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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 during 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 counterfeited 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 counterfeited 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.

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

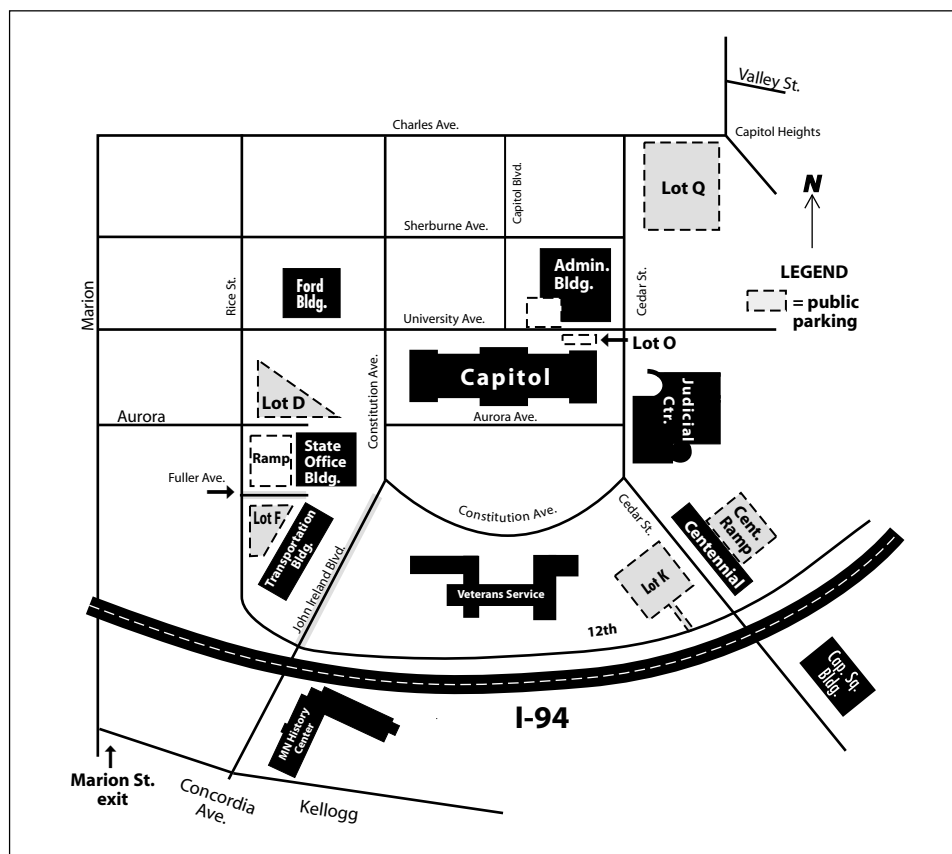
Tours

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.

For information updates, call House Calls at (651) 296-9283.

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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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