent more rights to decide what happens to the child if the custodial parent becomes ill or dies, Luther said. Under the law, the non-custodial parent would automatically gain custody unless that parent lost parental rights.

The law allows both natural parents to be involved in the decision and requires a hearing if the fitness of a non-custodial parent is called into question, Luther said.

The custodial parent can designate a temporary custodian with the consent of the other parent, under the new law.

The repealed designated caregiver statute said the agreement expired four years after it was signed. The new language designates a person as temporary custodian indefinitely.

Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version.

HF3318/SF3018*/CH404

Paying delinquent child support

The Department of Human Services will be able to seize bank accounts of parents who are delinquent in child support payments, under a law signed May 11 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

"It will be a significant new way to reach people we haven't caught before," said Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul), who sponsored the legislation in the House. "(The state) will have the capacity to take it straight out of their bank account without their permission."

The law will include all financial institutions within the state, from larger banks in the Twin Cities to smaller facilities in rural areas. The law was necessary to comply with federal requirements.

The law also will allow the department to send letters to banks, telling them to freeze the amount of money a delinquent parent owes. The department is then responsible for notifying the parent the money has been seized.

A bank cannot be held liable for damages for seizing funds from accounts, under the law.

An appeals process for the parent to contest the seizure is also outlined in the bill.

Entenza said the state Department of Revenue and federal Internal Revenue Service already could seize money from bank accounts, but this measure extends that ability to the state Department of Human Services.

Sen. David Knutson (R-Burnsville)

sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3345/SF3016*/CH458

★ **GAMBLING**

Gambling fraud penalties

Tampering with gambling devices or claiming a gambling prize through fraud or use of counterfeited equipment will now be a felony, under a law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The law will establish felonies if the dollar amount involved in the gambling fraud exceeds \$2,500. The maximum penalty for a felony offense will be three years in prison and a \$6,000 fine.

A person could be charged with a misdemeanor when the dollar amount involved is \$500 or less, or a gross misdemeanor when the value is between \$500 and \$2,500.

The law will make it illegal to knowingly claim a gambling prize using altered or counterfeited equipment. It also will make it illegal to claim a prize through fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

Tampering with gambling equipment in an attempt to influence the outcome of the game also will be illegal, under the law.

Gambling officials say the law is necessary to curb the growth of cheating and fraud.

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) and Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan) sponsored the measure.

HF3023/SF2701*/CH318

Card counting devices prohibited

Gamblers are prohibited from using devices that can count cards or analyze strategy, under a law effective April 7, 2000. Use of such devices is now considered a felony.

The law establishes several new felonies.

For example, attempting to open or enter a device to remove money, chips, or tokens will now bring a felony charge.

Similarly, anyone who intentionally uses counterfeit chips or tokens also could be charged with a felony, as could an employee of the gambling licensee who cheats.

"There are professional cheats that travel across the state using these devices," said Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City), House sponsor of the measure.

The law was needed because a card club opened this spring at Canterbury Park in Shakopee, Osskopp said.

"There is nothing in law to regulate it," he said.

Indian-owned casinos are exempt from this law because the state does not have

jurisdiction to enforce the measure. The law is modeled after gambling laws in Nevada and New Jersey, Osskopp said.

The law also makes it a felony to manufacture, sell, or distribute cards, tokens, or dice used to violate these gambling provisions. Another portion of the law makes it a felony to instruct someone else to violate the law.

The law also expands the list of places where charitable gambling halls can legally make contributions to include community arts organizations. Previously, contributions could be made only to public and private educational institutions, scholarships, churches, natural resources projects.

Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

HF3571/SF2828*/CH336

★ **GAME & FISH**

Major changes in store

Hunting and fishing licenses will see across-the-board increases, under a new law signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law also allocates a portion of revenue from lottery ticket sales to pay for natural resources projects and establishes a state plan for managing the wolf population.

The measure had once contained only the license fee increases, but as action for the session wound down, the other natural resource issues were attached.

License fee increases first passed the House April 13, and the Senate added the provisions related to the wolf management plan and lottery ticket revenue.

Effective March 1, 2001, the fee increases will send more money to the game and fish fund, which pays for projects that improve water quality, stock fish and enhance aquatic vegetation, increase public water access, and other such projects.

Money from the license fee increases will be matched with revenue from the state's general fund.

Every \$2 of revenue from the fee increase will be matched by \$1 from the general fund. The fee increases are projected to raise about \$3.1 million in revenue for the 2002-03 biennium, and the general fund match will be slightly more than \$1.5 million.

The bill also includes a \$500,000 general fund appropriation to pay for walleye stocking in fiscal year 2001.

The lottery ticket revenue provision will further increase funding for game and fish projects, as well as projects for state parks, recreational trails, and zoos.

Those projects will receive 97 percent of the



A new law increases fees across the board for hunting and fishing licenses. Such fees are the primary source of revenue for game and fish funds in the state.

money that the state collects as a payment in lieu of sales tax on lottery tickets. Of the proceeds from lottery tickets, 16 cents per dollar goes to the state's general fund, which includes 6.5 cents per dollar that is considered a payment in lieu of sales tax.

The wolf management plan that is part of the law is nearly identical to a plan that was approved April 11 by the House (in the form of a separate bill).

The Senate had clarified part of the measure that allows a person to shoot a wolf that is attacking livestock or domestic animals. The new law specifies that the person can shoot a wolf in that situation only on the person's property.

A certified predator controller can be hired to trap wolves in an area where a wolf has destroyed livestock or domestic animals. The trapping can be done on the farmer's property and in a one-mile radius of the site of the attack for 60 days.

A person can shoot a wolf in defense of a human life, and guard animals can be used to repel or destroy wolves, under the law.

People will also be allowed to "harass" a wolf that they actually see within 500 yards of people, buildings, livestock, or domestic animals to discourage wolves from getting too close to homes or farms.

Any incident where a wolf is killed must be reported within 48 hours to the Department of Natural Resources or a University of Minnesota extension agent.

And effective July 1, 2001, compensation for a livestock owner who has an animal that is killed by a wolf will be based on fair market value instead of the current maximum of \$750 per animal.

No hunting season for wolves will be allowed for five years after the wolf is removed from the federal list of endangered species. But the law allows the commissioner of the DNR to prescribe

are effective Aug. 1, 2000.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) and Sen. Jane Krentz (DFL-May Township) sponsored the legislation.

HF3046*/SF2950/CH463

Fishing contests, hunting laws

Limits on the number of fishing contests in the state were established under a new law signed May 15. The law makes several other changes to hunting and fishing laws.

Effective Aug. 1, 2000, people who want to have fishing contests will need a permit unless several criteria are met: the number of participants is fewer than 30 for open water and fewer than 150 for ice fishing; the entry fee is \$25 per person or less; the total prize value is \$25,000 or less; the contest is not limited to trout species only; the contest is not limited to specifically named waters; and all the contest participants are age 18 years or under.

If those criteria are not met, the person can apply for a permit from the Department of Natural Resources.

The limits on fishing contests are based on the size of the lake, the number of participants, and the number of days that the contest would take place. And on all bodies of water 55,000 acres or less, the DNR commissioner can set aside at least two weekends per month with no permitted fishing contests.

A contest for a species on its opening day will not be allowed.

The commissioner can specify other restrictions as part of the permit to prevent undue loss of fish or to accommodate other concerns regarding large fishing contests.

Another provision in the law will improve some people's chances of getting a license to hunt moose. Minnesotans who have applied for and failed to get a license at least 10 times

open seasons and restrictions for taking wolves after the five years and after receiving comments from the public.

And effective March 1, 2001, violating the laws related to killing wolves is a gross misdemeanor.

Unless otherwise noted, the provisions described above

can apply in a separate selection process.

The separate process will make 20 percent of all moose-hunting licenses available to those applicants who have repeatedly failed to win a license.

The state issues a limited number of such licenses every other year, through a lottery system that includes all applicants in one pool. In 1999, 189 licenses were issued to hunt in northeastern Minnesota. There will not be a moose hunt in 2000.

A new deer license will be established under the bill, which will allow the holder to take one antlered buck throughout the state, rather than from a particular area. The license will cost \$66. Deer licenses currently cost \$22, and a separate law will increase that to \$25 in 2001.

Another provision in the law allows a person with mental retardation or a related condition to receive a provisional firearms safety certificate and hunting license.

The person will need to complete the classroom portion of the firearms safety course, and he or she could then hunt only while accompanied by a parent, guardian, or other adult who possesses a firearms safety certificate. The law does not apply if the person is otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm under state or federal law.

The law also takes a step toward resolving questions about state lands within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area.

The state owns about 100,000 acres of land, known as school trust land, in that area. Most of the land was donated from the federal government when Minnesota became a state.

The state-owned land is located on various parcels and is surrounded by federal land. Revenue from the land, through leases and the sale of logging rights, goes to the state's permanent school fund.

The University of Minnesota, Duluth will conduct an inventory and appraisal of the state lands to determine exactly how many acres of land belong to the state and provide other detailed information about the land.

That information will allow the state to negotiate a land exchange with the federal government, so that the state-owned parcels would be separate from the federal land.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) and Sen. Bob Lessard (DFL-Int'l Falls) sponsored the legislation.

The law also includes a minor change in a law that allows lighted fishing lures to be used in the state, which is effective May 16, 2000.

Other provisions of the law are effective Aug. 1, 2000.

HF866/SF1288*/CH473

Lifetime licenses

A new law will make lifetime hunting and fishing licenses available to Minnesotans and residents of other states.

Under the measure, people who want to hunt and fish will have the option to buy either a lifetime license or the traditional annual license.

The licenses are scheduled to be available March 1, 2001, for Minnesota residents and March 1, 2002, for nonresidents.

Fees for lifetime licenses are based on four groups: ages 3 and under, ages 4 to 15, ages 16 to 50, and ages 51 and older.

Lifetime fishing licenses for Minnesota residents in those age groups will cost \$227, \$300, \$383, and \$203 respectively. People who purchase that license will still need to purchase annual stamps if they want to fish for salmon or trout.

Lifetime fishing licenses will also be available for nonresidents at higher prices.

Lifetime small-game hunting licenses for residents will cost \$217, \$290, \$363, and \$213 for the same age groups. Those will also be available to nonresidents at a higher price.

Lifetime deer hunting licenses for residents will cost \$337, \$450, \$573, and \$383 respectively.

The law also will allow lifetime sporting licenses for residents that would cover fishing and small-game hunting. Such licenses will cost \$357, \$480, \$613, and \$413 respectively.

Lifetime deer hunting or sporting licenses will not be available for nonresidents.

Revenue from the licenses will establish a lifetime fish and wildlife trust fund. Money in that fund will be invested by the state Board of Investment, and it will pay for projects that currently are funded by revenue from annual hunting and fishing licenses.

The law was sponsored by Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater) and Sen. Bob Lessard (DFL-Int'l Falls).

HF3510*/SF3378/CH341

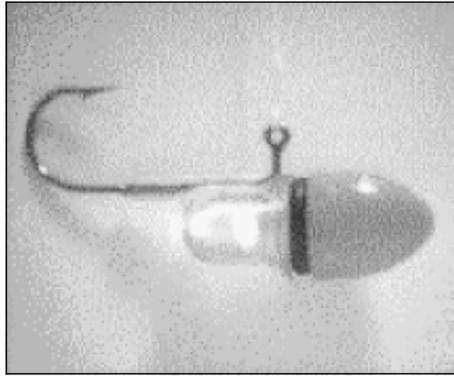
Law allows lighted lures

A new law, effective Aug. 1, 2000, will allow anglers to use lighted fishing lures.

While the lures are used in neighboring states, current state law allows the manufacture and sale of lighted lures but does not allow anglers to use them in Minnesota waters.

Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley) sponsored the measure in the House on behalf of a constituent who manufactures those lures, which contain a small battery.

The new law also contains a provision mandating that batteries used in lighted fishing lures cannot contain mercury. That provision of the law was added due to concerns that the



Anglers in Minnesota will now be able to use lighted fishing lures due to a law passed in the 2000 Legislative Session.

batteries could be swallowed by fish or lost in the water. Mercury pollution has caused the Department of Natural Resources to issue warnings against eating fish in some lakes in the state.

A separate bill was signed into law that further clarified that spotlights or other powerful light sources still are prohibited while fishing.

Sen. Pat Pariseau (R-Farmington) sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

HF3352/SF3586*/CH308

Permits for disabled hunters

A special hunting permit will be available to people who have a permanent disability, under a new law effective Jan. 1, 2001.

The permit will allow people with certain medical conditions to use a snowmobile or all-terrain vehicle while hunting in the state's wildlife management areas.

The law will allow the commissioner of natural resources to issue such permits to people who cannot step from a vehicle without the aid of a wheelchair, crutches, braces, or other means of support.

Permits will also be available to people who have heart or lung conditions and require breathing assistance.

A person who fraudulently applies for a permit, or a physician or chiropractor who fraudulently certifies that a person is disabled, will be guilty of a misdemeanor, under the law.

Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) and Sen. Jane Krentz (DFL-May Township) sponsored the legislation.

HF2603/SF2346*/CH265

Longer ice fishing season

The 2000 ice fishing season was extended by nine days, under a law effective Feb. 17, 2000.

The measure was sponsored in the House by Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin), who said it

would help small businesses and resorts in areas where ice fishing is popular. Those businesses lost potential income due to unusually warm weather in the early winter and a lack of snow.

Under previous state law, the ice fishing season was to last until the third Sunday in February, which this year would have been Feb. 20.

The new law extended the season through Feb. 29. The extension also included the spearfishing season.

The Senate sponsor was Sen. Pat Pariseau (R-Farmington).

HF2980/SF2763*/CH251

★ GOVERNMENT

Wide-ranging state funding law

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a \$185 million state government appropriations measure, which contains new funding for courts, natural resources, and jobs and housing programs. He did line-item veto two minor provisions.

The omnibus law will spend \$79.9 million from the general fund and another \$105 million from other accounts, including \$100 million in federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds.

Gov. Jesse Ventura line-item vetoed \$1.78 million from the measure. He singled out two provisions — \$1.75 million for construction grants at adult regional jail facilities and \$30,000 for purchasing drug detection dogs.

The largest portion of the spending law deals with health and human services programs, where it will spend a total of \$138 million — \$26 million from the general fund, \$12 million in forecast changes, and \$100 million in TANF dollars.

Proposals to increase sanctions for people who fail to meet work requirements of the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) were dropped in conference committee.

The law will pump \$26 million into improving salary for health care providers in nursing homes, group homes and those who serve people with disabilities. The law creates a 3 percent cost-of-living increase. There also was a cost-of-living increase last year.

Beginning later this year, the income limits for seniors would be increased to allow more people to receive aid under the state's prescription drug program. In 2002, the program will be expanded further to include people with permanent disabilities who meet the same income limits.

MFIP programs will receive \$20 million in TANF money for county-level intervention to



Eligibility for the state's prescription drug discount program will be expanded to include disabled residents under a provision in the omnibus state appropriations law.

provide family employment grants. Money will be used to help hard-to-employ individuals, who face barriers such as transportation problems, chemical dependency, lack of education, or the inability to speak English.

The law will provide \$6.6 million toward economic development programs. Among the highlights are \$1 million in grants to expand Internet services in rural towns. Another provision will provide \$1 million to boost tourism in northern Minnesota.

And the law will appropriate \$50 million to the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency. Approximately \$30 million will go toward building and financing affordable housing units. The remaining \$20 million is an interest-free loan to Habitat for Humanity.

The law features \$6.5 million in new spending for the Department of Public Safety,

\$3 million for courts, and \$1.2 million for the Center for Crime Victims Services.

District courts will receive \$2.7 million to reduce judge vacancies across the state. Some salaries for judges could be paid through this appropriation.

The Department of Corrections will receive \$2.25 million, which includes \$500,000 for designing a joint headquarters for the departments of Corrections and Public Safety.

The Department of Natural Resources will obtain \$5.4 million. Approximately \$4 million would go toward settling legal costs incurred from litigation involving several Indian tribes.

The other \$1.4 million will be used as grants for northern counties that have wildfire concerns this year. Grants can go toward purchasing emergency communications and response equipment or for training to prepare for wildfires.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the law.

Many of the individual provisions are effective May 16, 2000.

HF2699*/SF3798/CH488

Monarch becomes state butterfly

A new law, effective Aug. 1, 2000, makes the monarch the state butterfly.

It is the 13th state symbol, joining the state flag and state seal, state tree (red or Norway pine), state song ("Hail! Minnesota"), state bird (loon), state fish (walleye), state mushroom (morel), state drink (milk), state grain (wild rice), state muffin (blueberry), state flower (lady slipper), and state gemstone (Lake Superior agate).

The idea for the butterfly law came from a group of fourth-grade students at OH Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi. They were studying how a bill becomes a law and a special unit on butterflies. Then the students decided to combine the two and bring the idea to Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake), who sponsored the law.

The last state symbol to be established was the blueberry muffin in 1988, which was proposed by third-grade students from Carlton, a small town near Duluth. The students felt that the choice was appropriate because blueberries are plentiful in northern Minnesota, and farmers throughout the state produce other ingredients needed to make the muffins.

Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

HF2588/SF2326*/CH306

Paying costs of lawsuits

A new law will potentially require state agencies that instigate unsuccessful lawsuits to pay higher costs to defendants.

Currently, agencies are required to pay the attorneys' fees and other expenses of a defendant when the agency brings a civil action and loses, under certain conditions. Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the new law will expand the types of expenses that can be recovered by the prevailing party, and it clarifies the procedure for receiving those awards from a court or administrative law judge.

The new law will allow the prevailing party to recover reasonable costs of any study, analysis, engineering report, test, or project that the party has done in response to the state's action. Those costs are added to those that already can be recovered under current law, including various court fees, mileage, postage, and delivery costs.

Also, previous law limited the amount of attorney fees that can be recovered to \$100 per hour. The new law will raise that limit to \$125 per hour.

The new law also modifies the definition of who is eligible for recovering those types of expenses. Groups that are eligible under existing law include organizations with up to 50 employees and annual revenues that do not exceed \$4 million. The new law will expand the eligibility by increasing the number of employees to 500 and the annual revenues to \$7 million.

The law applies only if the state agency fails to justify its position when it instigates a civil suit or contested case other than a tort action.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) and Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope) sponsored the law.

HF3497*/SF3539/CH439

Turning over state property

The state turned over ownership of a former correctional facility to the city of Sauk Centre under a law effective April 5, 2000.

The facility was established in 1911 as a facility for delinquent girls and became coeducational in 1967.

Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria), House sponsor of the measure, said the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Sauk Centre was closed in July 1999 and has been vacant since then.

Local officials can now use the property for economic development or for city or county government purposes, which Cassell said will be a vehicle to create jobs. The city must study land-use options to determine the best use of the property and submit a report to the state Department of Administration.

If the state had not turned the land over to

the city, the state Department of Administration estimated that it would have spent \$200,000 per year in minimal maintenance to the vacant facility.

Under state law, when an agency vacates a piece of property, the state Department of Administration offers the property to other state agencies or departments that might want to use the property. But in this case, no other agency expressed interest.

Cassell said that the land originally was purchased by the city and given to the state in the early 1900s to be used as a correctional facility. The city also extended water and sewer lines to the buildings and has continued to maintain that system.

Sen. Cal Larson (R-Fergus Falls) was the Senate sponsor of the measure.

HF2819/SF2444*/CH326

★ HEALTH

Regulating alternative care

A law that will allow the Department of Health to oversee complementary and alternative health care practices was signed by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law will establish an office, housed at the Department of Health, for unlicensed complementary and alternative health care.

The office will investigate complaints against alternative health care practitioners, will discipline practitioners in some cases, and will serve as a clearinghouse for information on such practices.

Language in the law enabling the department to oversee complementary and alternative health care practices was added to the measure by a conference committee before it was presented to the governor for his signature.

The proposal drew some criticism from House members during debate on the conference committee report earlier this month.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe), a physician, said some fear exists in the medical community that patients may opt for one or more unproven alternative treatments instead of conventional medicine for life-threatening illnesses.

Mulder said that by approving the measure, legislators were recognizing procedures that have not been based on scientific fact.

But Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), sponsor of the legislation, said the new law will provide for consumer protection and does not encourage the use of procedures unproven in the medical community.

The law also will make changes to the

regulation of both speech-language pathologists and audiologists, unlicensed mental health practitioners, and alcohol and drug counselors.

Furthermore, the law will alter the Administrative Simplification Act by requiring a uniform report for offering medical and benefits advice, as well as a uniform document explaining benefits for patients and providers.

Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

Most sections of the new law take effect Aug. 1, 2000. Sections about governing procedures for alternative health care and recommendations for making employee health insurance affordable are effective May 12, 2000.

HF3839*/SF2474/CH460

Training for care providers

Foster and respite care providers will have to meet training standards to care for children dependent on certain medical devices to live, under a law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The law is an attempt to decrease the chance that a child left in the company of a foster care provider could suffer harm due to a provider's inexperience or lack of training with special equipment critical to the life and care of the child.

Care providers will be required to have training or experience with a child's medical equipment before being allowed to care for the child.

Agencies that place children in homes, even if it's only on a temporary basis, will be required to ensure that the care provider has the necessary training before being entrusted with the child's care.

The legislation was brought forward with the help of Sharon Morrissey and husband, Don Baierl, of St. Paul, whose infant daughter died in 1997 because a care provider didn't know precisely how to operate the child's health equipment.

The Department of Human Services will be required to develop the training form. Officials expect little, if any, fiscal impact to the department.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) and Sen. Sandra Pappas (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the measure.

HF3342/SF3025*/CH338

Prescription drug cards

People will be prohibited from selling, marketing, promoting, and distributing any card offering discounts for prescription drugs that fails to meet certain requirements, under a law.

Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the measure will allow an individual or the state attorney

general to sue to stop any such act and obtain damages any deception may have caused.

The measure will protect consumers from promised discounts that are either confusing or not backed by insurance policies.

Discounts that are deceptive or that are not authorized by contract with the pharmacies listed on the card, will be in violation of the new law, and people issuing or distributing the cards will be subject to prosecution.

Also, discount cards will have to prominently state that discounts offered are not being offered through any insurance policy.

The new law will not apply, however, to vision care, glasses, or contact lenses provided by an optometrist or ophthalmologist.

Discounts promised under contract with the state of Minnesota, or a consumer discount card issued by a store for use at that particular store will also be allowed.

Furthermore, a card administered by a health insurer, nonprofit health service plan corporation, or health maintenance organization will be exempt from complying with card requirements put forth by the law.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) sponsored the legislation.

HF2883/SF2579*/CH303

Exposure to bloodborne diseases

A law will establish procedures regarding occupational exposure to bloodborne diseases for emergency medical services (EMS) personnel, corrections employees, and secure treatment facility workers.

The law addresses proper procedure for obtaining consent for testing, obtaining and testing blood samples for bloodborne diseases, and for informing individuals of blood test results, in certain situations.

The situations the new law will apply to include cases when people holding these occupations are exposed to a bloodborne disease in the course of carrying out their jobs.

The measure also will expand the state's HIV and Hepatitis B prevention program for health professionals to cover Hepatitis C. HIV is the virus that causes AIDS.

Also, the law modifies notification requirements that apply when emergency medical personnel are exposed to a person with active tuberculosis.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) and Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the legislation. The new law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF1631/SF1202*/CH422

Dealing with 'sharps'

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law aimed at reducing occupational exposures to bloodborne diseases through "sharps" injuries.

Effective June 10, 2000, the law will require employers to comply with federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations on bloodborne pathogens.

It also will require that employers review written exposure control plans annually and document in the plan consideration of appropriate engineering controls that are designed to eliminate or minimize exposure.

Sharps are needles and other medical devices used in testing. They are often used to draw blood and therefore carry the most risk for exposure to diseases carried through the blood.

The new law will require that a company establish a safety committee to make recommendations for using the best methods to limit injury. The law also will require that a person representing employees most likely to use or encounter a device creating exposure to bloodborne pathogens will be appointed to the committee.

Finally, the employer will be required to establish internal procedures to document the route of exposure and circumstances under which an exposure incident took place. The law spells out how information must be documented, as well. It should include the procedure being performed when the incident took place and the protective equipment or clothing used at the time of the exposure incident.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount) and Sen. Linda Higgins (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the legislation.

HF2639/SF2397*/CH351

Jury duty for nursing mothers

A judicial task force will suggest possible changes to jury rules for nursing mothers, under a law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The Supreme Court Jury Reform Task Force has been instructed to study the issue and suggest recommendations to accommodate the needs of nursing mothers who are selected for jury duty.

During the 2000 session, the House eventually accepted the Senate language calling for a study. However, an earlier version of the House bill would have exempted all nursing mothers from jury duty.

Rep. Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) and Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the legislation.

HF1865*/SF2094/CH269

HIGHER EDUCATION

★

Designing campus buildings

Representatives of colleges, universities, and state agencies will be allowed to vote on the design of state buildings, under a new law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

Contracts for designing state buildings are awarded through the state Designer Selection Board.

Under current law, the agency or school that will be using a new building appoints a non-voting member to the board, which consists of five voting members. The board looks at design plans from competing firms and decides which firm will receive the contract.

Under the new law, the board will consist of seven voting members, including one who will represent the school or agency that will be using the proposed building.

Other board members will represent the American Institute of Architects, the Associated General Contractors, the Consulting Engineers Council of Minnesota (with input from other professional engineering societies in the state), the Minnesota State Arts Board, and two citizen members who will be appointed by the state commissioner of the Department of Administration.

If, for example, a building is being designed for the University of Minnesota, the university will have a vote on the final design of the

building.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) and Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan) sponsored the measure.

HF3195/SF3701*/CH384

HOUSING

★

Interest on security deposits

A new law effective Aug. 1, 2000, will delay a scheduled increase in the interest rate paid by property owners on tenant security deposits.

Current law sets the rate at 3 percent until 2001, and after that time the rate was to be increased to 4 percent. The new law will change the date of the increase to 4 percent from May 1, 2001, to May 1, 2004.

State law related to the interest rate on security deposits has been adjusted several times in recent years. The 1992 Legislature changed the rate from 5.5 percent to 4 percent until May 1, 1997, but the rate was to return to 5.5 percent thereafter. In 1996, the rate was cut to 3 percent until May 1, 1999, with an increase to 4 percent thereafter.

The 1998 Legislature extended the 3 percent rate until 2001, and the new law will give it three more years.

Rep. Julie Storm (R-St. Peter) and Sen.

SEEKING SENATE SEAT



Rep. Myron Orfield bids the House adieu as members pack up and adjourn for the year. Orfield served as a House legislator for five terms, and he is running for a spot in the state Senate.

James Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul) sponsored the legislation.

HF3132*/SF2890/CH282

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Newborn drop-off law

A law effective April 19, 2000, allows a mother — or a person of her consent — to leave an unharmed newborn at a hospital emergency room up to 72 hours following the child's birth without fear of prosecution.

A hospital is required to accept the child and to notify a local welfare agency within 24 hours of the departure of the person bringing the baby to the hospital.

Under Minnesota law, a mother who willfully neglects a newborn when she is reasonably able to care for the infant can be charged with a gross misdemeanor. The new law provides a small exception.

This law allows the individual delivering the unwanted newborn to exit the building without providing identification. The hospital is allowed to ask questions about the medical history of the mother or newborn, but the person leaving the baby is not required to provide any information.

A newborn that is left behind will be considered an abandoned child. The baby, according to the new law, must not have any obvious injuries or illness in order for the hospital to accept it.

A hospital or employee of the hospital receiving the child is considered immune from any civil liability that could potentially result, if the act of receiving the newborn is done in good faith.

Furthermore, a social service agency taking custody of the child is not required to later reunite the child with its parents or search for relatives of the child as a placement option.

Officials are uncertain how many babies hospitals could realistically expect to be dropped off as a result of the new law.

Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior) and Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids) sponsored the legislation.

HF2945/SF2615*/CH421

Nursing center to stay open

The Legislature voted to override Gov. Jesse Ventura's veto of a bill aimed at assuring the continued operation of the Ah-Gwah-Ching center, a nursing facility in Walker.

The Ah-Gwah-Ching center serves residents whose aggressive or difficult to manage behavioral needs cannot be met in their home community.

In his veto message, Ventura said that the bill was "unnecessary" because law currently exists prohibiting the commissioner of the Department of Human Services to close the facility without the Legislature's approval.

Ventura vetoed the bill April 3 and the House voted to override the veto the following day. The Senate override came later in April, and the measure will become law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

In addition to language in the measure calling for the center to remain open, the law will clarify the admissions criteria of the facility and require that the center promote emergency admittance and geriatric rapid assessment stabilization programs.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. Tony Kinkel (DFL-Park Rapids) sponsored the legislation.

HF2809*/SF2631/CH310

Responsibility for care

The commissioner of the Department of Human Services is now required to consult with stakeholders and develop recommendations for transferring guardianship responsibilities for adults with mental retardation from the department to another entity.

Under a new law effective April 21, 2000, stakeholders include family members, advocacy organizations, counties, service providers, and the office of the ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation.

The law requires those taking over guardianship responsibilities to be either a multi-purpose agency providing a broad range of social services or a new or existing office within state government that does not currently have duties related to mentally retarded people.

The law also states that an entity must provide assurance that it will act in the best interests of each person left in its care.

Officials must provide recommendations for transferring guardianship responsibilities, including cost estimates, to the chair of the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee and the chair of the Senate Health and Family Security Committee by December 15, 2000, under the law.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) and Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) sponsored the legislation.

HF2671*/SF2567/CH429

Paying for audiology services

A law amending state medical assistance reimbursement requirements for audiology and related services was signed by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the law will require that the state reimburse speech-language pathology and audiology services provided by a person issued a temporary registration at the same rate as services performed by a registered pathologist or audiologist.

To receive the same reimbursement rate, temporarily licensed professionals will have to undergo the appropriate supervision and monitoring requirements provided in existing state law.

A speech-language pathologist is a professional who is licensed by the state, and qualified by training and experience, to diagnose and treat speech and language problems.

Audiologists are trained professionals who specialize in working with individuals with hearing problems. Audiologists identify, treat, and help prevent hearing loss for people of all ages.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) and Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the legislation.

HF2477/SF2499*/CH347

Caring for disabled people

A law that makes modifications to Department of Human Services policy regarding continuing care services for people with disabilities was signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The new law will require that people with disabilities be provided with a telephone number to call for the purpose of filing a complaint with the office of the ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation.

The measure also eliminates a previous requirement that stated requests for home care services for persons residing in a foster care setting include the foster care placement agreement and a determination of the level of an enrollee's difficulty of care.

Shared personal care assistant and private duty nursing services will be allowed to take place outside an enrollee's home or foster home when normal life activities take a care recipient outside his or her typical care setting, under the new law.

Several other technical changes to department language regarding care for disabled persons are included as part of the law. A few of those provisions pertain to requirements for rate and pay adjustments for facilities that care for the disabled.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) and Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester) sponsored the legislation.

Most provisions included in the new law take effect Aug. 1, 2000. A provision allowing a guardian of an adult who is not the responsible party to obtain a hardship waiver in

order to be reimbursed for providing personal care assistance services took effect May 16, 2000.

HF3409*/SF2841/CH474

Recourse for vulnerable adults

Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law May 15 that will create a panel to review decisions made by lead agencies regarding cases of potential maltreatment of vulnerable adults.

The law will provide a vulnerable adult or individual acting on behalf of such a person the opportunity to challenge an agency's decision before an impartial body.

Under current law, a vulnerable adult or person acting on his or her behalf has no other place to appeal but to the agency that produced the decision.

The board created by the new law will consist of representatives from the Department of Human Services and the Department of Health, the ombudsman for older Minnesotans, and the ombudsman for mental health and mental retardation.

A request for a review, the law states, will be taken up at the panel's next quarterly meeting.

Rep. Lee Greenfield (DFL-Mpls), sponsor of the legislation, referred to the measure as a "quality assurance approach" to reviewing decisions in cases of potential maltreatment.

The law will require that within 30 days of the panel's review, it must notify the lead agency and the person who requested the review of its decision. The panel may decide whether it agrees with the agency's decision or require the agency to reconsider its ruling.

If the panel were to decide that the agency must reconsider its disposition, the measure will require the agency reconsider and report back to the panel with its determination within 30 days.

Furthermore, the panel will be required to report to the Legislature each January the number of requests for review it received, the number of cases where the panel required the lead agency to reconsider its decision, the number of times when the final disposition was changed, and any recommendations to improve the review or investigative process.

Finally, the commissioner of the Department of Human Services will be required to offer medically necessary psychiatric and dental services to developmentally disabled clients in the Faribault service area, which would extend 100 miles around the city, under the new law.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3250/SF3028*/CH465

★ **INSURANCE**

Help for Holocaust survivors

A new law signed by Gov. Jesse Ventura will assist Holocaust survivors in settling and collecting insurance claims.

Aimed at insurance companies and their affiliates that do business in Minnesota and issued policies in Europe prior to 1946, the law allows the commissioner of the Department of Commerce to provide special assistance to Minnesota residents who have claims to settle.

The law allows the department to establish a registry of records of Holocaust-related insurance policies and claims. The registry will contain information such as a list of policies sold with the names of the insured and their beneficiaries, and whether the proceeds have been paid.

Companies that fail to provide the data to assist victims and their beneficiaries could be fined or have their authority to do business in the state suspended.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), House sponsor of the legislation, said that often life insurance claims require a death certificate, which for a Holocaust victim is not available.

He said there are about 200 Holocaust survivors living in the state.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) was the Senate sponsor. The law is effective April 14, 2000.

HF3756/SF3423*/CH367

Prompt payment of claims

Health insurance companies will be required to promptly pay clean claims by health care providers and facilities, under a law effective Jan. 1, 2001.

Third-party administrators also will be subject to payment requirements, but the new law will not pertain to services provided by pharmacists.

A "clean claim" is defined as a claim that has no defect or impropriety, including any lack of required documentation or any circumstance that prevents timely payment.

Health plan companies and third-party administrators will be required to pay or deny a clean claim within 30 days of receiving the claim. Claims not paid in that time will be subject to an interest payment of 1.5 percent of the claim per month.

The company providing the health plan or the third-party administrator would be responsible for paying the interest — not the insured party.

Late claim payments will not be subject to an interest payment if the payment is delayed so that the company can review potentially fraudulent or abusive billing practices, however.

Furthermore, the commissioner of the Department of Health will be prohibited from assessing a financial administrative penalty against a health plan company that violates the law.

Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the legislation.

HF2643/SF2767*/CH349

★ **LAW**

Liability for providing alcohol

A new law will make people who supply alcohol to those under age 21 subject to civil suits.

Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the law is an attempt to curtail parties where adults serve liquor to juveniles. House sponsor Rep. Phil Carruthers (DFL-Brooklyn Center) said the law will potentially make such adults liable for the actions of a juvenile after he or she leaves the premises.

The law will pertain to people who do not possess liquor licenses, thereby covering events like house parties.

The law will make an adult liable for actions of the minor if the adult supplied alcohol and had control over the premises, was in a reasonable position to stop the juvenile from drinking, or knowingly and recklessly permitted the underage consumption of alcohol.

The intoxicated teen who caused any injury or other harm would not be able to sue the person providing the alcohol.

The law includes a provision that says homeowners cannot purchase liability coverage under their homeowner's insurance to cover liability for an intoxicated juvenile's actions, unless it is specifically stated in the policy that it is meant to cover such situations. However, that provision will expire Dec. 31, 2001.

The law stems from cases such as a 1997 New Year's Eve crash that killed St. Paul teenager Kevin Brockway, who was leaving a party where alcohol was provided by another teen's parent.

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the Senate version.

HF2555/SF1733*/CH423

Hearing harassment cases

Judges will have discretionary power in hearing harassment cases, under a law signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura. The law takes effect July 1, 2000.

Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) was the House sponsor of the measure, which also redefines

harassment to include a “single incident” that has a “substantial adverse effect.” Previously, law required there be repeated incidents for an act to be considered harassment.

Smith said a key provision in the law is that it will not require a hearing to take place on every harassment complaint.

“It gives the court the flexibility they wanted after 10 years of looking at this statute,” Smith said.

A judge can throw out frivolous harassment complaints, such as those involving name-calling, Smith said. The judges would then have more time to hear serious harassment matters, he added.

The state began tracking restraining order filings in 1992, when 4,800 were filed. Last year, 8,800 restraining orders were filed.

A victim must allege a clear and present danger of harassment before the court may issue a temporary restraining order, under the law.

The new law does not eliminate the court’s option of waiving a fee for restraining orders in cases of financial hardship.

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the Senate version.

HF2516*/SF3580/CH476

No public defenders for youths

Public defenders will not be appointed to child protection cases if the juvenile is younger than 10, under a new law.

The law will create a uniform statewide system that dictates when a public defender should be brought in to represent a child. A juvenile age 10 or older could obtain a public defender, but a child under age 10 could not.

“Infants don’t need separate legal council, and it’s a waste of money,” said Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), who was House sponsor of the measure. “Some attorneys are being hired to represent a 2-year-old. That doesn’t need to be done.”

The law originates from the state Board of Public Defenders. In a recent letter, State Public Defender John Stuart explained that the law pertains only to child protection or services cases, not to juvenile delinquency cases.

Stuart said some courts never appoint attorneys unless the child is at least 12 years old, while other courts always appoint a lawyer for young children.

“The age of 10 was chosen as the cutoff because children under the age of 10 cannot be charged with juvenile delinquency, but may be dealt with in a children in need of

protection or services proceeding,” Stuart wrote.

Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF3119/SF2725*/CH357

Legal action for beer wholesalers

A new law effective April 18, 2000, clarifies existing laws regarding legal actions between beer brewers and wholesalers.

The law allows wholesalers to sue a brewer in either state or federal court for violations to state laws regarding the Minnesota beer brewers and wholesalers act.

The new law also gives wholesalers the right to a jury trial against brewers, and it provides that the right to bring action may not be waived except at the time the suit is filed.

The state’s beer brewers and wholesalers laws include provisions prohibiting brewers from inducing or coercing wholesalers into accepting delivery of any alcoholic beverage or any other commodity which wasn’t ordered by the wholesaler.

The laws also establish the right of free association between all brewers and wholesalers. Brewers cannot collaborate to fix or artificially elevate prices.

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) and Sen. Sam Solon (DFL-Duluth) sponsored the measure.

HF1947/SF1618*/CH415

Access to information

Public defenders will be given access to law enforcement databases, under a law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The new law will allow state and district public defenders, along with any attorney who is working for a public defense corporation, limited access to various criminal and juvenile databases.

“The defense felt they should have access to information on the people they are defending,” said Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada), House sponsor of the measure. “We felt it was a fairness issue.”

Public defenders will be given access to data regarding the attorney’s client only and will not be able to examine data on other people. The defender also will not have access to active and ongoing investigative data, under the law.

The proposal came from the State Public Defender’s Office, Broecker said.

Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate version of the legislation.

HF3950/SF3154*/CH377

FOCUS ON EDUCATION



Rep. Alice Johnson hugs Rep. David Tomassoni during the final day of the session. Johnson, a former chair of the House K-12 Education Finance Division, is stepping down after 14 years in the Legislature.

Information on sexual predators

Attorneys will have more access to court and health records of possible predatory sex offenders, under a law signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law makes alterations to the Sexually Dangerous Persons Act, which allows the state to civilly commit repeated predatory offenders to treatment.

The law allows county attorneys or the attorney general access to health and court records before a petition is filed in court. Prior to this law, attorneys obtained those records after a petition is filed.

"What they want to do is look at the health records," said Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), House sponsor of the measure.

There are about 160 predatory offenders in state hospitals. The offenders have completed their prison sentence and have been sent to a state hospital for treatment rather than being released into the general populace.

While a predatory offender could complete treatment and be released from a state hospital, that has yet to happen in the six-year history of the civil commitment law.

Because attorneys will have access to records before a petition is filed, they might determine that civil commitment is not necessary and not pursue a petition, Skoglund said.

The law will require that the individual be notified that attorneys are seeking his or her records. However, that notice can be waived if it could result in harm or harassment of potential witnesses.

The health and court records are not considered public information.

The Legislature approved the Sexually Dangerous Persons Act during a special session in 1994. The law stemmed from a case involving Dennis Linehan, who had a history of raping teen-agers in the 1960s and murdered one person. Linehan was set to be freed after a court struck down his commitment, saying Linehan could control his personal behavior.

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the Senate version. The law takes effect Aug. 1, 2000.

HF2880/SF2854*/CH480

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Township name change

A new state law allows the residents of the township of Lake Edwards in Crow Wing County to drop the "s" from the town's name.

There has been confusion about whether the legal name of the township had the "s" at the end, and the confusion has led to delays when the town has had to file documents with state and federal governments.

Township officials discovered that to legally change the name to the township of Lake Edward would ordinarily require a petition signed by at least 55 percent of the number of residents who voted in the last general election.

For Lake Edwards, a rural township located in the central part of the state with a population of approximately 1,500 people, the costs associated with that process seemed too high.

The new law allows the county board to change the name of the township upon receiving a resolution from the town board requesting the change.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the measure. The law is effective upon local action.

HF2521/SF2320*/CH253

Resolving boundary adjustments

A law will clarify the process for resolving disputes over municipal boundary adjustments.

Those adjustments, such as consolidations or annexations of towns or cities, used to be resolved by the Minnesota Municipal Board.

The board was abolished in 1999. The Legislature had set Dec. 31, 1999, as the date for the board to expire, but all of the board members resigned by June 1999, which left some of the adjustments unresolved.

At that time, the board's duties were set to be transferred to Minnesota Planning, a state agency that acts as a long-range planning arm of the governor's administration.

The new law, effective April 27, 2000, clarifies the dispute resolution process that may be used, and it authorizes the director of Minnesota Planning to delegate such disputes to the Office of Administrative Hearings. The parties involved in the dispute will share the associated costs of the resolution process.

Some provisions of the new law are retroactive to June 1, 1999, to address the disputes that were unresolved by the municipal board.

The law also requires Minnesota Planning to send a report to the House and Senate committees on local government and metropolitan affairs during the 2001 Legislative Session, regarding the effects of the transfer of duties.

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland) and Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) sponsored the measure.

HF3586/SF2951*/CH446

★ RECREATION

New plan for park permits

Annual permits for state parks will be valid for a full year after the date of purchase, under a new law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

Currently, annual park permits are valid only for the calendar year.

Proponents of the new law said it likely will increase the number of annual permits that are sold and encourage more visits to state parks year-round.

Earlier this year, an official from the Parks and Recreation Division of the Department of Natural Resources said survey results show the state could sell about 5,000 more permits per year.

The change could make enforcement more difficult than the current system, where an annual permit is distinctive and easy for park employees to see. But the official told lawmakers the change will be manageable because the sticker will be designed to clearly show the month and year it expires.

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

HF2505*/SF2289/CH278

Law sets fine for studs

The governor signed a measure that adds a civil penalty for using metal traction devices, or studs, on snowmobiles.

The new law was necessary because a civil penalty was inadvertently left out of a 1999 law that requires people to purchase a sticker for their snowmobiles if they intend to use studs.

The 1999 measure contains criminal penalties for people who drive a snowmobile with studs on a paved state trail.

The new law, effective April 5, 2000, establishes civil penalties for people who use snowmobile studs but do not purchase a sticker.

For the first offense, the penalty is capped at \$50. The fine for a second offense is up to \$300, and for third and subsequent offenses the fine is up to \$600.



A new law imposes civil fines and penalties for unauthorized use of snowmobile studs. Criminal penalties were enacted during the 1999 Legislative Session.

Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine) and Sen. Linda Runbeck (R-Circle Pines) sponsored the legislation.
HF3555/SF3283*/CH324

★ SAFETY

Bleacher safety changes

Safety requirements for bleachers, such as those at sports facilities or local parks, will be modified under a new law that takes effect Jan. 1, 2002.

New safety requirements for bleachers were signed into law last year, but Gov. Jesse Ventura line-item vetoed \$100,000 that would have helped communities and school districts pay the costs of complying with the new standards.

The 1999 law required bleachers that are taller than 30 inches to have gaps between seats, floorboards, and guardrails that do not exceed 4 inches. Otherwise, safety nets must be installed under bleachers that have gaps wider than 4 inches. The previous standard for gaps was 9 inches.

The new law will make the 4-inch requirement apply to bleachers that are at least 55 inches (nearly 5 feet) tall.

Retractable bleachers that are in place by Jan. 1, 2001, and that meet the previous 9-inch requirement for gaps, will be exempted from the 4-inch requirement. The responsible school district or organization will have to submit a safety management plan and amortization schedule for complying with the 4-inch standard.

A separate bill (HF4078) extended that exemption to bleachers at public and private

colleges and universities in the state that meet the 9-inch standard.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), House sponsor of the new measure, said it will ease the financial burden for schools, county fairs, and local parks departments without compromising safety standards.

The original legislation was brought forward after 6-year-old Toby Lee of Mound fell through a set of bleachers at a hockey game in Hutchinson and died in January 1999. The boy fell through a 13-inch gap in those bleachers.

The requirements are applicable to all new construction and installation as of Jan. 1, 2001.

Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan) was the Senate sponsor of the measure.

HF2846/SF3272*/CH417

★ TAXES

Tax cut and rebate plan signed

State taxpayers will receive more than \$1 billion in tax reductions and rebates, under a new law signed May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Included in the new law is a rate reduction in all three income brackets, a one-time sales tax rebate, a cap on automobile license tab fees, and an agricultural rebate totaling \$18 million.

The new law reduces the income tax rates by 0.15 percent in the upper and lower tax brackets. The middle bracket rate is reduced by 0.20 percent. Taxpayers will receive about a \$142 million income tax cut for tax year 2000. The state will collect around \$317 million less over the next biennium.

The new law also caps license registration

tab fees. The fee is now set at \$189 in the second year of a car's life and \$99 in the third through 10th years. The fee in the first year remains unchanged, as does the minimum \$35 tax that applies to all cars older than 10 years.

Lower income families benefit from an increase in the percentage of earnings used in calculating the state's working family credit. The credit is similar to the federal earned income credit that provides a wage supplement equal to a percentage of the earnings of low-income individuals.

The new law increases the percentage of earnings used in calculating the working family credit so that for all claimants, the credit equals at least 25 percent of the federal earned income tax credit.

A one-time \$635 million sales tax rebate based on 1998 receipts is provided for in the law.

Rebates for married couples and heads of households will be at least \$168 and as high as \$2,400. For other filers, the minimum will be \$95 with the maximum set at \$1,200.

Taxpayers can expect a check of about 40 percent to 45 percent of what they received last year and the rebate checks will be mailed in August.

People eligible for the automatic rebate are those who had income tax liability in 1998, those who filed a claim for the 1998 property tax rebate, and those who had social security income in 1998.

Social Security recipients who were Minnesota residents in 1998 but did not claim a 1998 property tax rebate or have 1998 income tax liability will receive a rebate of \$95.

And unlike last year's rebate, dependents will be eligible for a rebate equal to 35 percent of the amount a nondependent would receive.

The law also provides agricultural assistance for farms located in 31 counties that were declared disaster counties in 1999 by President Clinton or were contiguous to a disaster county. Farmers in those counties will receive a payment equal to \$4 for each acre covered under crop insurance in 2000.

Farmers also will benefit from an \$11.5 million increase in the education agricultural credit. The rate of the credit is increased from 54 percent to 70 percent for agriculture homestead land and buildings up to \$600,000 in market value. The rate for nonhomestead agriculture property is increased from 50 percent to 63 percent.

The new law allows employers in the state to receive a transit pass tax credit equal to 30 percent of the cost of transit passes provided to employees.

Also the law provides a \$5 million appropriation to the Department of Trade and Economic Development to make a redevelopment



Legislators made changes to the bleacher safety requirements passed into law during 1999. Height requirements were raised for bleachers required to have gaps no more than four inches and exemptions were expanded. Implementation of the requirements was also delayed.

grant to the city of Richfield. The grant will be used to acquire houses and apartment buildings in a two-block area adjacent to the new north-south runway at the airport.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) and Sen. Douglas Johnson (DFL-Tower) sponsored the legislation. Most of the new law's provisions are effective May 16, 2000.

HF4127*/SF2657/CH490

Evading sales tax payments

People who collect motor vehicle sales tax and then fail to send the tax to the state could be charged with a felony, under a new law effective April 14, 2000.

The law creates a felony for not submitting vehicle sales tax to the state, regardless of how much money is involved, but it states that the person collecting the tax must "willfully" fail to send in the tax.

House sponsor Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) said the law stems from a February state Supreme Court decision related to a case where a Mankato businessman was convicted of collecting \$12,000 in vehicle sales tax and failing to send the money to the state. As a result of the court ruling, it was no longer a felony to not send in sales tax.

Officials estimate the state will collect about \$526 million in vehicle sales tax in 2001.

Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids) sponsored the Senate version.

HF3303/SF3566*/CH366

Wadena County exemption

A new law will provide a one-time exemption to Wadena County from a truth-in-taxation publishing requirement.

Due to an oversight, the required public notice of the public hearing was not published, House sponsor Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee) said during a February hearing on the bill.

She said the county's auditor was new to the position. At the same time as preparing for the truth-in-taxation process, the auditor was also involved in administering a special election.

The county did meet its requirement of mailing notices to all taxpayers.

The state Department of Revenue ruled that the county did not substantially comply with state truth-in-taxation laws because of the failure to advertise the public hearing. The ruling would have required the county to use its previous year's levy.

Under the law, the county will be able to use its payable 2000 levy that was adopted at the public hearing.

During a House Taxes Committee hearing of the bill, department officials expressed con-

cern about setting precedence by exempting the county from meeting its requirements.

Assistant Commissioner Jenny Engh said that the department supplies a checklist that clearly lays out each requirement of the truth-in-taxation process.

Daggett said that the mistake was not deliberate, and since the county had met its other notification requirements, the county's taxpayers were sufficiently made aware of the public hearing.

Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

The law is effective upon local approval.

SF2554*/HF3039/CH258

★ TRANSPORTATION

Transportation spending law

A \$602 million transportation funding package was signed into law May 15 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The law preserves light-rail funding and appropriates cash for nearly all transportation items.

Ventura line-item vetoed a \$750,000 appropriation to the Department of Trade and Economic Development, but left the rest of the law intact.

However, the governor said in a letter that accompanied the bill that he is not happy with the bill and he feels legislators have squandered permanent funding in favor of the one-time appropriations.

"At best, this will accelerate a few already-

planned highway projects, and it largely ignores needed new investment in transit," Ventura wrote.

Ventura also objected to a measure in the law that moves nonhighway spending from the trunk highway fund to the general fund. The state attorney general and Department of Finance will examine the constitutionality of using trunk highway fund money for nonhighway projects.

"It is difficult to understand how appropriations made by the Legislature for many biennia could now be considered unconstitutional," Ventura wrote.

Money used for Office of Tourism kiosks and tort claims has been improperly spent from the trunk highway fund, when it should have come from the general fund, legislators said.

Ventura also said in his letter that legislators did not look at the long-term impact of shifting these funds to the general fund. He said the Department of Finance's numbers will reflect those costs.

The law features \$405 million in cash spending for road improvements. House leaders have said it's important to take advantage of the \$1.8 billion projected surplus for the biennium and fund areas that have been underfunded in recent history.

The Department of Transportation will spend \$177 million for eliminating bottlenecks on Twin Cities highways and another \$177 million on rural interregional corridors, which are major roadways that connect urban and rural areas.

Another \$100 million for transportation

SAYING GOODBYE



Rep. Jim Rostberg who served for three terms, is stepping down to start up a family business with his wife.



A new law that includes funding for transportation improvements includes \$177 million to relieve highway bottlenecks in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

will come from trunk highway bonds.

In addition, the final agreement leaves about \$92 million in previously allocated bonds for light-rail transit intact.

While the law does not strip funding for light rail, one provision will not allow the Department of Transportation to seek federal funds for the Hiawatha line unless the money is available to the state only because of light rail. In other words, if the money could be used for roads or bridges in Minnesota, the department could not seek the money for light rail. That section is effective May 16, 2000.

The law also will allow the Metropolitan Council to sell or lease naming rights to the 14 transit stations that are planned along the 11-mile Hiawatha line.

The Transportation Department cannot spend state funds on commuter rail projects unless the money has been specifically appropriated for that purpose, under the law. This provision is effective May 16, 2000.

The law will also call for \$39 million in cash for bridge improvements or replacements.

Four of the state's large highway department facilities will be upgraded or replaced at a cost of \$25.7 million. Renovations at the Transportation Department headquarters in St. Cloud will run \$10.3 million and upgrades to the Detroit Lakes headquarters will cost \$8.7 million. Like the bridge funding, the buildings will be funded through cash rather than with bonds.

The law also will spend money for a new Regional Transportation Management Center in Roseville. The law will require the department to sell its current center within three

years of completion of the new center.

The law also includes \$15 million for a revolving loan fund, which can be used for state highway projects. The governor vetoed \$10 million for the fund last year.

A study of the ramp meter system in the Twin Cities highlights the policy portions of the law. The Transportation Department will perform the study at no cost to the state.

Meters will be turned off for a period of time determined by the department to evaluate the effectiveness of the ramps. Department officials could not further specify when the study would be done and how many days the lights would be inactive.

The law establishes a commission dealing with major transportation projects. The commission will hear project proposals that exceed \$5 million and have a significant role in the overall transportation system. The commission also requires environmental impact surveys be completed to help evaluate the project.

The commission will only review and comment on projects — it will not be given final approval authority. This provision takes effect July 1, 2000.

Most spending provisions are effective July 1, 2000.

Sen. Dean Johnson (DFL-Willmar) sponsored the Senate version.

HF2891*/SF2678/CH479

Right-of-way accident liability

The state will have limited immunity from civil lawsuits involving recreational motor vehicle accidents that occur in a highway right-of-way, under a law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The law will establish the state is not liable when accidents or injuries occur involving snowmobiles or other off-road recreational vehicles.

“There has to be a level of responsibility in the hands of recreational vehicle users,” said Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), who sponsored the measure in the House. “Someone who uses a recreational vehicle in a prudent and responsible manner will be fine.”

Recreational vehicles are supposed to drive only on the outside, or “backslope” of the ditch, not at the bottom or the side closest to the highway. The law will not affect where motor vehicles can be driven.

Statute already gives the state limited liability for accidents that occur on ice-covered roads or in state parks.

Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the Senate measure.

HF3613/SF3307*/CH373

One plate for collector cars

Cars manufactured prior to 1972 and classic or model cars will only be required to have one license plate, under a law.

Effective Aug. 1, 2000, the measure will allow cars with a pioneer, classic car, collector, or street rod license to only display one plate.

If the car owner chooses to display just one plate, that plate must be located on the rear of the car, the law states.

Previously, the law allowed only certain cars manufactured prior to 1968 to display just one plate.

“This covers muscle cars made in 1971 or 1972,” said Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) said, who sponsored the measure in the House.

The reason for the change came from constituents who believed that two plates on their street rods were not necessary, Haas said.

The new law also states that only one plate is needed for cars built prior to 1972 that are used for general transportation purposes.

“Some people do use them for driving around,” Haas said. “You don’t see many of these cars in the winter.”

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the Senate bill.

HF2824*/SF2578/CH280

Exceptions to weight restrictions

Some heavier vehicles such as public utility or recycling trucks are exempt from spring-time road weight restrictions, under a law effective April 25, 2000.

The law allows a few specified vehicles to travel on roads that usually have weight restrictions for eight weeks in the spring.

"No one is for wrecking roads. I'm certainly not," said Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen), House sponsor of the measure.

Public utility vehicles need to be able to travel on side roads when emergencies occur, Workman said.

"For them to come onto your street and restore your power, they are technically breaking the law," Workman said during a House Transportation Policy Committee meeting in February. "That's ridiculous."

Exempted vehicles under the new law must not exceed 20,000 pounds per axle.

The law will be repealed in three years, so legislators will have to take further action to continue the law if it works well, Workman said.

The eight-week weight restrictions are enforced when the ice thaws and roads become particularly soft. Road restrictions are generally placed on state and county highways or city streets. By starting the weight restrictions on time, the department estimates it saves \$10 million annually in road replacement costs.

Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing) sponsored the Senate measure.

HF3274/SF2785*/CH433

C. Elmer Anderson highway

A Minnesota road will be named in honor of a former governor, under a new law.

The portion of Highway 371 from Baxter to Barrows in Crow Wing County, which is known as the Brainerd bypass, will be named the C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway.

Anderson, who died in January 1998, served as Minnesota governor from 1951 to 1955. He also served as lieutenant governor for 11 non-consecutive years. When he was first elected lieutenant governor in 1938, Anderson was only 26 years old.

Anderson, a Republican and a native of Brainerd, became governor in 1951 when Gov. Luther Youngdahl resigned to accept an appointment to the federal bench. Anderson defeated Orville Freeman in 1952 but lost to the same man in 1954. (Governors served only two-year terms at the time.)

After leaving the statehouse, Anderson returned to Brainerd, where he was a businessman and, for 10 years, served as the town's mayor.

Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) was

quoted at Anderson's funeral as saying he was always proud of Brainerd and stayed active in the issues important to the area.

Signs designating the road must be funded from nonpublic money, according to the law, which is effective Aug. 1, 2000.

Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the measure.

HF2502*/SF3207/CH279

Red Bull highway

A portion of Interstate 35 will be renamed to honor a military unit, under a law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The stretch of freeway will be renamed the 34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division Highway. Private money must be used to purchase and place signs. The designation will extend from the Iowa border to the Twin Cities.

The Red Bull Division, comprised of National Guard members from Minnesota, Iowa, and South Dakota, was the first division deployed overseas during World War II, according to the Minnesota National Guard. The division was stationed in North Africa and Italy during the war.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) and Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing) sponsored the measure.

HF3156*/SF2709/CH281

Highway named after contractor

A southern Minnesota highway will be named after a noted contractor and transportation advocate, under a new law effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The stretch of Highway 4 from Sleepy Eye to St. James will be named the Richard J. Mathiowetz Memorial Highway. Mathiowetz, a Sleepy Eye native, was dubbed a "legendary contractor" in the December issue of Construction Bulletin. He died Oct. 31, 1999, at age 64.

Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet) sponsored the measure in the House. Swenson said that Mathiowetz regularly traveled to the Capitol seeking funding for roads and highways.

"He had been an energetic advocate for good roads and highways," Swenson said.

Mathiowetz began working at his father's construction company when he turned 18, and he was involved in contracting throughout his life. Swenson said Mathiowetz deserves to have a highway named after him due to his long-standing reputation as a contractor in the area.

Funds for the purchase and placement of signs marking the highway must come through nonpublic sources.

Sen. Dennis Frederickson (R-New Ulm) sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

HF3142*/SF2844/CH288

VETERANS

★

Exempting rebate income

Sales tax refunds or rebates will not be considered income for residents of veterans' homes, under a new law.

The new law will clarify current law that requires residents of veterans' homes to pay for their care based on their ability to pay.

Cost of care is based on the average costs of operating veterans' homes.

The law relates to any future sales tax refunds and rebates, and to those paid after June 30, 1999. That money will not be considered income for residents of veterans' homes, under the law.

The law also will allow the governing board of the veterans' home in Hastings to use federal grant money to purchase a home to be used as transitional housing for homeless or disabled veterans.

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) and Sen. James Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul) sponsored the measure.

HF2968/SF3139*/CH442

CONGRESS BOUND?



Rep. Betty McCollum has served four terms in the House and is leaving to pursue a seat in Congress. She won the DFL endorsement for the seat being vacated by U.S. Rep. Bruce Vento.

Editor's note: This section includes summaries of all proposals that were vetoed in full or line-item vetoed this year.

★ **BONDING**

Four bonding vetoes overridden

The House voted to override four line-item vetoes from the \$640.3 million bonding law, which will pay for repairs to state facilities and new construction projects. Four other line-item vetoes were allowed to stand.

The Legislature had passed several major bills May 9 and recessed until the vetoes could be re-considered May 17.

The Senate also voted to override the same provisions, which means they will become law.

Gov. Jesse Ventura has had six full or line-item vetoes overridden in his first two years as governor. That is more than any other governor, according to records that date back only to 1939. An override requires 90 votes in the House and 45 votes in the Senate.

One override was a veto of a \$3 million appropriation from the state's general fund to begin construction on a new Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. The law will allow that \$3 million to be spent only if an equal amount of non-state money is contributed to the project.

In his veto message, Gov. Jesse Ventura wrote, "Projects of this nature should, at minimum, be able to demonstrate significant local and philanthropic financial commitments prior to a request for state funding."

Ventura added that additional policy discussions should take place before the state commits money for capital requests from arts organizations.

One attempt to override the veto failed on an 84-42 vote. It was later reconsidered and was passed on a 92-36 vote.

A similar line-item veto was overridden that will send \$1 million to the city of Lanesboro for a new arts center. Lanesboro is located just north of the Iowa border in southeastern Minnesota.

Another veto override was for \$135,000 to the Department of Health to fund a vehicle to promote organ donation.

"There are a variety of health-related causes that are worthy of public education but it is not the state's role to single out one cause or outreach mechanism," Ventura wrote in his veto message.

But the House voted 112-16 to override the

veto. Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) proposed the override, saying that the \$135,000 will be matched with an equal amount of nonstate money, and it will help address a serious health concern.

A fourth line-item veto that was overridden will spend \$1.5 million to pay for multicultural learning centers in St. James and Pelican Rapids. The vote was 100-26.

Rep. Bob Westfall (R-Rothsay) said the money mainly will pay for English as a second language classes and other services for recent immigrants. The center in Pelican Rapids originally was designed to provide those types of services for about 1,800 people, but the immigrant population has grown to more than 2,600 in that area, he said.

Rep. Gregory Gray (DFL-Mpls) added that the centers help build a sense of community and that the governor was "dead wrong in vetoing both of these provisions."

Line-item vetoes that were not overridden were \$500,000 for a Center for Agricultural Innovation in Olivia, \$100,000 for the Housing and Redevelopment Authority in Landfall to repair retaining walls, and \$150,000 for the St. Croix Valley Heritage Center.

"I believe that local or private funding is the most appropriate financing source for each of these projects," Ventura wrote.

Finally, a line-item veto cancelled \$2.7 million to build a cold weather testing

center in International Falls, which would have tested products to determine how they respond to cold temperatures. That money would have required an equal amount of nonstate matching funds.

An attempt to override the veto failed on a 59-68 vote.

Ventura also wrote that for all the projects that were vetoed, more pressing state needs could have been funded in the bonding bill.

HF4078*/SF3811/CH492

★ **BUSINESS**

Veto kills towing bill

The governor vetoed a bill that would have allowed people to claim any valuables from inside a car that has been towed and impounded.

Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul), who sponsored the bill in the House, was not pleased by the veto.

"The towing truck companies always knew they were stretching the law on keeping personal items," Dawkins said. "I'm surprised they were able to convince the governor their livelihood depended on their need to keep baseball mitts and briefcases."

Gov. Jesse Ventura expressed concern that Dawkins' bill would have hurt the towing



Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed two bills involving towing companies this session — one that would have clarified liens against towed vehicles and another that would have allowed banks to claim money first when a vehicle was sold after it had been towed following a drunken driving arrest.

industry. He said impound lots would have been required to absorb the costs of towing and storing abandoned vehicles.

"Owners of the vehicles would bear no responsibility for the towing, storage, or disposal costs of the vehicle, but would be permitted to obtain their possessions from the vehicle," Ventura wrote in his veto message. "Those possessions may be worth more than the vehicle itself."

State law says the impound lot owners have a lien on a car it has in its possession but says nothing about personal items in the car, Dawkins said. He added that he would like to see a court rule on that statute, because he believes the court would rule against impound lot owners and towing companies.

Sen. Sandra Pappas (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the bill in the Senate.

HF3566/SF3291*/CH388

★ CRIME

Vehicle forfeiture bill

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill that would have given banks more rights to funds generated from forfeited vehicles.

Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) was the House sponsor of the bill, which would have allowed banks to acquire forfeited vehicles if there is an outstanding loan or lease on the car.

"Right now, sales are done at impound lots," Entenza explained. "This bill (would have allowed) the banks to remove the vehicle from the impound lot, clean it up, and sell it at a higher value."

Under the bill, banks would have first applied proceeds to the debt they are owed by the vehicle owner. The bank then would have been required to reimburse impound lots for holding the car. Any remaining cash from the sale of forfeited vehicles would have gone into a special fund for law enforcement.

However, Ventura rejected the measure, claiming it had fiscal implications he could not accept.

"This bill does not require a financial institution to reimburse law enforcement agencies for their cost when the sale of the forfeited vehicle does not equal or exceed the loan balance," Ventura wrote in his veto message.

"Current law provides an incentive for the lien holder to get the maximum value for the forfeited vehicle because they must pay the costs incurred by law enforcement before satisfying their lien. This bill eliminates the incentive and would result in increased costs to the taxpayers."

Entenza said he was surprised by the veto.

"It was a disappointment that the Depart-

ment of Public Safety, which watched this bill for two years, waited until after it passed to register their objections," Entenza said.

Under state law, drivers are required to forfeit their vehicle only after a third drunken driving conviction.

Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids) sponsored the Senate version.

HF262/SF76*/CH383

★ FAMILY

No marriage license discount

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill that would have reduced the marriage license fees for couples who received at least 12 hours of premarital education.

And a failed attempt to override the veto kept the bill from becoming law. The Senate voted May 17 to override the veto, but the attempt failed to get a two-thirds majority in the House.

The bill would have raised the cost of a regular marriage license from \$70 to \$75. But for those couples who received premarital education, the marriage license fee would have been only \$25.

The bill specified that the education topics would include teaching about the seriousness of marriage, conflict management skills, and the desirability of obtaining counseling if the marriage falls into difficulty later on.

Couples would have had to obtain education from a clergy member, a person authorized by law to perform marriages, or a marriage and family therapist.

Ventura said he doesn't believe the government should have a role in marriage counseling.

"This bill is overly intrusive and increases costs for those who choose not to receive premarital counseling," Ventura wrote in his veto message. "I understand the authors' intent and share their concerns about our high divorce rate, however, I do not believe that government should intervene in a couple's marital decisions."

Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson) and Sen. Steve Dille (R-Dassel) sponsored the legislation.

HF2229/SF884*/CH397

★ GOVERNMENT

No time limit on confirmation

The first bill Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed during the 2000 Legislative Session would have limited the term of an acting or temporary commissioner of a state department.

Under state law, commissioners are

appointed by the governor, subject to the Senate's confirmation of the appointment. The bill would have limited the term of an acting or temporary commissioner to 18 months.

In his veto message, Ventura said the bill would have punished a commissioner for the Senate's failure to "fulfill its obligation to act" within the time limit.

"The confirmation of commissioners is an important role for the Senate," the governor wrote. "It is imperative to maintain a certain level of accountability and a clear expectation for all parties involved."

Ventura, who watched the Senate reject one of his appointees this year, acknowledged that there is a need for change.

"I look forward to working with the Legislature to create a comprehensive piece of legislation that addresses the concerns of both the legislative and executive branches of government on this matter," he wrote.

Rep. Sondra Erickson (R-Princeton) and Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora) sponsored the bill.

HF118*/SF160/CH277

Regional jails, drug dogs cut

Gov. Jesse Ventura line-item vetoed \$1.78 million from the omnibus state government appropriations bill, which includes \$185 million in total spending.

Ventura singled out two provisions — \$1.75 million for construction grants at adult regional jail facilities and \$30,000 for purchasing drug detection dogs.

In his veto message, Ventura said both items should come from local funds, not state money.

The Department of Corrections would have been responsible for distributing the grants to counties for regional jails. The money would have comprised up to 30 percent of overall construction costs.

The money for dog purchases would have been distributed through the Department of Public Safety. Agencies would have been allowed to seek funding for only one drug-sniffing dog.

The remainder of the funding bill was left intact.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the omnibus legislation.

HF2699*/SF3798/CH488

★ HEALTH

Waiting period plan scuttled

Wanting to avoid what he called “government intrusion” into an individual’s private life, Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed the contentious “right-to-know” abortion bill.

The bill would have required a woman considering an abortion to wait at least 24 hours before undergoing the procedure. It also would have required that the woman be given information about risks and alternatives at least 24 hours before the procedure is scheduled.

“I have decided that it is wrong for government to assume a role in something that I always believed was between a woman, her family, her doctor and, if she chooses, her clergy,” Ventura said when he announced the veto.

Ventura said that he thought long and hard about the bill, and talked with family, friends, advisors, and the people of Minnesota before coming to his decision.

Had the governor signed the bill, a woman would have been required to receive by mail, phone, Internet, or in person information about prenatal care, child support, adoption, and other material about pregnancy and community support services prior to having an abortion.

The bill would have waived a 24-hour waiting period for cases when a woman’s life or health may be put in danger by delaying the procedure.

The decision by the governor to veto the measure drew criticism from pro-life organizations and House Republican leaders.

In a news release issued after the governor announced his veto, House Speaker Steve Sviggum called Ventura’s decision “very upsetting.”

He noted that Ventura’s staff had appeared to have worked out a compromise with House Republican leadership over the bill, prior to the announcement of the veto.

“Ironically, Gov. Ventura talks about not being your typical politician. This action looks too much like the worst of a politician: Go back on your campaign promises, don’t honor your word through a negotiated agreement, and bend to powerful special interest group pressure,” Sviggum said.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the bill.

HF3652/SF3387*/CH412

Salary for hospital officials

The governor vetoed a bill that would have exempted certain public hospital employees from state law that sets compensation limits on individuals employed by a city, town, county, or other local government agency.

The law says that a person employed by a political subdivision, excluding a school dis-

trict, may not exceed 95 percent of the salary of the governor.

The bill would have provided an exemption for public hospital administrators, pharmacists, and psychologists to exclude them from having to comply with limitations on compensation.

In his veto message, Gov. Jesse Ventura said the exemption is not necessary because there is already an existing process for public employers to request exemptions on a case-by-case basis.

He continued by saying the Department of Employee Relations and the Legislative Coordinating Commission’s Subcommittee on Employee Relations have responded positively to exemption requests that demonstrate that an employer is competing in a national or regional market and would have problems attracting or retaining employees if forced to follow statutory salary limits.

“The current exemption process works and should not be circumvented with broad exclusions in statute,” Ventura wrote.

Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) and Sen. Mark Ourada (R-Buffalo) sponsored the vetoed bill.

HF3629/SF2385*/CH448

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Nursing center veto override

The Legislature has voted to override the veto of a bill aimed at assuring the continued operation of the Ah-Gwah-Ching center, a nursing facility in Walker.

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed the bill in early April, and the House voted to override the veto the following day. The Senate override came later, and now the measure is effective Aug. 1, 2000.

The Ah-Gwah-Ching center serves residents whose aggressive or difficult to manage behavioral needs cannot be met in their home community.

In his veto message, Ventura said that the bill was “unnecessary” because law currently exists prohibiting the commissioner of the Department of Human Services to close the facility without the Legislature’s approval.

In addition to language in the measure calling for the center to remain open, the law will clarify the admissions criteria of the facility and require that the center promote emergency admittance and geriatric rapid assessment stabilization programs.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. Tony Kinkel (DFL-Park Rapids) sponsored the legislation.

HF2809*/SF2631/CH310

★ TRANSPORTATION

Right lane measure vetoed

Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill that sought to have the state post signs urging drivers on the freeway to travel in the right lane whenever possible.

But a later agreement with the Department of Transportation satisfied one of the main goals of the bill’s supporters.

The final bill that emerged from conference committee was stripped of language that would have made it a crime not to stay to the right, as had been discussed. And the final bill would not have allowed law enforcement to pull over drivers for failing to follow the provision.

Drivers would have been asked, but not required, to move to the right lane after passing, under the final proposal. And the bill would have required the placement of a sign every 50 miles along freeways reminding drivers to move to the right lane after passing.

“I don’t see any reason why he would veto it,” said Rep. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), who sponsored the bill in the House. “I thought this would be the type of bill he would sign.”

Tomassoni said throughout the session that his goal was to obtain signs asking people to move out of the left lane, and he was not pushing for language that would have made it a petty misdemeanor to clog the left lane.

Ventura said he vetoed the bill, in part, because of concerns about Twin Cities freeways with left exits and similar problems. Later, the administration agreed to have the Transportation Department post signs asking drivers to stay right on portions of interstate outside the metro area.

Sen. Dick Day (R-Owatonna) sponsored the Senate version of the vetoed bill.

HF3091/SF2484*/CH425

Tourism centers vetoed

Gov. Jesse Ventura line-item vetoed a \$750,000 appropriation for the Department of Trade and Economic Development within the omnibus transportation finance bill.

The money, a grant to the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission for the Minnesota River Tourism Initiative, would have been used to plan and design travel information centers in west and central Minnesota.

“We do not believe it is cost-effective to place three new travel information centers in such close proximity, and feel that any new tourism-related appropriations would be better spent improving actual tourism destinations like trails or parks,” Ventura wrote in his veto message.

That was the only item vetoed from the \$602 million transportation funding package.

HF2891*/SF2678/CH479

An elusive compromise

A modest Profile of Learning bill finally won passage as the 2000 session came to a close

By MIKE DE LARCO

Following weeks of talks between House and Senate leadership over what to do about the controversial Profile of Learning, the Legislature passed a measure May 17 that would allow local officials to ease requirements under the show-what-you-know initiative.

The House passed the bill on an 82-44 vote. The Senate vote was 46-17.

Legislators also discarded a second proposal that would have allowed school boards the choice between the Profile and a back-to-basics alternative proposed earlier in the session called the North Star Standard.

The move to drop the North Star Standard

as an option for districts was merely the latest twist in the Profile saga this spring. Last week, talks about fine-tuning the Profile delayed House votes on four important spending bills until wee hours of the morning May 10.

A year ago, legislators failed to reach an agreement on how to improve the Profile, a companion to the state's other graduation requirement — the basic skills tests.

The Profile has been criticized by teachers and school districts for excessive paperwork and problems with implementation.

It was created to shift learning away from textbooks and lectures and move it in the direction of experiments, teamwork, research,

and independent projects.

Under the Profile, students are required to perform various tasks in core learning areas that have practical applications for life beyond the classroom.

The "fix-it" bill passed by the House would allow teachers and school boards to vote on a site-by-site basis on the number of Profile tasks required for graduation. If a district could not agree on a number, the state's requirement of 24 standards would apply.

This year's ninth- and tenth-graders would be excused from Profile requirements, under the bill. Educators have said this session they were worried that some students would be denied diplomas because implementation problems put completion of the Profile's content standards out of reach for some.

Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls) and Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) are sponsors of the bill.

The Profile bill (HF3618/SF3286*) now heads to the governor's desk. 

Reflections

The end of a legislative session always gives rise to a wellspring of mixed emotions for members and staff alike. The build up to and the final hours before closing are not unlike a high school or college graduation. Long-time compatriots may never be seen again, even though heartfelt promises are made to the contrary.

When new staff, like pages, arrive at the Capitol, they are nervous, unsuspecting, and don't know anyone. But the commonality of their work and long hours bind them together as good friends and acquaintances that make for great billiards tournaments and Karaoke competitions after work.

New lawmakers begin their service in a freshman class and develop lasting friendships as committee members, by sharing living quarters, and as House chamber seatmates for many terms. The closeness and camaraderie among them or staff members is unparalleled.

Near the end, session becomes a state of mind. It's like being in a hospital waiting room, agonizing and guessing what the outcome will be for a loved one undergoing serious surgery. Legislators may ask themselves, "Is the governor going to veto

my bill?" "Will I have time enough after the last hour of session to get to California for my wedding?" "Am I too burned out to face another election campaign?"

For lawmakers and staff alike, session reminds one of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture. It begins very slowly and quietly. In the middle, things build up to a loud crescendo. And at the end, carillon bells ring and cannons roar every few seconds to close out the impressive piece.

What may start out slow and calm, ends with intense 16- to 24-hour workdays for revisors, researchers, or legislative reference librarians who spend a lot of time probing the archives for obscure information requested by writers and fact finders.

As lawmakers make tough decisions, staff members support them with a wide range of tasks. Many duties include financial revisions by fiscal analysts, fielding phone calls from constituents, printing thousands of documents, and minute-to-minute strategizing by caucus staff. All of it is intense — down to the last minute before adjournment.

This 81st Legislative Session adjourned

unlike any other. Even though opposing party leaders in the House and Senate expressed strong emotions early in the chambers, they came to a unique decision of sensitivity, while still holding those strong feelings. Their ultimate goal was to get some crucial laws passed for the well-being of the state. The lawmakers set a plan to move bills across the governor's desk without veto.

Just in case, they also saved themselves three days in the 120-day legislative period to try and override any vetoes.

After the handshakes, hugs, and the "so long for now" and "goodbyes" are said, those who remain may still experience emotional feelings.

For some, they can be as simple as loving the quiet hallways and empty elevators. A few miss noisy meetings, while others feel guilty for working only 40 hours in a week. Many long to be as far away from the capital city as possible — like Abu Dhabi, for example.

Such is the emotional roller coaster ride of being involved in a process that "gets in your blood." Somehow, the agony and exhaustion of it all always leads to a profound respect for the institution.

— LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT

The end of the road

Local government issues and family call Rep. Peg Larsen back home after three terms in the House

By CHRIS VETTER

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland) can't believe time has gone by so fast. When she entered public life and ran for a Lakeland City Council seat, her youngest daughter was 2 years old. Now, that daughter, Jenna, is 16.

Larsen has decided to not seek re-election to her House seat, which she has held since 1994, to spend more time with her family. Prior to winning her legislative seat, she served eight years on the city council, including four years as the city's first female mayor.

"I really did some soul-searching," Larsen said. "I think it's time to put some normalcy in my life."

When Larsen announced her decision to leave May 17, many legislators were surprised, even though Larsen has been contemplating the move for more than a year. Larsen noted that her district endorsed her last month.

Larsen and her husband, Thomas, have four children, between the ages of 16 and 23. Two have left home; Larsen hopes to spend more time with the two still living at home.

"Fourteen years — in my mind, that's my own term limit," she said.

But it will not be easy to leave, she said.

"I have loved doing this," Larsen said. "I told my family I would stay as long as this is what I did, and did not become who I am."

Larsen said she never expected to become involved in state politics. Then, in 1994 legislators from her district approached her about running against incumbent DFLer Rep. Pamela Neary.

"I didn't know how anyone knew I was a Republican," Larsen said, noting that her city council is nonpartisan.

After two months of discussing the idea of running, Larsen decided to give it a shot.

"Win or lose, I decided it would be a positive experience," she said.

Among Larsen's top priorities was to scale back the powers of the Metropolitan Council. She sponsored several bills to abolish or rearrange the organization, which she contends has too much power for a nonelected body.

While her bills failed, Larsen argues that she won her case.

"The bill was to point out the Met Council is not accountable," she said. "I worked to make that well-known."

Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove), who represents a nearby district, co-sponsored legislation to abolish the Met Council. Marko agrees that the goal of curbing its powers has been successful.

"They should be partners, not facilitators," Marko said.

When Republicans won control of the House in the November 1998 election, Larsen was named the chair of the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, which she said was a big honor.

Legislators point to Larsen's efforts for bipartisan support as one of her key attributes.

"She worked very hard to develop friendships on both sides of the aisle," Marko said. "She's a true lady with a heart of gold and she's a hard

worker."

Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris) worked with Larsen on the Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

"She doesn't look at party labels," Jennings said. "She's the kind of legislator you don't want to see go. It's difficult to replace someone of that caliber."

Rep. James Clark (R-Springfield) said Larsen was an outstanding committee chair.

"Her door is always open. She goes out of her way to address the concerns of members of the committee," Clark said.

A significant measure Larsen sponsored was

a ban on amortization passed in 1999. The law prohibits cities and counties from setting a deadline for property owners to cease operations that do not conform to zoning ordinances. The measure included an exception for when municipalities try to close strip clubs or other "adult" businesses.

Larsen and other critics said some local governments were exploiting the amortization process to force out businesses without having to pay fair market value for their land. If the local government set a deadline for a business owner to conform to a new zoning ordinance or move, potential buyers would have no incentive to purchase a property until after the deadline had passed, when the seller would have no negotiating power and the property value would plummet.

Larsen said one of the most exciting moments in her tenure was the first time one of her bills became law.

"When I found out, and I got the letter from the governor, that was exciting," Larsen said.

While Larsen is unsure what her future holds, it likely will involve managing urban growth. She helped found the Middle St. Croix Valley Planning Advisory Board, which discusses the impact growth in one area has on other areas.

Larsen, who earned a sociology degree from the University of Slippery Rock in Pennsylvania, has also worked as a special needs educational assistant.

She said she is happy with her accomplishments as she leaves the Legislature.

"I feel like I want to do something new and exciting," Larsen said. "At this time, I'm not sure what that will be." 🐼



STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Peg Larsen
Republican
District 56B – Lakeland
Terms: 3

Career notes: After getting her start on the Lakeland City Council, Larsen worked heavily on local and regional issues at the Capitol. For the past two years, she has served as chair of the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

Self-imposed term limits

A leader on crime and public safety, Rep. Sherry Broecker is leaving the House after three terms to return to her interest in local issues

BY CHRIS VETTER

Rep. Sherry Broecker (R-Little Canada) did not plan to get involved with politics, but a horrible accident drew her interest to local issues.

Broecker had witnessed a severe car accident near her former home in Vadnais Heights, where one car broadsided the vehicle in front of her own. Broecker helped remove children from the wrecked car.

That prompted her to think the intersection needed a stoplight.

"I knew I had to be proactive," she said.

She ran for the Vadnais Heights City Council. She won and served eight years beginning in 1986. Signals were soon added at the intersection.

Her work on the council led to a fight for a legislative seat. Broecker ran for the Legislature in 1994, defeating incumbent DFLer Rep. Marc Asch in a close and nasty fight. Legal battles came after the election.

Now, after six years in the Legislature, Broecker, a supporter of term limits who once promised to stay no more than six years in the House, has decided to step aside.

"It's been a huge honor to serve in the House," she said. "I've learned a lot. For my family and I, it's been a long 14 years (including service on the city council) of late-night meetings and rescheduled family events."

Broecker has enjoyed working at the Legislature, but she misses the hands-on experience of city council work.

"Down here, you lose a little bit of that close-connectiveness," she said. "It's a little more broad, and you are dealing with the whole state."

When other legislators talk about Broecker, they mention her friendship and her humor. Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) said Broecker knows how to break up a tense moment with a good joke.

"Always at the right moment, she knows how to make you laugh," Smith said. "I like her. I consider her a friend. She's an excellent chairwoman and a hard worker."

Broecker doesn't mind being thought of as a prankster. She laughs about the practical jokes she and other members have pulled on legislators. She mentioned a time when she purchased a frozen turkey and placed it on a legislator's desk during floor discussion on turkey stamps.

"If you can't have a little fun, there's no sense of being here," Broecker said.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) also has served alongside Broecker on judiciary and crime-related committees.

"She is a very good person to be around," Skoglund said. "She was always inclusive in her decisions."

Early on, Broecker was assigned to the Judiciary Finance Committee — an area that she admits she knew relatively little about in the beginning. She wanted to broaden her areas of focus, and that new focus became crime issues.

When the Republicans won control of the House in the 1998 election, Broecker was awarded the chair of that committee. She said she has tried to

include all members of her committee in the decision-making process.

"You can sell what you are doing better when you have people with you that can help sell the idea," she said.

And she doesn't hesitate when she says her favorite legislation is "Katie's Law," which passed earlier this year. The law toughens penalties for repeat sex offenders and begins funding for a law enforcement information system.

"It was almost like it was back at the local level," Broecker said. "It was a sincere, heartfelt law."



Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), chair of the House Crime Prevention Committee, said he and Broecker have developed a valued friendship while working on crime-related issues.

"She has been dedicated to serving the criminal justice community and puts her heart into helping others," said Stanek. "On behalf of police officers, firefighters, crime victims, and public safety advocates, I thank her."

Broecker sponsored disaster relief for northern suburbs hit by a tornado and a domestic abuse reduction project in Ramsey County during her tenure. She also co-sponsored failed legislation in 1997 that would have allowed tax credits for people who donated to state colleges.

She has also supported permanent tax cuts in the past two years.

After six years in the Legislature, Broecker looks forward to new opportunities.

"I just felt it was time to prioritize my life," she said. "For me, that's my family."

Broecker's mother died a few months ago. She helped care for her mom during her last few years.

In addition to her desire to focus on her family, including three sons age 19 to 25, Broecker is a believer in term limits.

"I said six years ago in my campaign brochures that I would only serve three terms, and I stand by that," she said.

Broecker is not sure what will come next. She said a lobbying position is not high on her list. She looks forward to building a new home on Forest Lake with her husband, Jerry.

"I don't know what's in store," she said. "I'll put it in the good Lord's hands and whatever will be, will be." 

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Sherry Broecker
Republican
District 53B – Little Canada
Terms: 3

Career notes: Currently the chair of the House Judiciary Finance Committee, Broecker was the sponsor of "Katie's Law," a 2000 measure crafted in the wake of the abduction of Katie Poirier from a Moose Lake convenience store. The law prescribes a variety of changes to protect the public from sex offenders.

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Exactly 3,256 bills were introduced during the 2000 Legislative Session — 1,706 by the House and 1,550 by the Senate. Of those, 250 bills (and one resolution) were passed by both bodies during the session and sent to the governor.

So what happened to the other 3,006 bills? Some were duplicates, some were folded into other bills, but most are dead, gone from the legislative process unless they are reintroduced next year. The biennium has ended, and bills do not carry over from one biennium to the next.

And what happened to the 250 bills that have been sent to the governor? Most were signed into law, some are awaiting the governor's action, and some were vetoed.

Here's a quick review of the governor's veto authority during the second year of the biennium.

Once a bill has passed both the House and the Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor has several options when considering a bill. The governor can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill; or
- do nothing, which at the end of the biennium, results in a pocket veto.

The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

If a bill was passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session, the bill will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state, but his signature is not required.

If a bill is passed during the last three days of the session, the governor has a longer time to act on it. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary of state within 14 days of adjournment or the bill will not become law. Inaction by the governor results in a "pocket veto," and the governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the spending items to which he or she objects. As with all vetoes, the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is either 14 days after adjournment for bills passed during the final three days of the session, or within three days after the governor receives the bill at any other time.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history — unless it is re-introduced next year.

After each session, a comprehensive summary of all bills that were signed into law or vetoed is published. You can obtain a copy of New Laws 2000 by calling or writing the House Public Information Office, 175 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155-1298; (651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550.

Editor's note: The following chart includes the 250 bills (and one resolution) that passed both the House and the Senate and have been sent on to the governor for consideration. Final action is as yet incomplete on 8 of the bills. The bills are, for the most part, sorted according to the committee of origin.

Here are definitions of some of the terms used in the chart.

Governor's options

- enactment
The date the governor signed the bill into law.
- line-item veto (liv)
The power or action of the governor to reject individual items within an appropriations bill while approving the rest of the bill.
- Veto

The governor did not approve the bill.

- *An asterisk marks the version of the bill the House and Senate approved and sent on to the governor.

Effective dates

Each act takes effect at 12:01 a.m. on the day it becomes effective, unless the act specifies a different time. Examples:

- Aug. 1, 2000

Each act the governor signs into law, except those that make appropriations, take effect on Aug. 1 following its final enactment, unless the act specifies a different date.

- July 1, 2000

An appropriations act, or an act spending money, takes effect at the beginning of the first day of July following its final enactment, unless the act specifies a different date.

- Day after enactment

The act becomes effective on the day after the governor signs it.

- Upon local approval

A special law requiring approval from the local government unit it affects becomes effective the day after the local government unit's governing body files a certificate with the secretary of state, unless the act specifies a later date.

- Various

Different parts of the act have different effective dates.

- with exceptions (we)

Act includes other effective dates.

- with qualifications (wq)

Act adds conditions to the effective date.

- retroactive (retro.)

Act goes into effect as of a specified date in the past.

2000 MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE
FINAL ACTION (as of May 18, 2000)

HF—House File
SF—Senate File
R—Resolution
CH—Chapter

we—with exceptions
wq—with qualifications
*—bill the governor signed or vetoed
†—approved without governor's signature

liv—line item veto
◆—veto overridden by Legislature

HF	Author	SF	Author	Bill Title	CH	Governor's signature	Governor's veto	Awaiting governor's action	Effective date
				Agriculture Policy					
3332*	Swenson	3120	Hanson	Dairy research and promotion council alternative term expiration dates authorized.	285	3/27			8/1
3868	Daggett	3260*	Stevens	Aquatic farm licensing requirements modified.	331	4/4			8/1
3174	Swenson	3195*	Scheevel	Dairy product adulteration penalties modified.	385	4/13			8/1
3692*	Kuisle	3443	Sams	Feedlot permit provisions modified.	435	4/24			4/25
3534*	Harder	3070	Frederickson	Agricultural contract requirements and enforcement procedures modified.	470	5/15			1/1/01
3312*	Finseth	3223	Sams	Agricultural policy provisions modified.	477	5/15			5/16 (Secs. 22, 67-74); 8/1
2797	Tunheim	2575*	Stumpf	Dislocated worker program eligibility expanded to include specified working farmers.	481	5/15			8/1
				Capital Investment					
4078*	Knobloch	3811	Berglin	Omnibus bonding bill.	492	5/15	liv◆		5/16 (Art. 1); 7/1 (Art. 2)
				Civil Law					
2749*	Holberg	2464	Betzold	Revisor's bill.	260	3/14			various dates
3232	Goodno	2692*	Hottinger	Business corporations and limited liability companies shareholder rights modified.	264	3/20			8/1
1865*	Pawlenty	2094	Anderson	Nursing mothers needs study by the Supreme Court Jury Reform Task Force required.	269	3/23			8/1
3107	Greiling	2634*	Betzold	Civil commitment relative notification provided.	316	4/3			8/1
3220	Smith	2510*	Knutson	Real property recording and common interest ownership provisions modified.	320	4/4			various dates
2803*	Smith	3119	Cohen	Court reporters allowed to organize under the Public Employment Labor Relations Act.	345	4/10			8/1
3347	Gleason	2989*	Runbeck	Administrative law and workers' compensation judges conduct regulated.	355	4/10			12/31
3119	Bishop	2725*	Spear	Public defenders minors juvenile court representation restricted.	357	4/10			8/1
1267	Pawlenty	1126*	Betzold	Civil actions economic loss doctrine clarification.	358	4/11			8/1
3208	Dawkins	2723*	Betzold	Trust and probate provisions modified.	362	4/11			8/1
3517	Biernat	2742*	Foley	Expedited child support hearing notice to remove filing period modified.	372	4/13			8/1
3566	Dawkins	3291*	Pappas	Towed motor vehicles lien provisions clarified.	388		4/13		
3424	Pawlenty	3346*	Kelley, S.P.	Electronic filing of real estate documents task force established.	391	4/14			8/1
2229	Harder	884*	Dille	Reduced marriage license fee provided for couples who obtain premarital counseling.	397		4/14		
3519	Biernat	2794*	Foley	Expedited child support process provisions modified.	403	4/14			8/1
3318	Luther	3018*	Ranum	Standby and alternate custodians of children designation provided.	404	4/14			4/15
3577	Holberg	3116*	Knutson	Creditors' garnishments, executions, and levies regulated.	405	4/14			8/1
2555	Carruthers	1733*	Betzold	Civil third-party liability imposed for damages caused by intoxicated persons under age 21.	423	4/18			8/1
2563*	Storm	2381	Hottinger	Mechanics' lien civil cause of action created.	430	4/20			8/1
3311	Dawkins	3169*	Kiscaden	Parenting plans provided, parenting time procedure clarified, and terminology modified.	444	4/27			various dates
3047*	Kuisle	2944	Scheid	Title insurance mortgage release certificate language modified.	450	5/1			8/1
3997	McGuire	3300*	Cohen	Second judicial district streamlined dissolution procedure pilot project extended.	452	5/5			5/6
3345	Entenza	3016*	Knutson	Child support enforcement provisions modified.	458	5/11			8/1
47	Bishop	11*	Betzold	Domestic abuse victim civil cause of action provided.	471	5/15			8/1
2880	Skoglund	2854*	Kelly, R.C.	County attorney access to private data authorized for commitment proceeding determinations.	480	5/15			8/1
				Commerce					
2687	Wolf	2652*	Novak	Electric power generating plant siting act exemptions expanded.	289	3/28			3/29
3421*	Bakk	2779	Johnson, D.J.	Electric cooperatives' election to be regulated petition and balloting provisions modified.	292	3/28			3/29
1333	Daggett	2193*	Sams	Wood sales contracts regulated.	301	3/31			8/1
2675	Haas	2569*	Scheid	Vicarious liability insurance coverage for punitive and exemplary damages authorized.	304	3/31			4/1
2719*	Lieder	2436	Scheid	Rental automobile insurance coverage regulated.	309	4/3			8/1
2656*	Wolf	3441	Sams	Auto glass repair and replacement regulated, and rebates and incentives limited.	342	4/6			4/7 (Secs. 2, 3); 8/1 (Sec. 1)
2974	Dauids	3203*	Oliver	Insurance uniform accounting principles codification.	350	4/10			various dates
3756	Abrams	3423*	Spear	Holocaust victims insurance relief act established.	367	4/13			4/14
3109*	Entenza	3699	Wiener	Uniform electronic transactions act adopted.	371	4/13			8/1
3903	Westrom	2987*	Vickerman	Cooperative income financing and distribution provisions modified.	379	4/13			7/1/99 retro. (Sec. 1); 8/1 (Secs. 2, 3)
562	Paulsen	619*	Kleis	Collection agencies regulated.	389	4/13			8/1
3066	Seifert, J.	2783*	Knutson	Secretary of State fees and annual corporate registrations regulated.	395	4/14			various dates
3964	Wilkin	3626*	Wiener	Comprehensive Health Association eligibility and coverage modified.	398	4/14			4/15
1394	Pawlenty	1495*	Hottinger	Uniform Commercial Code secured transactions provisions adopted.	399	4/14			8/1
2731*	Dauids	2753	Novak	Motor vehicle manufacturers and distributors unfair practices regulated.	409	4/14			4/15
1947	Jennings	1618*	Solon	Brewer and wholesaler judicial remedies modified.	415	4/17			4/18
2846	Bradley	3272*	Wiener	Bleacher safety building code requirements modified.	417	4/17			8/1
2973	Dauids	2870*	Metzen	Financial institution loan charges and payments regulated.	427	4/20			various dates
2451*	Dauids	2271	Novak	Legislative Electric Energy Task Force expiration date extended.	436	4/24			4/25
3974	Paulsen	3581*	Solon	Omnibus liquor bill.	440	4/24			upon local approval

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HF	Author	SF	Author	Bill Title	CH	Governor's signature	Governor's veto	Awaiting governor's action	Effective date
2757*	Jennings	2614	Novak	Biomass power mandate regulated.	443	4/24			4/25
1748	Haas	1870*	Hottinger	Motor vehicle fuel franchises and marketing agreements regulated.	456	5/5			5/6 wq
3505*	Dauids	3092	Oliver	Commerce Department regulations provided.	483	5/15			various dates
988	Jennings	1048*	Johnson, D.H.	Public utility commissioners ex parte communication regulated.	487	5/15			8/1
				Crime Prevention					
2067*	Westerberg	2071	Ranum	Juvenile offenders modifications.	255	3/7			8/1
2774	Broecker	2485*	Wiger	Carisoprodol schedule IV controlled substance listing effective date delayed.	262	3/20			8/1
2815*	Carruthers	2386	Johnson, D.H.	Hennepin County District Court fine proceeds distribution modified.	270	3/23			7/1
3766*	Skoglund	3676	Ranum	Pawnbrokers computerized records transmission format specified.	274	3/23			3/24
3003	Stanek	3097*	Spear	Department of Corrections fugitive apprehension unit created.	291	3/28			8/1
3370	Westerberg	3330*	Neuville	Department of Corrections housekeeping bill.	299	3/28			7/1
3023	Broecker	2701*	Wiener	Lawful gambling fraud defined and criminal penalties imposed.	318	4/3			8/1
1590*	Mahoney	1952	Berg	Warrant authority of alcohol and gambling agents clarified.	325	4/4			8/1
3571	Oskopp	2828*	Wiger	Gambling regulated, specified activities prohibited, and shipment of devices regulated.	336	4/6			4/7
465	Ozment	624*	Murphy	Firefighter training and education board created.	344	4/6			8/1
2751	Stanek	3455*	Johnson, D.H.	Stolen or fraudulent checks provisions modifications.	354	4/10			8/1
3457	Holberg	2858*	Spear	Civilly committed sexual psychopaths or sexually dangerous persons transfer procedure.	359	4/11			4/12
3303	Entenza	3566*	Foley	Criminal penalty for failure to remit motor vehicle sales taxes.	366	4/13			4/14
3331*	Howes	2980	Junge	Prevention of domestic violence and sexual assault interagency task force created.	368	4/13			7/1
3950	Broecker	3154*	Ranum	Criminal and juvenile justice database access authorized for criminal defense purposes.	377	4/13			8/1
262	Entenza	76*	Foley	DWI motor vehicle forfeiture proceedings requirements modified.	383		4/13		
3075	Paulsen	2655*	Scheid	Insurance tax laws recodified.	394	4/14			various dates
3512	Anderson, B.	3108*	Lesewski	Local and state correctional facility inmate telephone access regulated.	408	4/14			8/1
3825	Smith	3338*	Johnson, D.H.	Tribal police departments annual insurance cap established.	411	4/14			4/15 (Secs. 3-7); 8/1 (Secs. 1,2)
2830*	Clark, K.	2771	Kelly, R.C.	Pimps and patrons of juvenile prostitution provided enhanced criminal penalties.	431	4/20			7/1 (Sec. 1); 8/1 (Sec. 2)
1067	Fuller	551*	Junge	Domestic abuse crime sentences and provisions modified.	437	4/24			4/25 (Sec. 1); 8/1 (Secs. 2-19)
2958	Mahoney	2830*	Wiger	Crime of escape from custody expanded.	441	4/24			7/1 (Sec. 1); 8/1 (Sec. 2)
3550	Hilty	3178*	Metzen	Commissioner of public safety rule authority continued.	445	4/26			7/1 (Sec. 2); 8/1 (Secs. 1, 3-29)
2833*	McGuire	2891	Kelly, R.C.	Specified student behavioral data disclosed to the juvenile justice system.	451	5/5			8/1
2655	Leppik	2845*	Knutson	Underage persons alcohol or tobacco purchase with false I.D. provided increased penalties.	472	5/15			8/1
2516*	Smith	3580	Kelly, R.C.	Harassment definition and provisions modified relating to restraining orders.	476	5/15			7/1
2995	Fuller	2677*	Johnson, D.H.	Driving while impaired crimes and provisions recodified and simplified.	478	5/15			various dates
				Education Policy					
76	Seagren	86*	Pogemiller	K-12 education technical changes provided.	254	3/7			various dates
3618	Ness	3286*	Pogemiller	Profile of Learning modified.	500			x	
				Environment & Natural Resources Finance					
3046*	Holsten	2950	Krentz	Wolf management provided and hunting and fishing fees modified.	463	5/15			various dates
				Environment & Natural Resources Policy					
4178	Bakk	3835*	Johnson, D.J.	Resolution to expedite the BWCWA U.S. Forest Service EIS.	Res. 5			x	
2980	Haas	2763*	Pariseau	Fishing season modified.	251	2/16			2/17
2603	Hackbarth	2346*	Krentz	Permanently disabled hunters permit privileges modified.	265	3/20			1/1/01
2505*	Leppik	2289	Robertson	Annual state park permits effective for a 12-month period.	278	3/24			8/1
3352	Gerlach	3586*	Pariseau	Lighted fishing lures authorized.	308	4/3			8/1
3596	Ozment	3369*	Ring	Special environmental purpose districts pilot projects.	321	4/4			4/5
3555	Westerberg	3283*	Runbeck	Snowmobile metal traction device sticker requirement civil enforcement provided.	324	4/4			4/5
2819	Cassell	2444*	Larson	Stearns County land conveyance authorized.	326	4/4			4/5
2940*	Workman	2735	Price	Dry cleaner environmental response and reimbursement law modified.	333	4/4			4/5
2559	Howes	2546*	Stevens	Inland water sunken logs recovery and historical artifacts ownership provided.	337	4/6			4/7
3134*	Ozment	2857	Lessard	Metro Mosquito Control Commission authority to enter specified state lands limited.	339	4/6			4/7
3510*	Holsten	3378	Lessard	Lifetime resident angling, small game hunting, firearms deer, and sporting licenses issued.	341	4/6			4/7
2761	Rostberg	3379*	Ring	Omnibus tax-forfeited land bill.	348	4/10			4/11 (Sec. 1-15, 17); 8/1 (Sec. 16)
3576*	Oskopp	3361	Higgins	Solid waste and wastewater treatment facilities reporting requirements modified.	370	4/13			4/14 (Sec. 2); 8/1 (Secs. 1, 3-5)
2807	Howes	2514*	Stevens	Yellow perch limit rulemaking authority restricted.	374	4/13			12/1 (for one year)
2613	Boudreau	2949*	Hottinger	Big Woods heritage forest established.	375	4/13			8/1
3520	Osthoff	3290*	Kelly, R.C.	Environmental response and liability agreement grants provided.	376	4/13			4/14
2888*	Peterson	2573	Berg	Canoe and boating route marking authorized on a portion of the Chippewa River.	381	4/13			8/1
1493	Ozment	83*	Stevens	Wetland regulation simplified and consolidated.	382	4/13			various dates

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R—Resolution *—bill the governor signed or vetoed
CH—Chapter †—approved without governor's signature

HF	Author	SF	Author	Bill Title	CH	Governor's signature	Governor's veto	Awaiting governor's action	Effective date
3328	Hackbarth	2877*	Janezich	Iron Range off-highway vehicle recreation area addition in St. Louis County provided.	393	4/14			8/1
304	Tunheim	173*	Moe	Possession of wild animals taken on the Red Lake Indian Reservation authorized.	406	4/14			8/1
2889	Hackbarth	2683*	Samuelson	Bowfishing archery bows exempted from casing requirement.	428	4/20			4/21
3292	Dorman	2946*	Vickerman	Gasoline blended with the oxygenate methyl tertiary butyl ether sale prohibited.	434	4/24			8/1
2962	Haas	3036*	Johnson, D.H.	Seizure and administrative forfeiture of firearms and abandoned property provided.	466	5/15			5/16
866	Holsten	1288*	Lessard	Game and fish provisions modified.	473	5/15			various dates
3213*	Ozment	3878	Lessard	Department of Natural Resources forestry bill.	485	5/15			various dates
2991	Swenson	3002*	Frederickson	State park additions and deletions provided.	486	5/15			8/1
3516*	McCullum	3071	Ring	Natural resources provisions modified.	495			x	
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy									
4060	McCullum	2348*	Wiger	Resolution for release of Americans held in North Korea, China, Russia and Vietnam.	Res. 4	4/3			n/a
2680	Jaros	2465*	Solon	Political party treasurers authorized to sign political contribution refund receipt forms.	263	3/20			8/1
3762	Jaros	3355*	Solon	Port authority electronic funds disbursement authorized.	272	3/23			3/24
118*	Erickson	160	Stevens	State agency commissioners acting service time limited.	277		3/24		
2836*	Rostberg	2982	Johnson, D.E.	National Guard and organized militia membership eligibility clarified.	283	3/27			8/1
3281	Boudreau	2691*	Wiener	State building energy code authority transferred to commissioner of administration.	297	3/28			7/1
3219	Osskopp	2903*	Vickerman	Omnibus gambling bill.	300	3/31			4/1
2785	Rest	2821*	Hottinger	Charitable organization annual report filing requirements modified.	302	3/31			4/1
2588	Mares	2326*	Wiger	Monarch designated as the state butterfly.	306	3/31			8/1
4076	Haake	2653*	Novak	Internet state agency grant information required and uniform application developed.	332	4/4			8/1
2822	Rhodes	2547*	Metzen	Capitol area site selected for installation of Minnesota firefighters memorial.	380	4/13			8/1
3195	Leppik	3701*	Wiener	State designer selection board membership modified.	384	4/13			8/1
2981	Rostberg	2848*	Kelley, S.P.	PELRA supervisory or confidential employees list expanded.	387	4/13			8/1
3554	Anderson, B.	3138*	Wiger	Veterans Affairs commissioner duties technical changes provided.	390	4/14			4/15 (Sec. 15); 8/1 (Secs. 1-14, 16)
3597	Mares	2795*	Metzen	State investments modified.	392	4/14			4/15
2570	Bradley	3259*	Limmer	Energy code rules to remain in effect for specified residential buildings.	407	4/13			4/14
3633*	Rhodes	3550	Terwilliger	Mighty Eighth Air Force Week designated.	414	4/14			8/1
1834	Osskopp	1699*	Price	Electronic funds transfers and credit card payments to state agencies authorized.	419	4/18			8/1
3495	Anderson, B.	2972*	Knutson	State purchases open bidding authorized.	420	4/18			8/1
3497*	Tuma	3539	Junge	State of Minnesota attorney fees recovery regulated.	439	4/24			8/1
2968	Mullery	3139*	Metzen	Veterans homes support test not to include sales tax rebates.	442	4/24			8/1
3445	Stang	3257*	Hottinger	Legislative employment provisions modified.	457	5/5			8/1
2999	Mares	2796*	Pogemiller	Public pension plan provisions modified.	461	5/15			various dates
3557*	Krinkie	2836	Price	State govt., human services, and pre-K-12 education code provisions corrected.	464	5/15			various dates
2826*	Seifert, M.	2673	Larson	Minnesota election law procedures clarified.	467	5/15			8/1
3000	Seifert, M.	3234*	Hottinger	Legislative committees authorized to formally object to rules.	469	5/15			various dates
3110*	Mares	2679	Krentz	Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission exhibition participation provision repealed.	498			x	
Health & Human Services Finance									
3064	Jaros	2776*	Solon	St. Louis County nursing home renovation approval deadline extended.	271	3/23			8/1
3652	Goodno	3387*	Samuelson	Abortion informed consent requirements modified.	412		4/14		
2699*	Goodno	3798	Samuelson	Omnibus state departments supplemental appropriations bill.	488	5/15	liv		various dates
Health & Human Services Policy									
3236*	Mulder	3236	Kiscaden	Vital record certified copy issuance provisions modified.	267	3/23			8/1
3113*	Goodno	3089	Sams	Pharmacies permitted an additional certified technician.	276	3/24			8/1
3222*	Rhodes	3117	Hottinger	Health-related licensing boards reporting requirements modified.	284	3/27			various dates
3196*	Osskopp	2978	Murphy	Nursing facility employee pension benefit costs treated as PERA contributions.	294	3/28			7/1 wq
3375	Mulder	3161*	Kiscaden	Health care purchasing alliances modified.	295	3/28			8/1
3188	Tingelstad	3253*	Sams	Special transportation services medical assistance reimbursement study required.	296	3/28			8/1
2909	Abeler	2365*	Sams	Physician assistant supervisory requirement modified.	298	3/28			8/1
2883	Howes	2579*	Hottinger	Prescription drug discounts regulated.	303	3/31			8/1
3209*	Seifert, J.	2699	Samuelson	Health care cost containment major commitment expenditure report requirements modified.	307	4/3			8/1
2809*	Howes	2631	Kinkel	Ah-Gwah-Ching nursing center admissions criteria clarified.	310		4/3 ♦		8/1
3226	Nornes	2896*	Stevens	Nursing home resident assistants authorized and survey process procedure developed.	312	4/3			4/4 (Secs. 1,2); 8/1
2994	Fuller	2748*	Lourey	Ambulance service and EMT requirements modified.	313	4/3			4/4
3212	Tingelstad	2734*	Berglin	Home care and personal care provider transportation expense reimbursement studied.	314	4/3			8/1
3048	Nornes	2868*	Stevens	New medical assistance case-mix system timelines implemented.	315	4/3			8/1
3306	Wilkin	3549*	Terwilliger	Residential hospice program requirements modified.	317	4/3			8/1 (Sec. 1)

2000 MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE
FINAL ACTION (as of May 18, 2000)

HF—House File we—with exceptions liv—line item veto
SF—Senate File wq—with qualifications ♦—veto overridden by Legislature
R—Resolution *—bill the governor signed or vetoed
CH—Chapter †—approved without governor's signature

HF	Author	SF	Author	Bill Title	CH	Governor's signature	Governor's veto	Awaiting governor's action	Effective date
3365	Abeler	2941*	Kiscaden	Vulnerable adult neglect and medical error provisions modified.	319	4/3			8/1
3310	Abeler	3055*	Kiscaden	Health plan contract stacking regulated and remedy provided.	322	4/4			8/2
3103	Sykora	3005*	Ranum	Human services licensing provisions modified.	327	4/4			4/5
2670*	Bradley	2566	Hottinger	Mental retardation community-based waived services modified.	330	4/4			4/5
3342	Mariani	3025*	Pappas	Foster care providers medical equipment operation competency required.	338	4/6			8/1
3122*	Abeler	2901	Berglin	MA, GA, MinnesotaCare, and health care program provisions modified.	340	4/6			various dates
3477	Mulder	2499*	Sams	Speech language pathology and audiology services medical assistance clarified.	347	4/10			8/1
2643	Luther	2767*	Samuelson	Health plan companies and third party administrators clean health or home care services claims.	349	4/10			1/1/01
2639	Ozment	2397*	Higgins	Employees bloodborne pathogens exposure reduction procedures.	351	4/10			6/10
3052	Solberg	2850*	Lessard	Itasca County medical assistance prepayment demonstration project extended.	353	4/10			8/1
947	Howes	1038*	Solon	Occupational therapist and assistant licensing requirements established.	361	4/11			4/12
3626	Mulder	3428*	Kelley, S.P.	Psychologist supervisory and disciplinary requirements modified.	363	4/11			8/1
3537	Bradley	3198*	Berglin	Nursing facilities closure plans and savings reallocation process established.	364	4/11			4/12 (Sec. 1); 8/1 (Secs. 2-4)
1326*	Abeler	1130	Berglin	Community social services limited liability provided.	369	4/13			8/1
2707	Juhnke	3348*	Johnson, D.E.	Organization sponsored potluck event requirements modified.	378	4/13			8/1
1662	Boudreau	1896*	Kiscaden	Medical assistance programs and liens modified.	400	4/14			8/1
3176	Boudreau	3410*	Berglin	Neglect definition modified.	401	4/14			various dates
2935	Larsen, P.	2363*	Sams	Dental benefit plans regulated.	410	4/14			8/1; 8/1/01 (Sec. 3, subd. 2)
1383	Wilkin	1231*	Hottinger	Optometrist licensing provisions modified.	413	4/14			8/1
2945	Sykora	2615*	Foley	Persons leaving unharmed newborns at hospital emergency rooms not prosecuted.	421	4/18			4/19
1631	Goodno	1202*	Spear	Protocol established for occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens.	422	4/18			8/1
2671*	Bradley	2567	Hottinger	Temp. census employee income excluded from public assistance eligibility determinations.	429	4/20			4/21
2713	Rest	2686*	Robling	Funeral acts and services regulated.	438	4/24			8/1
3629	Olson	2385*	Ourada	Public hospital employees compensation limit exemption provided.	448		5/1		
3020*	Bradley	3199	Fischbach	Long-term care provisions modified.	449	5/1			7/1 (most sections)
3839*	Goodno	2474	Kiscaden	Unlicensed complementary and alternative health care practitioners regulated.	460	5/11			various dates
3250	Greenfield	3028*	Spear	Vulnerable adult maltreatment review panel established.	465	5/15			8/1
3409*	Bradley	2841	Kiscaden	Persons with disabilities continuing care services provisions modified.	474	5/15			5/16 (Sec. 6); 8/1
3642*	Huntley	2847	Kiscaden	Medical education program funds application and distribution provisions modified.	494			x	
				Higher Education Finance					
2969	Tuma	2803*	Hottinger	Certified public accountant licensing requirements modified.	346	4/10			8/1
3082	Tuma	3150*	Larson	Higher education facilities authority bonding authority increased.	386	4/13			8/1
3726	Bishop	3386*	Stumpf	Minnesota State Colleges and Universities chancellor separate salary subdivision created.	453	5/5			8/1
				Jobs & Economic Development Policy					
2642*	Rhodes	2552	Kelley, S.P.	Search firms surety bonding requirements modified.	261	3/14			8/1
979*	Lindner	2059	Belanger	Landlords authorized to apportion utility payments among units.	268	3/23			8/1 we
3132*	Storm	2890	Metzen	Security deposit interest rates provided.	282	3/24			8/1
3290	Dorman	2894*	Higgins	Occupational safety and health discrimination complaint communications classified.	323	4/4			8/1
3806	Wolf	3554*	Scheevel	Nonprofit organization re-employment compensation provisions modified.	343	4/6			4/7
3584	Lindner	3354*	Novak	Manufactured homes limited dealer license requirements clarified.	352	4/10			4/11
3901*	Storm	3769	Lesewski	Housing finance agency community rehabilitation grants and loans authorized.	424	4/20			8/1
3960	Nornes	3644*	Novak	Workers' compensation benefits increased.	447	4/27			various dates
3501*	Holberg	2811	Betzold	Omnibus data classification, access, and privacy bill.	468	5/15			various dates
3057	McElroy	2893*	Hottinger	Business subsidy provisions clarified.	482	5/15			various dates
				Judiciary Finance					
2688*	Broecker	2769	Ranum	Omnibus crime prevention and judiciary finance bill.	311	4/3			various dates
				K-12 Education Finance					
3800*	Seagren	3559	Junge	Omnibus K-12 policy and supplemental appropriations bill.	489	5/15			various dates
				Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs					
2634	Anderson, I.	2411*	Lessard	Northern Itasca hospital board membership requirements modified.	252	3/1			8/1
2521	Hasskamp	2320*	Samuelson	Lake Edwards township name change.	253	3/1			upon local approval
2722*	Tunheim	2502	Stumpf	Kittson County town dissolution authority.	256	3/7			upon local compliance
2535*	Sykora	2291	Oliver	Shorewood authorized to elect city council members by wards.	257	3/13			upon local compliance
3338*	Holberg	2907	Robling	Scott County officials duties reorganized.	259	3/14			3/15
2723*	Ness	2528	Dille	McLeod County office authority extended.	266	3/23			8/1
2927*	Tuma	2685	Robling	Metropolitan Inter-County Association group insurance protection authorized.	273	3/23			3/24
2873*	Hackbarth	2516	Novak	Anoka County department head time requirements clarified.	275	3/23			upon local compliance

**2000 MINNESOTA LEGISLATURE
FINAL ACTION (as of May 18, 2000)**

HF—House File we—with exceptions liv—line item veto
 SF—Senate File wq—with qualifications ♦—veto overridden by Legislature
 R—Resolution *—bill the governor signed or vetoed
 CH—Chapter †—approved without governor's signature

HF	Author	SF	Author	Bill Title	CH	Governor's signature	Governor's veto	Awaiting governor's action	Effective date
3433*	Osthoff	3292	Kelly, R.C.	St. Paul Port Authority recreational facilities and purposes authority modified.	286	3/27			upon local compliance
3016	Stang	2756*	Fischbach	Hospital districts annexation authority expanded.	290	3/28			8/1
3399	Sykora	3145*	Oliver	Minnetonka qualified newspaper designation priority variance.	305	3/31			4/1
3152	Kuisle	2905*	Kelley, S.P.	Local government units purchase provisions modified.	328	4/4			8/1
3169*	Gerlach	3167	Pariseau	Dakota County personnel board of appeals provisions modified.	329	4/4			upon local compliance
3327	Broecker	2676*	Wiger	Local government authorization to petition to amend or repeal rules sunset modified.	335	4/6			8/1
3795	Kuisle	3478*	Kiscaden	Rochester firefighter probationary period rules modified.	356	4/10			upon local approval
3202	Wilkin	2789*	Belanger	Coroner compensation provisions clarified.	360	4/11			4/12
3260	Olson	2968*	Ourada	Lake improvement district provisions modified.	396	4/14			various dates
3263	Swapinski	3082*	Solon	Duluth Human Rights Commission additional powers authorized.	402	4/14			upon local approval
2791	Abrams	2471*	Higgins	Hennepin County Human Resources Board and department provisions modified.	416	4/17			8/1
3786	Anderson, B.	2456*	Ourada	Wright County ditch conveyance to St. Michael and Albertville authorized.	432	4/24			upon local approval
3586	Larsen, P.	2951*	Vickerman	Alternative dispute resolution process use clarified.	446	4/26			8/1
3378	Tomassoni	2570*	Janezich	St. Louis County unclassified service position authorized number increased.	454	5/5			8/1
2673	Rest	2521*	Vickerman	Political subdivision corporation creation standards established.	455	5/5			upon local compliance
2489*	Skoglund	3093	Higgins	Political subdivisions authorized to require registration of impounded bicycles upon sale.	462	5/15			8/1
3229*	Abrams	2986	Higgins	Hennepin County obligations payment by electronic transfer or credit card provided.	475	5/15			5/16
2591*	Anderson, I.	2415	Lessard	Minnesota-Ontario legislative commission established.	484	5/15			various dates wq
849*	Haake	751	Novak	Minor use metro airports expansion and upgrade authority modified.	491	5/15			8/1
				Rules & Legislative Administration					
4143	Seifert, J.	3819*	Knutson	Revisor's bill.	499			x	
				Taxes					
3039	Daggett	2554*	Sams	Wadena County truth in taxation process advertisement requirement penalty exemption.	258	3/13			upon local approval
3234	Abrams	3091*	Murphy	Sales and use tax law recodified.	418	4/18			various dates
4090	Abrams	3730*	Pogemiller	Public finance provisions modified.	493			x	
3024	Abrams	2693*	Belanger	Tax and revenue recapture provisions corrected.	496			x	
				Transportation Policy					
2502*	Wenzel	3207	Samuelson	C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway designated.	279	3/24			8/1
2824*	Haas	2578	Betzold	Collector motor vehicles license plate option.	280	3/24			8/1
3156*	Workman	2709	Murphy	I-35 designation as 34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division Highway.	281	3/24			8/1
3475	Anderson, B.	2813*	Betzold	State vehicle identification requirements modified.	287	3/27			8/1
3142*	Swenson	2844	Frederickson	Trunk Highway No. 4 designated as Richard J. Mathiowetz Memorial Highway.	288	3/28			8/1
3053*	Workman	2508	Murphy	Collector vehicles authorized to display a blue light as part of rear brakes.	293	3/28			3/29
2936	Workman	2511*	Vickerman	Public and private property entry authorized for examinations and surveys.	334	4/4			8/1
3613	Holberg	3307*	Ranum	Recreational vehicles personal injury claims.	373	4/13			8/1
3091	Tomassoni	2484*	Day	Motor vehicles required to be driven in the right-hand lane clarified.	425		4/20		
2953	Workman	3023*	Kleis	Vehicle registration and titling provisions modified.	426	4/20			various dates
3274	Workman	2785*	Murphy	Utility-owned vehicles exempted from specified weight restrictions.	433	4/24			4/25 (repealed 6/1/03)
3688	Molnau	2956*	Kiscaden	Midwest Interstate Passenger Rail Compact adopted.	459	5/11			8/1
2891*	Molnau	2678	Johnson, D.E.	Omnibus transportation finance bill.	479	5/15	liv		7/1
672	Kuisle	702*	Vickerman	Real property plats county review and approval clarified.	497			x	
				Ways & Means					
3952	Ozment	3533*	Kelly, R.C.	Claims against the state payments provided.	365	4/11			4/12
4127*	Abrams	2657	Johnson, D.J.	Omnibus tax bill.	490	5/15			various dates

Wednesday, May 17

HF4178—Bakk (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources Policy

BWCAW; President and the President's Council on Environmental Quality memorialized to expedite the reduction of fuel loading within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness.

HF4179—Olson (R)

Education Policy

Local control of public education provided and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF4180—Reuter (Ind.)

Education Policy

State test of the basic requirement for written composition destroyed, student responses exempted from mandatory reporting requirements, and future test prompts limited.

HF4181—Kahn (DFL)

Health & Human Services Policy

Minnesota prescription drug fair pricing act adopted, fair drug pricing board established, criminal penalties imposed, and money appropriated.



State marriage counselor

Wisconsin takes unusual approach to reducing divorce rate

Gov. Jesse Ventura recently vetoed a measure that promised couples a discount on their marriage license for obtaining pre-marital counseling, and a bill creating covenant marriages has stalled in committee.

In general, it's not been easy going for bills that aim to reduce divorces and shore up the institution of marriage.

But our neighbors to the east in Wisconsin now have a state marriage counselor with funds allocated in 1999.

One paragraph in the 750-page budget bill passed by the Wisconsin Legislature authorizes one full-time position as part of the "Community Marriage Policy Project."

The state marriage counselor will coordinate and assist communities in developing standards for marriages solemnized in Wisconsin by members of the clergy. The state official will team with local clergy members to develop those standards.

The state also appropriated \$105,000 for the project through 2001, and \$60,000 per year afterward. It is set to be repealed in October 2003.

The measure, which received the support of a national group called Marriage Savers, was sponsored by Rep. Scott Jensen, speaker of the Wisconsin State Assembly.

Marriage Savers advocates that couples receive a certain amount of pre-marital counseling and suggests that couples wait at least four to six months after engagement before being married. The group also suggests that a mentor relationship be established between couples married for many years and those just starting out.

Overall, the group claims that divorce rates continue to climb at alarming rates and says communities need to take an active role in preventing divorce because of the societal and economical costs associated with it.

(Divorce rates in Wisconsin have, in fact, dropped over the past 10 years, according to that state's Department of Health. The divorce rate in 1998 was 3.3 per 1,000 people, compared to 3.5 nationally. It peaked at 3.7 in 1992, the same year the U.S. divorce rate was 4.8.)

Critics of the program say it comes too close to the line separating church and state.

The Marriage Savers Web site says that 119 cities in 37 states and Canada have adopted community marriage policies as of January 2000.

(M.KIBIGER)

How a Bill Becomes

Idea

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

Legal form

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

Authors

3 Each bill must have a legislator to sponsor and introduce it in the Legislature. That legislator is the chief author whose name appears on the bill along with the bill's file number to identify it as it moves through the legislative process. There may be up to 34 co-authors from the House and four from the Senate. Their names also appear on the bill.

General Register

7 In the House, the General Register serves as a parking lot where bills await action by the full body. Bills chosen to appear on the Calendar for the Day or the Fiscal Calendar are drawn from the General Register.

In the Senate, a different procedure is used. Bills are listed on the General Orders agenda. Senate members, acting as the "committee of the whole," have a chance to debate the issue and offer amendments on the bill. Afterwards, they vote to recommend: passage of the bill, progress (delay action), or further committee action. And sometimes they recommend that a bill not pass. From here, the bill is placed on the Calendar.

Calendar for the Day

8 In the House, the Calendar for the Day is a list of bills the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee has designated for the full House to vote on. Members can vote to amend the bill, and after amendments are dispensed with, the bill is given its *third reading* before the vote of the full body is taken. The House also has a Fiscal Calendar, on which the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee or House Taxes Committee can call up for consideration any tax or finance bill that has had a second reading. The bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.

In the Senate, bills approved by the "committee of the whole" are placed on the Calendar. At this point, the bill has its *third reading*, after which time the bill cannot be amended unless the entire body agrees to it. Toward the end of the session, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration designates bills from the General Orders calendar to receive priority consideration. These Special Orders bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.

A bill needs 68 votes to pass the House and 34 votes to pass the Senate. If the House and Senate each pass the same version of the bill, it goes to the governor for a signature.



a Law in Minnesota

Introduction

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

Conference

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

Committee

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

Floor

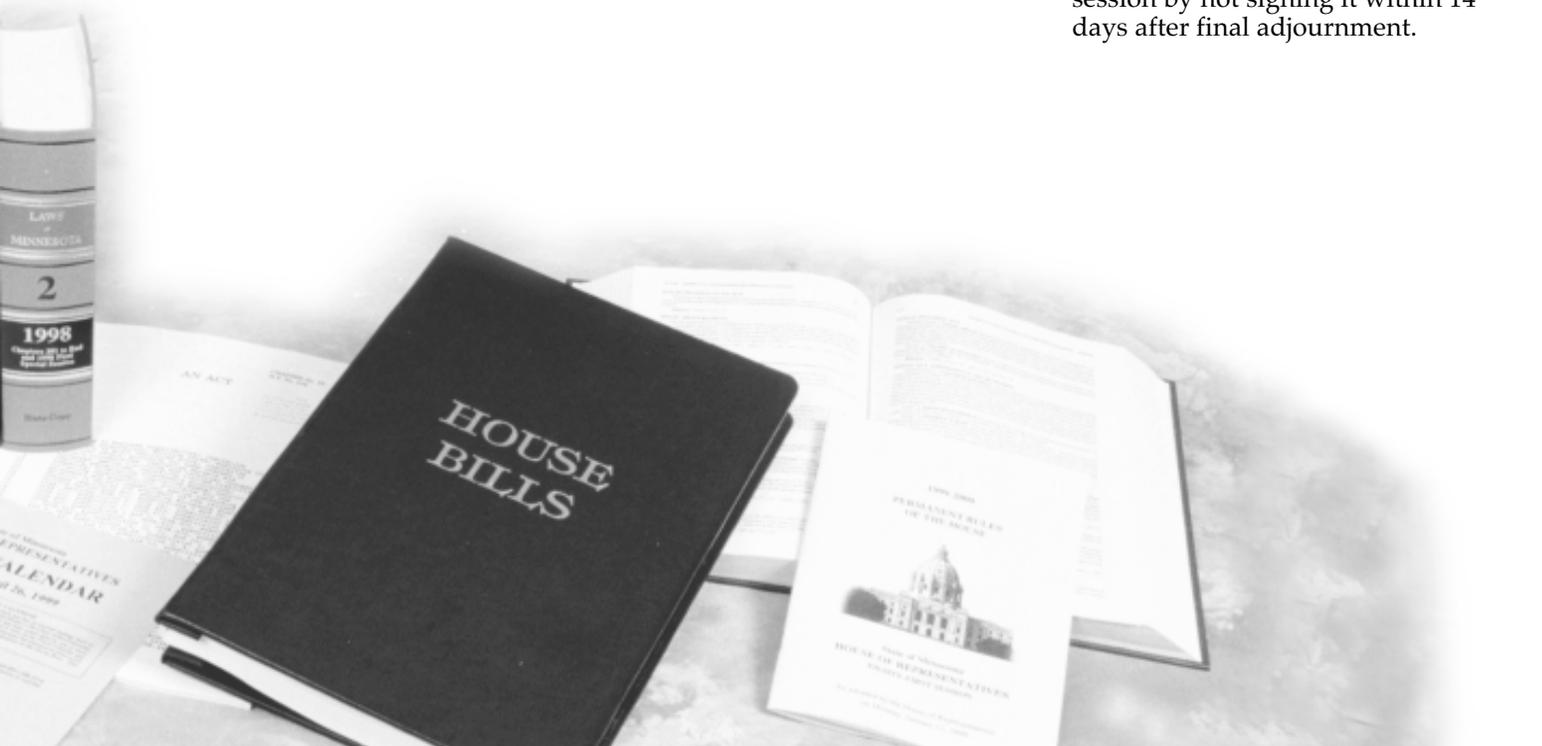
10 The conference committee's compromise bill then goes back to the House and the Senate for another vote. If both bodies pass the bill in this form, it is sent to the governor for his or her approval or disapproval. (If one or both bodies reject the report, it goes back to the conference committee for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

Floor

6 After the full House or Senate accepts the committee report, the bill has its *second reading* and is placed on the House agenda called the General Register or the Senate agenda called General Orders. (A committee can recommend that non-controversial bills bypass the General Register or General Orders and go onto the Consent Calendar, where bills usually pass without debate.) After this point, House and Senate procedures differ slightly.

Governor

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



MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
 175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
 ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155-1298

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
 MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
 MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

2000 Legislative Session

House files introduced during the 2000 session	1,706
Total for biennium	4,181
Senate files introduced during the 2000 session	1,550
Total for biennium	3,835
Total number of bills introduced, 1999-2000	8,016
In 1997-98	7,309
Two-year sessions in which more bills have been introduced	0
Bills sent to the governor in 2000	250
In 1998	157
Two-year total of bills sent to the governor, 1999-2000	500
In 1997-98	408
Bills that became law, 1999-2000 (as of May 18)	480
Number filed without the governor's signature	4
Number still pending governor's action	8
Bills that became law, 1997-98	439
Resolutions adopted by the 2000 Legislature	2
Number of full vetoes of bills by Gov. Jesse Ventura in 2000 (as of May 18)	8
Total full vetoes for the biennium	14
Number of additional bills with line-item vetoes in 2000 (as of May 18)	3
Total bills with line-item vetoes for the biennium	15
Vetoes — line-item and full — overridden by the Legislature in 2000	5
Number of veto overrides in the biennium	6
Total number of veto overrides, 1939 to 1998	4
Number of pages in the 2000 omnibus tax bill	247
In 1999	435
In 1998	334
Maximum number of legislative days the lawmakers can meet in regular session during a biennium	120
Number used in 1999-2000	118
Number used in 1997-98	109
Number used in 1995-96	113
Legislative days used in 2000	51
In 1999	67
In 1998	46
In 1997	63
Time Legislature will convene Jan. 3, 2001	12 noon

Sources: Chief Clerk's Office; House Public Information Office; Senate Information Office; Legislative Reference Library.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For general information, call:
House Information Office
(651) 296-2146 or
1-800-657-3550

To obtain a copy of a bill, call:
Chief Clerk's Office
(651) 296-2314

To find out about bill introductions or the status of a specific bill, call:
House Index Office
(651) 296-6646

For an up-to-date recorded message giving committee meeting times and agendas, call:
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The House of Representatives can be reached on the World Wide Web at:
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