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SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

MARCH 30, 2001
VOLUME 18, NUMBER 13

In this issue:

WINE IN GROCERY STORES

MILK PRICE BOARD, PROFILE PROPOSALS, AND MORE

HF2175-HF2353

Session Weekly

Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office. During the 2001-2002 Legislative Session, each issue reports daily House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and upcoming committee meeting schedules, and provides other information. The publication is a service of the Minnesota House. No fee.

To subscribe, contact:
Minnesota House of Representatives
Public Information Office
175 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155-1298
(651) 296-2146 or
1-800-657-3550
TTY (651) 296-9896

Director
LeClair G. Lambert

Editor/Assistant Director
Michelle Kibiger

Assistant Editor
Mike Cook

Art & Production Coordinator
Paul Battaglia

Writers
David Maeda, Theresa Stahl,
Jonas M. Walker, Mary Kay Watson

Chief Photographer
Tom Olmscheid

Photographers
Andrew Von Bank, Sara Kirk

Office Manager
Nicole Wood

Staff Assistants
Christy Novak, Michelle Sorvari

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

Printed on recycled paper which is 50% recycled,
30% post-consumer content.



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On the cover: The illuminated murals on the ceiling of the House chamber shine down on the body as the first committee deadline passes and action shifts from committees to the House Floor.

—Photo by Tom Olmscheid

Wine with dinner

Sale of wine in grocery stores debate pits consumer convenience against potential increased youth access

BY THERESA STAHL

Displaying grocery bags loaded with thousands of responses from customers wanting to permit the sale of wine in grocery stores, proponents of a bill for the provision claimed it is what the people are asking for.

Members of the Liquor Subcommittee of the House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic Development Policy Committee responded, approving the measure March 23 that would allow the sale of wine in grocery stores in the seven-county metropolitan area. The bill was scheduled to be voted on March 29 by the full committee, after this edition went to press.

Opponents argued the bill would increase alcohol availability to youth and would increase drinking in society as a whole.

"The expansion of alcohol adds to the problems in our community," said Jaime Martinez of Action on Alcohol and Teens.

It is a "responsible proposal," said Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior), sponsor of the bill. In fact, her proposal is legal in 33 other states, including Wisconsin, Iowa, and South Dakota. "If youth access would increase dramatically due to wine being sold in grocery stores, why haven't these other states changed their law back?"

HF1205 would permit supermarkets of at least 10,000 square feet to sell wine with up to 15 per-

cent alcohol. These table and dinner wines would only be sold during the same hours wine is presently sold at liquor stores.

Sykora anticipated concerns of increased

underage access and included language in the bill requiring mandatory identification checks on all wine purchases, mandatory training of managers and employees on state laws regulating the sale of wine, and mandatory annual compliance checks.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said the bill might place additional costs on cities in order to have officers conduct the required compliance checks. Sykora disagreed.

"It will not be a big burden on police departments because there are already mandatory compliance checks for tobacco sold in grocery stores," she said.

HF1205 would also require store clerks selling wine to be 18 years of age or older. Clerks under

18 must call a manager to complete the sale, Sykora said.

Martinez said the provision might lead to further legislation to allow the sale of liquor and spirits in grocery stores. Nancy Christensen, executive director of the Minnesota Grocers Association and supporter of the bill, said her organization "would oppose amendments to include regular beer or spirits."

Christensen said grocery stores would adhere to the same penalties as liquor stores for violations of the law.

Terry Maglich from the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association doesn't know if cities will implement the same penalties as liquor stores, which is to close the store for one to 30 days.

Gordon Farrington, regional vice president for Cub Foods, described to committee members the sort of training employees of the grocery chain receive, including time spent on age restrictions and what they can and can't sell to minors. The company fires employees who fail to ask for identification for 3.2 beer or tobacco products, he said.

Grocery stores historically have very low profits due to competition, said Randy Chambers, vice president of operations for Twin Cities Rainbow Foods stores, and therefore have a lot of programs to combat theft.

Rainbow employs a loss prevention force and has video surveillance that the company uses to audit cashiers for theft and compliance with laws, Farrington said.

With an actual register checkout, complete with conveyor belt and scanner, he conducted a demonstration for the committee. When a bottle of wine is scanned, the computer gives a prompt to enter a birth date. The cashier then asks for identification, Farrington explained, and without it the sale cannot be completed.

The computer also accounts for the time of sale, and will display an error message if the purchase is attempted after legal hours to sell liquor. Farrington, who has been a manager at grocery stores in states that do permit the sale of wine, said these security procedures have worked.

Rep. Jeff Johnson (R-Plymouth) asked if security systems for theft prevention would be left up to each grocery store. Christensen said they would be required to have a theft prevention program before wine would be sold in the store. Individual cities would decide whether the program is acceptable, she said.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Terry Maglich, left, president of MGM Liquors in St. Paul, testifies March 23 against a bill that would allow the sale of wine in Twin Cities metropolitan area grocery stores during a hearing of the Liquor Subcommittee of the House Commerce, Jobs and Economic Development Committee. Jim Farrell, right, of the Minnesota Licensed Beverage Association also testified in opposition. Brian Sayles, center, a grocery manager at Rainbow Foods in Maplewood was at the hearing in support of the bill.

Johnson inquired about statistics from states that have passed laws to permit the sale of wine in grocery stores, saying it would be persuasive evidence either way. Neither side produced any data.

Brenda Visnovic of the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association argued liquor retailers can monitor buyers and their companions much more closely than grocers. Liquor stores don't let people in the store if they are not at least 21 years old, she said.

Judy Johnson, a Plymouth city council member who considers herself pro-business, objected to the bill for a number of reasons. "Groceries are valuable assets, and I appreciate that they're trying to bring in new ways to (make money), but this bill will have a price," she said.

She produced data from the city of Plymouth that showed grocery stores fail compliance checks for 3.2 beer and tobacco sales about twice as often as liquor stores. She also said grocery store clerks are a high turnover position, and many of them are high school students.

"This is one more venue that young people will gain access to alcohol," Johnson said. "It isn't worth the risk to the community."

Selena Reilly, youth coordinator at Mothers Against Drunk Driving, said her main concern with the bill is increased underage access. She said students have gotten excited about easier access and have said to her "the only people who would benefit would be youth."

Reilly said she is worried about added peer pressure, that the measure would result in increased drinking problems later in life, and would put people more at risk for rape and violence.

Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont), a grocer, said he doesn't believe youth go to stores to buy alcohol that much, but believes they get it from parents.

Rukavina said he "doesn't care if you sell alcohol in hardware stores," but opposes the bill because it would entice youth to buy alcohol and because of the impact it could have on small liquor stores. He said he hasn't heard from any privately owned grocery stores in his district.

He also mentioned the jail in St. Louis County is full of drunken drivers. (Part of St. Louis County is in Rukavina's district.) The jail budget has soared and the number of sheriffs have doubled.

He said this legislation might be the start of allowing all alcoholic beverages to be sold in grocery stores. "It's only a matter of time that you will be here pushing for everything," said Rukavina, and he asked what people are supposed to do when they want to drink liquor or beer with dinner.

Christensen of the Minnesota Grocers Association replied, "If they do they could go to their liquor store." 🐼

IT'S A FACT



Insane practices

Mentally ill, deaf, and blind institutionalized together in early days

Since early statehood, the Minnesota Legislature has taken steps to help citizens who couldn't help themselves.

In the 19th Century, the accepted method in public welfare was to isolate people who were seen as "defective" or "insane" in institutions. The intent was to protect society from them, while at the same time hoping to cure them. Both the methods and terminology were primitive by today's standards.

The first such institution operated by the state, opened in 1864 in Faribault. Geared primarily for the care of children, the Minnesota State Institute for the Education of the Deaf and Dumb was built on 40 acres of land donated by the city.

At the time, Gov. Henry A. Swift told the Legislature: "The care and education of this unfortunate class of our people is a sacred trust, which this state will never hesitate to accept and discharge, much less abandon, after having entered upon the work."

However, as the state's population grew and its need for care became more diverse, hospitals were required to handle everything from blind and deaf children to mentally handicapped individuals, all in the same place.

Though early reports focus only on the administration and costs of institutions, they hint at the difficulty of dealing with patients of such varying needs. Often people with very different disabilities were lumped together in the same institution.

That created communication problems between hospital staff and patients, plus as feelings of isolation among patients who could not relate to one another, according to reports.

These early days are chronicled in *The Minnesota Department of Human Services, Memories of our past*, published in 1998.

In the state's early years, some of Minnesota's mentally ill were sent to Iowa or Missouri hospitals, others were locked up in the state's jails. In 1866, the Legislature established the Minnesota State Hospital for the Insane in St. Peter.

In 1879 a second Hospital for the Insane

was opened in Rochester. Initially, the facility was intended to be an "inebriate asylum," but overcrowding at the St. Peter institution led the Legislature to abandon that plan. Nonetheless, "inebriates" were admitted to the Rochester institution along with the "insane."

That same year, the Legislature formed the Minnesota State Lunacy Commission to "weed out the idiots" from the insane asylums and put them into an experimen-

tal school. Apparently the school was a success — in 1881 the state established a School for Idiots and Imbeciles.

However, the Legislature directed the new school be connected with the Institute for the Deaf, Dumb, and Blind in Faribault. In 1885, the institute's name was

changed to the Minnesota School for the Feeble-Minded, or mentally retarded. Two years later the school became a department of the Minnesota Institute for Defectives.

The first state agency for overseeing these institutions was established in 1883 and was known as the State Board of Correction and Charities. Today's Department of Human Services has evolved through the years from that first agency. In 1901, it was renamed the State Board of Control; in 1939, the Department of Social Security; and in 1953, the Department of Public Welfare.

The institution in Faribault has gone through many metamorphoses and is known today as The Faribault Regional Center.

Today, the actions of the Department of Human Services reflects its culture just as the State Board of Correction and Charities did in the 1800s. Institutionalization is now reserved for the very ill. And the agency's goal is to keep persons with illness or disabilities in their homes and communities as much as possible.

People with disabilities and illness are often fully participating members of society, and the deprecatory terminology of the past is gone.

(M.K. WATSON)



The first institution for the deaf at Faribault in 1863.

★ AGRICULTURE

County feedlot management

The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee heard several bills pertaining to feedlots March 26.

HF1241 would make it mandatory for all counties except Hennepin, Ramsey, and Washington to operate feedlot and manure management programs on behalf of the state. Currently 50 of the 87 counties are performing those duties voluntarily. The bill would also appropriate funds to help pay for feedlot inspectors.

"This bill will help expedite environmental concerns," said Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel), the bill's sponsor. "So far it has not been funded adequately."

Dave Weirens, speaking for the Association of Minnesota Counties, argued that making the feedlot program mandatory would be counterproductive. "We support the current feedlot program," he said.

"I don't think the current program is working," Ness said.

HF1241 was approved and sent to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

Ness also sponsors HF1243, which would establish a feedlot specialist program to assist farmers through the permitting process, which he characterized as confusing and expensive.

"There is a decline of hope in our rural economy," Ness said. "Before they give up, I want someone there to give them a hand."

The bill would appropriate \$1 million for the biennium to the commissioner of agriculture to contract for feedlot specialists.

HF1243 was approved and sent to the House Agriculture and Rural Development Finance Committee.

A third bill, HF1734, sponsored by Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester), was also approved, but it was sent to the House floor.

It would ease the current standards requiring operators of feedlots with more than a certain number of animal units to register with the county or the state Pollution Control Agency, unless they are located in a county that has conducted level two or level three feedlot inventories, which are more detailed.

The bill would require the PCA to allow counties to submit a level one inventory, which would be sufficient to exempt feedlot operators from registering their individual feedlots.

A level one feedlot inventory is an inventory of animal units, by animal type, in each watershed area of a county.

★ BUDGET

Budget targets approved

The House approved a budget resolution March 26 setting the overall amount that can be used in determining committee budget proposals for the next biennium.

The resolution, which passed on a 75-56 vote, includes \$25 billion for expenditures carried over from last session. It sets \$714 million as the amount that can be appropriated for new expenditures in 2002-03 and \$1.2 billion for tax reductions, an amount that is not counted as expenditure.

The total does not include a one-time general fund appropriation of \$1.6 million to transfer money from the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax Fund to the Highway User Tax Distribution Fund caused by the license tab reduction fee approved last year.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, said the resolution establishes a budget that includes a "consistent, adequate increase in discretionary spending" for the next biennium.

"We have had sequential large surpluses we've had to deal with last session and this

session because of our dynamic economy, because of our productive people, and because of our tax structure that seems to produce surpluses in spite of the adjustments we make from session to session," Bishop said.

DFL members argued the budget resolution provides an inadequate amount for education, affordable housing and health care issues facing the state.

Gov. Jesse Ventura's budget proposal includes the same \$714 million amount for additional spending measures and sets aside \$1.1 billion for tax reductions.

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) said the resolution lacks a balanced approach to the future health of the state.

"Probably 80 to 90 percent of the resources of this state would be devoted to the tax relief at a time when investments in education, transportation, our environment, health care, our seniors are urgently needed. We can balance these needs," Pugh said.

House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) said the resolution preserves the surplus for tax relief while allowing for inflationary increases in spending.

"We are going to reallocate money within the governor's number to address many of the key priorities that have been mentioned here today," Pawlenty said during the floor debate. "I think it's a prudent measure that's in line with the governor, that's in line with where most Minnesotans are."



House Speaker Steve Sviggum, right, and Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty discuss a budget resolution with members of the press in the House gallery prior to the March 22 floor session.

The Ways and Means Committee will establish the specific target amounts for each House finance committee in the coming weeks.

★ CRIME

Racial profiling bill advances

A measure that addresses racial profiling might be included in the omnibus bill from the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

The committee heard the bill March 29 and amended it. It will be considered for inclusion in the omnibus bill.

The bill (HF505), sponsored by Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), defines racial profiling, requires the establishment of a state-wide model policy, mandates training requirements, and provides for administrative oversight of police departments by the Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training.

It does not require mandatory collection of racial profiling data or of the badge numbers of officers involved in possible racial profiling.

Instead, it places the onus for training of officers and making sure they comply with regulations on individual departments. Any disciplinary measures or other violations would be handled administratively within the department, under the supervision of the POST Board. It also makes data collection voluntary.

The bill would appropriate \$400,000 to the POST Board for training reimbursement to local communities, and \$100,000 to the Department of Public Safety for a public awareness campaign, which is aimed at explaining the complaint process to citizens who feel they have been racially profiled.

Neil Melton, executive director of the POST Board, said he researched training methods surrounding racial profiling and found that other states have had success with small group, interactive training, rather than mass seminars via video or satellite.

He said estimated cost for training is about \$500,000. It would involve about 225 seminars statewide of 40 officers each.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) questioned the substantial cost for an issue that's not a secret and should not be treated as a new thing.

"A simple watching of the video may not give us the results we've wanted," Melton said.

The committee amended the bill to require jurisdictions to report the number of racial profiling complaints they collect and the disposition of each complaint. The data would be collected by the POST Board and if a jurisdiction did not report its complaints, it could

not receive its training reimbursement, Melton said. The board also conducts unannounced annual audits to ensure compliance on about 10 percent of the agencies statewide, he added.

Stanek proposed the amendment after hearings in the House Crime Prevention Committee.

"I heard loud and clear from the Crime Prevention committee and others that we need to have an evaluation piece included in this," Stanek said. "I'm trying to bring forward a fair and balanced bill."

Victims support services

When Jim Basta's son Tony was shot while riding his bicycle in a St. Paul neighborhood in April 2000, life as he and his family knew it dissolved, and they felt like they had no one to turn to.

But a St. Paul program intended to offer families support when their loved one has been a victim of homicide, suicide or accidental death stepped up and gave the Basta family the direction they needed to carry on.

Basta testified March 27 before the House Judiciary Finance Committee in support of a bill (HF1735) that would increase state funding for the Victim Intervention Project Institute. The bill will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

"I find that the service they provided could not be replaced, and there's no price you could put on it," Basta said. "We are not weak people. We just needed some help."

Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-St. Paul), the bill's sponsor, said the bill would provide \$600,000 for 2002-03 to provide support services for families in both St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Margaret McAbee from the institute said her budget for this year is \$100,000. About \$41,000 of that money came from the Crime Victims Services Center in the Department of Public Safety.

In addition, the state has appropriated \$30,000 in each of the last four years for the institute.

Many committee members wondered why there was a need for both the crime victims center and the intervention institute. Both McAbee and the witnesses said the institute fills an important role early on that the services centers cannot provide.

The institute serves as an initial point of contact for survivors of these crimes. It offers support groups and other crisis situation services. It also makes referrals for counseling if necessary.

Several other people emotionally retold their tragic stories of loss and heartfelt support for the institute.

Lt. Dan Grout from the Minneapolis Police Department said families of victims need a place to turn so they can express their feelings of remorse, guilt, anger, and other emotions. Many people, especially when the crimes are not solved, have no way to work that out.

Betty Nachtsheim said she didn't have anyone who could really relate to the pain she suffered when her husband was murdered, until she went to the institute in 1992 — 19 years after the crime.

And for other family members, like Sue Maher whose 21-year-old son was murdered, they just need to see that other people have made it through. She said she was particularly thankful for the help her other son received from the institute.

"There's no way I could be here or be safe and productive today without VIPI," Maher said. "I was so relieved to know that we could get through this."

'Values-based' prison programming

"Values-based" pre-release programs for minimum-security state prisoners could receive state funding.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) is sponsoring legislation he says would help inmates "stay out of trouble and perform better in society."

HF1911 would allow the commissioner of corrections to solicit proposals from private vendors through a competitive bidding process for the value-based programs, focusing on a smooth transition for inmates back into the community. The program would be funded partially by public dollars and would affect inmates nearing release.

Tuma said the program would be located in one of the state's existing prison facilities. His bill would appropriate \$200,000 to start the project, most of which would cover initial operating expenses.

The House Crime Prevention Committee unanimously approved and referred the bill to the House Judiciary Finance Committee March 27, where it will be considered for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

Tuma said he was inspired by a similar program in Iowa, which in turn was motivated by a Texas "faith-based" program. Asked about his decision to adopt the term "values-based," he explained he found the Iowa language "more Midwestern."

Tuma described visiting the Iowa prison where a similar program was in operation. "I felt like I was walking into a collegiate dormitory," he said. "This is an excellent program and its worth a try."

Unlike boot camps, Tuma's proposal would

not reduce offenders' sentences. Instead, inmates would agree to take part in classes so as to establish relationships with private groups, such as churches, outside the prison.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) suggested the U.S. Constitution's prohibition against the state establishment of religion would be violated "if a committee designates which church a released prisoner would attend." Tuma responded the Texas program had avoided challenge because it was entirely voluntary.

He added he intended to include the American Civil Liberties Union in designing the funding request form. "We are trying to achieve consensus going in," said Tuma. Any group could apply to run such a program.

Department of Corrections Commissioner Sheryl Ramstad Hvaas said she "would envision as much private funding as possible." She emphasized that Gov. Jesse Ventura's budget appropriates no money for such initiatives. "We are not requesting this funding," she said.

Rep. Dale Swapinski (DFL-Duluth) encouraged Tuma to examine the importance of Native American spirituality, in addition to Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Tuma agreed, saying, "We as a government should encourage people to seek religion and spirituality as part of their rehabilitation."

Funding COPS overtime

A bill that would provide \$1 million in grants to help Minnesota communities fund overtime for community-oriented policing (COPS) was heard in the House Judiciary Finance Committee March 27.

The bill (HF1055), sponsored by Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake), will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

The money would be split so that 50 percent goes to Minneapolis and St. Paul, while the other 50 percent would be allocated to all other parts of the state.

In 1999, the Legislature appropriated \$500,000 for COPS grants, \$30,000 of which went to pay for drug dogs. Of the remaining \$470,000, \$235,000 went to St. Paul and Minneapolis, and 13 other jurisdictions split \$235,000. Six of those jurisdictions were in Greater Minnesota.

The COPS program began in the mid-1990s when Congress began appropriating money to increase the number of law enforcement officers in the United States, in hopes of reducing crime rates. Local jurisdictions are allowed either one-time grants for various purposes, or three-year grants for new officer positions that the municipality must fully fund at the end of the grant.

Mares said it was important that the money be earmarked for COPS overtime so that the department does not merely use the grant for overall overtime.

The grants would likely be administered by the Office of Drug Policy and Violence Prevention, which oversees such grants, in the Department of Public Safety.

County probation officer salaries

The requests for more salaries for local probation officers are piling up before the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

Members heard a bill (HF2141), sponsored by Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie), March 27 that would allocate nearly \$3.8 million for 2002-03 to counties not governed by the Community Corrections Act.

The bill will be considered for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

The Community Corrections Act, enacted in 1973, is a partnership between the state and local county governments to provide various corrections services at the local level. The counties are allowed significant leeway in programming for inmates and probationers. In return, the state provides funding for those programs.

Currently, 56 of Minnesota's 87 counties are not part of community corrections. The state Corrections Department provides all court services to 26 counties, and the remaining 30 only rely on the state to provide court services for adult felons. Those counties provide

juvenile and misdemeanor services themselves.

State law requires a 50 percent salary reimbursement to non-CCA counties. Kielkucki said the current state funding level is about 44 percent.

His bill would appropriate the money so counties can be reimbursed to the full 50 percent level for probation officer expenses.

Gov. Jesse Ventura's budget also recommended the funding.

"There's some concern that we feel we're fulfilling our end of the deal and the state is not," said Kevin Corbid from the Association of Minnesota Counties.

The bill would also allow counties to retain probation fees. Under existing law, those fees are deposited in the state's general fund.

★ EDUCATION

Loan forgiveness for teachers

Future science, math, industrial technology, and special education teachers may receive a monetary break in paying for their education.

HF422, sponsored by Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington), reflects the forecasted shortage of teachers in the state especially in science and math areas, which is mostly due to retirements. The bill was heard in the K-12 Education Finance Committee March 26. Seagren is chair of the committee.

Her bill offers loan forgiveness for science, math, industrial technology, and special

EDUCATION RALLY



PHOTO BY SARA KIRK

Shayna Anderson (from left), Lindsay Madson, Jenna Goss, Laura Meyer, and Drew Krings, all freshmen from Winona Senior High School, display signs March 27 during an education rally on the steps of the Capitol.

education teachers in amounts of up to \$1,000 at the end of the first successful school year, up to \$3,000 after the second, and up to \$5,000 after the third. The same teachers in rural areas would see up to \$3,000, \$5,000, \$7,000, respectively.

Rep. Sondra Erickson (R-Princeton) asked why the bill says “up to” the reimbursement amount, and who would determine the amount.

Seagren said the Higher Education Services Office would manage the loan forgiveness program. Phil Lewenstein, communications and legislative representative for the office, said they would determine the repayment sum based on the amount of the teacher’s existing loan.

Rep. John Dorn (DFL-Mankato) wondered if the program would reimburse teachers in other fields of great demand, such as reading and English as a Second Language.

“These (fields) have been documented to be most critical at this time,” Seagren replied.

The bill was referred to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

Asthma relief

Asking members of the House Education Policy Committee to plug their noses and put a straw to their mouths, fifth-grader Taylor Orr instructed them to breath through the straw for 10 seconds.

This is what an asthma attack feels like, said Taylor, a student at Richfield Intermediate School.

She testified March 22 for a bill (HF1394) that would allow students, with parental permission, to carry inhalers with them in school. Presently, students can leave them with the school nurse, but sometimes a child, like Taylor, needs an inhaler before they can make it to the nurse.

Taylor told members of a time in class when she felt an asthma attack coming on but didn’t want to be a disturbance to the class by leaving. By the time she received her inhaler it was too late and she had to go to the doctor.

Taylor was lucky, said Cheryl Sasse, respiratory therapist at the American Lung Association, who told stories of children who have died from not having an inhaler on hand when they needed it.

Rep. Kathy Tingstad (R-Andover), sponsor of the bill, said 10 states have passed laws allowing students to carry inhalers.

“If children can carry their inhalers during other occasions” like after-school sports, church activities, and visits to friends houses, then why not school, asked Sasse. Asthma is the number one reason for school absences, she noted.

Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) asked what age children are when they usually know how to use the inhalers. Sasse said probably eight years old, but that’s where parental consent comes in. The bill requires districts to have received written authorization from the student’s parent permitting the student to self-administer the medication.

Some schools currently allow students to carry inhalers, but in an informal survey, said Sasse, 42 percent did not allow students to carry them.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) asked if separate legislation was needed to address medication for diabetes and bee stings. Bob Meeks, a lobbyist for the Minnesota School Board Association, said the use of a needle would bring up other issues that would take more time.

Meeks supported the legislation in HF1394. “We have to allow the medication to get to the children,” he said.

The bill was referred to the Health and Human Services Policy Committee.

Alternative education model

The traditional school year — nine months on, three months off — may be a thing of the past for some schools in the state.

Flexibility in school plans might help aid districts in parts of the state where monies are strained and distances are growing, said Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka).

HF1850, sponsored by Abeler, would establish a three-year pilot project to allow schools to evaluate, plan, and use flexible learning year programs to meet the educational needs of their students, which may result in four-quarter plans, all-year plans, or four-day week plans.

The bill, heard March 22 in the House Education Policy Committee, was approved and sent to the House floor.

Under HF1850, school districts and school sites would apply to the commissioner of the state’s education department after their local school board and a majority of teachers approved the plan. At project’s end, participants would be required to submit a comprehensive evaluation to the commissioner.

Abeler said the bill would reduce transportation costs for districts that sometimes bus students from more than one hour away. Schools, he said, would possibly introduce 10-hour days where an evening meal is served, or allow teachers to teach some material over the Internet so students could learn from home.

HF1850 reads, “The project is intended to explore effective alternatives for delivering education, with the goal of improving instruction and students’ educational outcomes and opportunities and increasing the cost-effectiveness of educational programs.”

The bill would waive the provision in state law that schools cannot start before Sept. 1, but Abeler said he would be open to amend the bill back to the current start date.

The nine-month school calendar always felt like a marathon, said Rep. John Dorn (DFL-Mankato), a former English teacher. He acknowledged extra curricular activities would be a problem, but said he was interested in what the bill could do.

Rep. Robert Ness (R-Dassel) said schools need to function on their original schedule structure. He said he has other serious reservations about the bill, but appreciates the creativity and initiative taken by Abeler.

The bill has no fiscal note, but Abeler said he believes it will result in savings.

CRUNCH TIME



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Committee tables fill with paperwork as legislators scramble to have their bills heard before the March 30 deadline when bills must pass through a policy committee. Pictured is the House Education Policy Committee March 29.

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★ ENERGY

Tax savings

The House Taxes Committee heard two bills March 23 that might energize more Minnesotans to buy certain energy efficient products.

HF961, sponsored by Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls), and HF2086, sponsored by Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair, would provide sales tax exemptions to products such as furnaces, water heaters, refrigerators, and automobiles that meet certain energy saving criteria.

Wagenius said the sales tax exemption would encourage consumers to purchase energy efficient products, and also encourage businesses to develop new technologies to meet the energy demands of the state.

The committee adopted an author's amendment to Wagenius' bill that would limit the scope and thus lower the cost of the measure. Originally the Department of Revenue estimated HF961 would cost \$36.5 million in 2002 and around \$40 million in subsequent years. The amendment made HF961 similar to Abrams' bill, which the department estimates would cost \$3.7 million in 2002 and around \$4 million per year thereafter.

Both bills establish criteria for products that would be exempt. For example HF2086 would exempt natural gas water heaters with an energy factor of at least 0.65.

Each bill requires the exempt products have an Energy Star Label. Energy Star is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency labeling program designed to identify and promote energy efficient products.

Automobiles that achieve a fuel efficiency level greater than 45 miles per gallon in highway use, and 35 miles per gallon in city use, would also be exempt in both bills.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) expressed concern that an increase in sales of cars able to attain greater gas mileage will have an impact on the amount the state collects in gasoline taxes.

Abrams said that since both bills contain sunset provisions — 2005 in HF2086 and 2007 in HF961 — it is doubtful the number of cars sold during that time achieving the standard will be that significant.

Former Speaker of the House Dee Long (DFL-Mpls) spoke in support of the proposals and said while researching the issue she was surprised to learn that 30 other states offer some type of incentives for energy efficient product purchases.

"We're a little bit behind the curve in doing something in this area," she said. "This may be a small step but it is a step in the right direction and it is good public policy."

★ ENVIRONMENT

Lake improvement districts

In Minnesota, lake associations are a common way for people who live on a lake to get together, plan for the future, and make decisions about rules. But their decisions have no legal bite.

An option that would give their decisions weight is the Lake Improvement District, an entity that, among other things, can regulate water surface use, construct water and sewer systems, and conduct water improvement and conservation projects.

Lake Improvement Districts are government entities that can raise money for projects through ad valorem taxes, bonds, service charges and access fees.

A bill (HF891), sponsored by Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) that would increase the percentage of property owners necessary to petition for the creation (or termination) of a district, was heard March 22 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee.

"Increasing the number of property owners needed to create (a lake improvement district) forces a situation where everyone has to be on board," said Carl Swanson, representing the Minnesota Lake Association.

County boards approve the creation of the districts, but only 14 have been approved statewide since 1976.

One reason for such a low approval rate is the low percentage of property owners required by current law to sign the petition, Olson said.

He added that county boards are more likely to turn down petitions with less than a majority of signatures. His bill would require 51 percent of property owners to sign the petition, instead of the current requirement of 26 percent.

"Can't you accomplish everything you want under current law?" asked Rep. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook).

"Yes, but this bill would make LIDs more effective," said Olson.

HF891 was approved and sent to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee.

★ FAMILY

Funding for community agencies

Community action councils, tribal governments, and other economic opportunity programs help meet the basic needs of low-income people in Minnesota while helping them move toward greater self sufficiency.

These agencies provide a number of programs at the local level, including Head Start, youth programs, nutrition, literacy, housing, crisis assistance, and job training. They are supported in part by the Minnesota Economic Opportunity Grant (MEOG) program.

Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls) is sponsoring a bill (HF1476) that would increase the funding for this program from its current appropriation of \$18 million to \$25 million for the biennium. The bill was heard March 26 by the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee.

"This increase is needed," said Patrick McFarland, from the Anoka County Community Action Council. He said financial pressures have stressed action councils' ability to serve their clients. Among the factors he cited were: no increase in funding in four years, increasing costs, increasing numbers of immigrant refugees, and an increase in the cost of "welfare-to-work" programs.

The core funding for community action councils comes from economic opportunity grants, according to McFarland. "We get funding from competitive grants too," he said. "But this is the glue that holds it all together."

The strength of community action councils, he added, is that they are locally planned, flexible solutions to people's problems.

The advantage of the economic opportunity grants, according to Tarryl Clark, executive director of the Minnesota Community Action Association, is their flexibility. Other grants are usually very specifically targeted.

"In order to meet the needs of families we serve, we need some flexible funding," said Davis Leino-Mills, of the Otter Tail-Wadena Community Action Council. "The Minnesota Economic Opportunity Grant and the Community Services Block Grant are the only flexible funds we get."

HF1476 will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

★ GOVERNMENT

Which year to meet?

The Legislature would go back to meeting every other year under a measure approved by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee March 28.

The committee approved an amendment to the bill that greatly changed the original proposal. The bill now goes to the House floor.

As it was originally introduced, HF2205, sponsored by House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), would have required the Legislature to get the bulk of its work done in the odd-numbered years. The bill would have allowed the

Legislature to meet up to 14 days during even-numbered years to deal with budget deficits.

The governor would still be able to call the Legislature into special session. In addition, the leaders from both the House and Senate, or a two-thirds majority vote could also lead to an even-year session.

Pawlenty said the bill would help the Legislature get back to its original focus of being a citizen body. He said that currently three-fourths of the membership are full-time legislators and the makeup of people who can afford the time to hold office was not representative of the state's population.

"We need to make this the type of place where people can come and serve," he said. "We need to get the insights, talents, and qualities that are now not here."

Dean Barkley, head of the Minnesota Planning agency, said Gov. Jesse Ventura supports the proposal because the current system has strayed from the intent of the constitutional amendment approved by voters in 1972 that led to annual sessions.

At that time, Barkley said, meeting every year was supposed to provide more in-depth study of issues, prevent the logjam of activity at the end of session, and avoid expensive special sessions.

The bill would encourage more controlled spending by the Legislature who would have to live within a budget established for the two-year period, Barkley said.

Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) said it did not make sense for legislators to get all the work done in the five months following the election and then have nothing else to do for the next 17 months.

He offered a successful amendment that switched the two years around. Under the amended bill the Legislature would be allowed to meet for 14 days in the odd numbered years to establish committee structures and get other organizational work done. Osskopp said the rest of the time could be spent holding committee hearings as well as meeting with constituents.

Professional contract concerns

The state of Minnesota has about 400 building projects going on at any given time, according to Kent Allin of the Department of Administration.

Before construction on these projects can begin, the state must contract with a team of professionals, including architects, engineers, surveyors, landscape architects, and interior designers. State law establishes how these professionals are to be selected.

On March 15 and 22, the House Capital Investment Committee heard discussion on a

bill that would change that selection process to "qualifications-based selection" or QBS.

"QBS gives state agencies the opportunity to hire someone qualified to do the job rather than just the lowest bidder," said Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park), sponsor of HF724.

Qualifications-based selection is currently used by 36 states. Minnesota uses a process known as "best value selection."

The bill, as amended, was approved and sent to the House floor over the objections of Department of Administration officials.

The proposal would require state agencies, when seeking professional design services, to first rank prospective contractors on the basis of qualifications. Only after that ranking, could the agency negotiate for price. The bill does not include building contractors.

An intense and protracted discussion of the merits of knowing price comparisons up front occupied the committee for two hearings.

"To not allow us to ask about price early is asking us to make decisions with blindfolds on," Allin said.

Representatives of the professional trades responded that they cannot give a price until they know the scope of the services.

The Department of Administration provides oversight on all government building projects. Allin said the department looks for conflicts of interest and makes certain the contracts are awarded on a competitive basis.

"We want to give our agencies and taxpayers the best deal possible," said Kath Ouska from the department. She said she believes the current process supports selecting contractors based on qualifications, adding that agencies are not required to accept the lowest bid, only that price must be a factor in selecting a contractor.

The Minneapolis public school system has been using the qualification-based system since 1994. It has been "instrumental" in the success of the system's management of its deferred maintenance and new school construction, according to Clyde Kane, interim director of facilities for the school system.

"With QBS the state will get the best services over the long haul," said Jeff Coleman, a member of the Consulting Engineers Council of Minnesota. "The amount paid to the designer is a small fraction of the total."

★ HEALTH

Abortion consent measure

A bill that would prohibit a woman from having an abortion unless the woman gives "voluntary, informed consent" was approved March 27 by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee. The bill was sent to the House Civil Law Committee.



Jennifer Draper, who was 22 when she had her first pregnancy aborted and is now a mother of five, testifies before the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee March 27 in support of a bill that would require women to give specific consent 24 hours before they can obtain an abortion.

"I believe this is a moderate, bipartisan piece of legislation that encourages choice," said Rep. Lynda Boudreau (R-Faribault), sponsor of HF262.

"This bill personifies 'big daddy' government telling the little woman what to do," said Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins). "I would say you're ratcheting back women's rights."

For a woman's consent to be informed, HF262 would require that she be given specified information by phone or in person at least 24 hours before an abortion. This would include: the name of the physician to perform the abortion, the medical risks associated with the abortion as well as the medical risks of carrying the child to term, and the probable gestational age of the fetus.

Existing law requires "the consent of the woman after a full explanation of the procedure and effect of the abortion."

The measure is similar to a bill passed by both houses during the 2000 Legislature and later vetoed by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The Minnesota Department of Health would be charged with compiling a comprehensive, geographically indexed list of public and private agencies available to help women through pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing, as well as detailed descriptions of the anatomical and physiological characteristics of a fetus at two-week gestational increments.

The bill would also provide that lawsuits could be brought against physicians by women or the parents of minors, if a physician performs, or attempts to perform, an abortion without complying with the informed consent law.

Sue Rockne, from the Midwest Health Center for Women, said legislation already exists that requires informed consent.

The decision to have an abortion “should not be a legislative decision,” Rockne said. “I think HF262 is designed to harass the clinics and provide directive counseling to scare a woman away from an abortion.”

Andrea Rau from Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life disagreed. “This bill does not prevent a woman from getting an abortion,” she said. “It doesn’t intend to harass physicians.”

Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) spoke in opposition to the bill. “Many women have to travel a great distance for an abortion. They’ve given a lot of thought to this before they ever get into their car,” he said.

“Any woman in a crisis pregnancy is vulnerable,” said Boudreau. “I believe it is the proper role of the government to protect her.”

Autism assistance

A bill that would fund intensive behavior therapy for children with autism was heard March 28 by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee.

Autism is a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain, according to the National Autism Society of America. It typically appears during the first three years of life and affects approximately 15 of every 10,000 people. Children with autism have difficulty with both verbal and nonverbal communication and in relating to the world around them.

“Historically, children suffering from autism have made no real progress,” said Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington), sponsor of HF1829.

“To date, the only clinical intervention to show success has been intensive behavioral intervention with very young children,” said Gail Peterson, a psychologist with the University of Minnesota. Without this therapy, also known as “applied behavioral analysis” (ABA), Peterson said 90 percent of these children would be placed in long-term care by adulthood.

Mary Norby, a St. Paul resident, gave tearful testimony of how this therapy has helped her son. She said he was diagnosed with autism at age four and was “aggressive, violent, and self-injurious.” After several years of intensive behavior therapy, her son is now a



St. Paul resident Mary Norby, a parent of an autistic child, gives emotional testimony March 28 during the House Health & Human Services Policy Committee in support of HF1829. The bill would provide intensive early intervention behavior therapy medical assistance coverage for autistic children.

sixth-grade honor student.

“I firmly believe if we hadn’t done ABA, he would not be living with us,” Norby said. “If we had not done ABA, he would now be costing the state a whole lot of money.”

“We’re not offering a cure,” Peterson emphasized. He said approximately 200 children in Minnesota suffer from autism, and about 150 of those have tried some form of ABA. About 50 percent of children who receive these services “return to normalcy by age six or seven.”

The therapy requires about 40 hours a week of one-on-one treatment by a therapist trained in the method. The duration of therapy is about three years, and the cost is approximately \$60,000 a year, according to Diane Halpin from Eden Prairie.

Ann Graves’ son was diagnosed with autism when he was two years old. She told the committee her family reluctantly moved from Minnesota to Wisconsin because Minnesota denied them funding for therapy, and Wisconsin funds it.

“One of the scariest things we learned was that 75 percent of autistic children never learn language,” Graves said. After intensive behavioral therapy, her son started to use functional language.

“One day he looked at me and said ‘Mom I want to go outside, please,’” Graves said. “Not that long ago, he didn’t even know I was ‘Mom.’”

HF1829 would expand medical assistance to cover home-based intensive early behavioral intervention for children with “autistic spectrum disorders.” The cost of the program has not yet been determined.

The bill was approved and sent to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

★ HIGHER EDUCATION

Allocation study

A bill requiring a study of the methods used by the central office of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities to deliver services to member institutions is being debated.

HF2087, sponsored Rep. Gene Pelowski, Jr. (DFL-Winona), will be considered for the House Higher Education Finance Committee’s omnibus bill.

The bill, heard by the committee March 28, states it is “an ongoing effort to provide greater autonomy for campuses and accountability at the system level.” It requires the board of trustees of MnSCU to “direct the council of presidents of MnSCU institutions to study the feasibility of restructuring central office services to better reflect the needs of college and university campuses.”

Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud) wondered if the campus presidents can be objective enough and can work through disagreements they may have such as, for example, some smaller campuses may like the way the central office does something but larger institutions may not.

“I can’t think of better people than those who get the brunt of what the central office says,” Pelowski said.

The study would assess funding core services several ways: through payment of a fee paid by all campuses; allowing campuses to contract for services from the central office; the impact of service delivery mechanisms on various institutions, such as two-year versus four-year; the feasibility of more market sensitive service delivery methods; and streamlined delivery methods. As for the last matter, Pelowski said he has heard of campuses doing the same things that are being done at the central office.

Committee Chair Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) asked if a study is needed. A similar one, involving presidents from four campuses, was released in February 2000.

Pelowski said he would like such a study to be ongoing, and Larry Shellito, president of Alexandria Technical College who helped produce the previous study, noted the players would be different this time.

If approved, a report must be submitted to the chairs of the higher education finance committees in the House and Senate by Feb. 15, 2002.

HUMAN SERVICES



Welfare worries

A bill that would modify the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), granting hardship extensions and tightening sanctions, was heard March 26 by the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee.

The welfare program offers public assistance to low income families and provides incentives for recipients to work toward self sufficiency. It took the place of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) on Jan. 1, 1998.

Current law limits program participants to a maximum lifetime eligibility period of 60 months. In the coming biennium, about 5,000 people face losing their benefits.

"Some people have life barriers that prevent them from moving on," said Verona Martin, executive director of Paradigms of Success in St. Paul. "It will take more than five years for some people to be weaned off the system."

"I'm trying to find a balance," Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) told an emotional, standing-room-only crowd. "I know there are people who try as hard as they can who cannot get off welfare and become self-sufficient."

Goodno sponsored HF1832 that would provide for an annual adjustment to ensure most participants would not lose eligibility until their income is 120 percent of the federal poverty guideline.

It would also establish hardship extensions for certain participants, for example, people who are ill or incapacitated, hard to employ, or primary caregivers of a child or parent with a disability.

The contentious issues for audience members were the bill's sanctions, in particular a 30 percent sanction for second and third occurrences of noncompliance, and disqualification from the program for a fourth occurrence.

The bill would also increase the sanctions for convicted drug offenders, providing a 30 percent sanction for a participant who fails a drug test once and permanently disqualifying the participant for failing a drug test twice.

"There have got to be better solutions," the Rev. David McCauley, executive director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, told the committee. "Stricter sanctions have been demonstrated to be noneffective in moving people from welfare to work.

"We do not simply cast off" those who are mentally ill, chronically addicted, or disabled, McCauley said.

"The people I work with are not so much noncompliant as completely overwhelmed," said Char Kerelko, from the Memorial Family Resource Center in Duluth.

Yuann Kim, a mother of five from Cambodia, spoke through an interpreter: "I don't want to ask for help but I must," she said. "I know some day I will not need help. I have tried to do everything required because I want to maintain myself."

Mina Wilson, director of the Olmsted County Community Support and Assistance Division, said: "Emerging from welfare dependency and poverty is not an event but a process. There is no evidence that this process takes only 60 months."

A number of amendments were offered by DFL legislators in an attempt to soften the bill. All failed to pass.

"I have a difficult time with this bill because I don't know where the safety net is for the children," said Rep. Luanne Koskinen (DFL-Coon Rapids).

HF 1832 was approved by a vote of nine to five. It now goes to the Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

Capital improvement grants sought

Some of the most vulnerable adults in Minnesota could receive more assistance under a bill sponsored by Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls).

HF924 would appropriate \$1 million from the general fund to the commissioner of human services for the 2002-03 biennium to establish a grant program for residential mental health program facility upgrades.

The House Health and Human Services Policy Committee heard the bill March 26 and referred it to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

Known as Rule 36 facilities, those affected by this bill are group homes which provide residential services to people with serious and persistent mental illness, said Hugh Aylward, president of the Minnesota Association of Mental Health Residential Facilities. He said 72 facilities exist in Minnesota, serving approximately 1,300 patients.

"Staff at Rule 36 facilities assist these residents by teaching independent living skills, helping to prepare residents for a more independent placement in the community," Aylward said.

The problem is that funding limitations have not allowed the facilities to upgrade their physical plants. Previous funding increases

approved by the Legislature have only been used for staff salaries, and have not included money for facility upgrades.

Aylward said that outside of Hennepin County, many Rule 36 facilities do not have sprinkler systems. "Given that our programs are mostly located in older buildings, and many residents smoke, this is important." He said some substances in cigarettes lessen auditory hallucinations for schizophrenia patients.

"In early 2000, a Hennepin County facility had a client set fire in his room, but the sprinkler system, which was funded through the county, put it out and prevented a lot of damage before the fire department arrived," Aylward added.

Other areas the money could be used for include: purchasing air conditioners, making roof repairs, updating carpeting and other flooring, and purchasing a vehicle making it easier to transport residents to medical appointments, shopping, or activities.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) asked if any matching grants have been discussed. Aylward said they had not.

Rep. Luanne Koskinen (DFL-Coon Rapids) wondered why this request was not held until a bonding bill year. Nornes said it is possible, but that would only delay things another year.

LAW



New judgeships pitched

A bill that would increase the number of judgeships in the state by nine will be considered for inclusion in the omnibus bill for the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester), sponsor of HF319, said at the March 22 meeting that judges' workloads are becoming so large they aren't able to spend as much time as needed on cases.

Of the two million filings in Minnesota during 2000, about 10 percent involved major criminal and civil cases. According to Sue Dosal, state court administrator, judges spend about 80 percent of their time on those major cases.

The new judgeships — distributed throughout the First, Third, Seventh, Ninth and 10th Judicial Districts — actually involve three new positions each: a judge, a law clerk, and a court reporter. The appropriation for new judges is not specified in the bill. However, the Department of Finance estimates the new judgeships would cost nearly \$6 million in the 2002-03 biennium and subsequent biennia.

Representatives from the State Board of Public Defense, who have previously testified

to their need for more funds in the coming biennium, did not speak against the proposal, but noted it would merely exacerbate the problem. They estimated extra costs of more than \$900,000 for public defense through 2003 with the new judgeships.

However, judges testified the legal system would simply slow down without more support and personnel.

Judge Leslie Metzen from the First Judicial District said many people do not feel they've been afforded justice because judges don't have time to hear them and because it takes a long time for their cases to be resolved.

"What I hope you realize is that these numbers translate into real people, real cases and real problems," she said. "We are efficient, we are well-managed, we are doing a good job. I don't know how else we can justify our jobs to you. ... Without additional funding, it will all slow down."

Particularly of concern to judges is the increase in juvenile cases traveling through the court system. Statistics show they increased 88 percent from 1990 to 2000.

Judge Gerard Ring from the Third Judicial District told the committee about two success stories from early in his career, where he was able to invest time in the boys who came before him.

But that time is precious now, and hard to find.

"Without the time that is necessary to review these cases," he said, "I'm not sure what would have happened. It's very easy to turn the situation the other way."

★ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Lobbying logistics

Local units of governments spent more than \$4.1 million lobbying the Legislature in 1999 according to a report prepared by the State Auditor's office.

Jennifer Mohlenhoff, assistant state auditor, and John Jernberg, a research analyst with the office, presented the report to the House Taxes Committee March 28.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), the committee chair, has been critical in committee hearings of bills proposing to eliminate the sales tax on local government purchases because most of the local officials have testified the money saved would be spent on services rather than property tax reductions.

Abrams has also questioned the large number of bills introduced this session asking for sales tax exemptions on local government projects.

The auditor's report examined both the



John Jernberg and Jennifer Mohlenhoff from the Office of the State Auditor give a presentation on local government lobbying expenditures to the House Taxes Committee March 28.

direct and indirect lobbying expenditures reported to the office. Direct expenses were defined as money paid directly to lobbying firms while indirect expenses encompass dues paid to associations who represent cities, counties, school districts, townships, and other units of government.

Jernberg said the amount spent on direct lobbying in 1999 represented a 13.9 percent increase from the previous year. He said the pattern over the years was for more lobbying money to be spent in odd-numbered years when the Legislature sets its budget.

Abrams asked if tax money was the only revenue source being spent by local governments on lobbying and if that meant money could have been available for property tax relief.

Mohlenhoff said that a conclusion could not be determined from the data collected for the report.

Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul) said he was concerned about the unfair playing field created by one local government unit spending more per capita than another for lobbying efforts.

"It just doesn't make any sense to me that we allow governmental entities to use tax money that they use to come up here and lobby us," Milbert said. "It's just a great big public trough that thousands and thousands of people are feeding on and it's all fueled by public property tax dollars."

Abrams said because the local governments often belong to different associations and hire different lobbyists they can sometimes have people arguing different sides of the same issue.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) said the lobbyists representing local units of government often support important causes and it was unfair to single them out as opposed to those who lobby in support of private interests.

"They're doing the citizens of the state a lot of good," he said.

★ METRO AFFAIRS

Metropolitan Council concerns

The House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Policy Committee approved a bill March 23 that would change legislative oversight of the Metropolitan Council.

HF981, sponsored by Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), would establish a legislative commission to oversee the council's operating and capital budgets and the work and capital improvement programs.

Under the measure, the commission would be composed of seven members from the House and seven members from the Senate. The speaker and minority leader would appoint House members. The Senate majority and minority leaders would appoint that body's members. The committee chair would alternate each year between the two bodies.

McElroy said the relationship between the Legislature and the metropolitan area's planning agency has become strained over the years because of a lack of communication and collaboration.

He said in past years both the House and Senate had separate committees for local

government and metropolitan affairs issues and the decision to merge those two committees into one has meant less time to oversee the Metropolitan Council's activities.

The new commission would also monitor and make recommendations on appointments to the council.

McElroy said the joint commission idea came out of conversations he had with Jim Solem, the council's former regional administrator. He said the two agreed that greater legislative oversight of the council was needed but it was important not to cross the line into micro-management.

Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove) asked if a better approach might not be returning to the old legislative committee structure or going to an elected Met Council that might be more accountable to the region's voters.

McElroy said the joint commission would foster a more collaborative effort, and he would strongly oppose a bill that would change the Met Council to an elected body because it would add a layer of government.

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

Closing Crosstown for construction

Lawmakers recently approved three bills regarding the proposed closure of Trunk Highway 62, the Crosstown Highway in the Twin Cities. All three were referred to the House Transportation Finance Committee.

During a March 27 House Transportation Policy Committee meeting, Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington) predicted "a huge amount of gridlock" if the state Department of Transportation proceeds with a plan to close the Crosstown Highway for four years in the final stage of Interstate 35W reconstruction.

Seagren sponsored HF625 to prohibit the department from beginning Crosstown construction projects until Interstate 494 has been improved to provide at least three multi-use lanes in each direction between Trunk Highways 5 and 100. Seagren has expressed concern that closing Highway 62 could exacerbate existing congestion in I-494.

Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina) sponsored similar legislation (HF797) that would prohibit the Crosstown's closure only between France and Portland avenues in Minneapolis. Erhardt said the Highway 62/I-35W interchange is "one of the 10 worst in the country" and that MnDOT's proposed change would "spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to repeat the flawed design."

A bill sponsored by Rep. Dan Larson

(DFL-Bloomington) would keep the Crosstown open between Trunk Highway 100 and Portland Avenue and require MnDOT to report to the Legislature on the present and future traffic levels and adequacy of the Crosstown. "This gives us a chance to look at other freeway design," said Larson.

Eight House DFLers wrote to MnDOT Commissioner Elwyn Tinklenberg urging "that there be no delay in the reconstruction of I-35W from the Crosstown area to 46th Street" in Minneapolis. The project to reconstruct the freeway through the core city has been ongoing for several years and lawmakers want to see its completion. They added that "four years is too long and is unacceptable."

MnDOT Metro Division Engineer Dick Stehr testified in opposition to the bills, emphasizing that additional delays could jeopardize federal funds for the project and would be inconsistent with the project's goals of reducing crashes and traffic bottlenecks.

Proper planning

Local units of government would have the final say in planning decisions under a measure approved by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee March 26.

HF46, sponsored by Rep. Eric Lipman (R-Lake Elmo), would repeal the state's Metropolitan Land Planning Act enacted in 1976. It established requirements and procedures for comprehensive local planning with the goal of a planned, orderly, and staged development in the region.

Local units of government are now required to develop a comprehensive plan including objectives and standards to guide public and private land use, development, redevelopment, and preservation for the land and water within the jurisdiction.

The Metropolitan Council reviews and comments on the consistency of the comprehensive plans and capital improvement programs with the adopted plans of the council. Local units of government may be required to modify their plan if the council decides that it may have a substantial impact on, or contain a substantial departure from, metropolitan system plans.

The bill would repeal requiring mandatory comprehensive planning by communities in the Twin Cities metropolitan area but would continue to allow them to develop plans if they chose to do so.

Lipman said the bill addresses the appropriate role for the council in the regional planning process. He said the intent of the Legislature was never to give the council the

"veto" power over local planning decisions.

"There isn't a need for a 'big planning brother,'" Lipman said.

He said the council should be able to comment on plans but not delay implementation and that it should play more of a facilitating role in getting communities to agree to joint powers agreements.

Eagan Mayor Patricia Awada spoke in support of HF46 saying zoning and other planning decisions are best made at the local level and not by a central governing authority.

She said Eagan works closely with its neighboring communities in providing services for its residents.

Jay Lindgren, a regional administrator of the Met Council, said the issue was whether it is important to have a regional vision and "have a tool in place so there can be a significant form of regional planning."

The bill was approved by a 10-8 vote and now goes to the House floor.

MILITARY



Releasing student data

Legislators are considering a bill that would require both public and private schools to release to military recruiters the names, addresses, and home phone numbers of all students in grades 11 and 12. Education officials would have 60 days to act upon a recruiter's request.

After a March 26 hearing, the House Civil Law Committee approved HF1677. It now moves to the House floor.

Under the bill, sponsored by Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar), schools would be required to give parents and students the opportunity to prohibit the dissemination of such information. He said he intended to compel high schools to provide the same access to student information as is now provided to colleges.

The data would be available "only for the purpose of providing information to students about military service, state and federal veterans' education benefits, and other career and educational opportunities provided by the military."

Capt. Richard Clifton, Jr., a St. Paul Army recruiter, said all public schools in his district now afford him "at least quarterly" access to students on campus, but that at least one private school completely bars him from recruiting.

Rep. Darlene Luther (DFL-Brooklyn Park) expressed concern that the military would be granted special access to student data. "I am having a tough time making an exception here."



Lt. Col. Steven L. Shea from the U.S. Army's Minneapolis Recruitment Battalion testifies in support of HF1677, a bill that would require an educational agency or institution to release to military recruiting officers the names, addresses, and home telephone numbers of students in grades 11 and 12.

There was some confusion as to whether student data is routinely made available. Capt. Jo Phillips of the U.S. Army Minneapolis Recruiting Company told the committee that he was not aware of any difference between military and educational efforts to collect student data. Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) told the committee that colleges normally receive information when students voluntarily contact colleges or register for the ACT, a standardized test.

Lt. Col. Steven L. Shea of the Army's Minneapolis Recruiting Battalion told the committee he thought the "best way" to provide students the opportunity to bar their schools from releasing information was to give them that choice during class registration.

★ SAFETY

Up in smoke

A bill that would require the state fire marshal to adopt rules regarding fire retardant standards for cigarettes was shot down for the second time this session.

The House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic Development Policy Committee voted 14-12 against the bill March 27 after it failed in the Governmental Operations and Veterans

Affairs Policy Committee by a tie vote, but was brought back to life after reconsideration.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), a former firefighter, sponsored the bill. The leading cause of fire deaths is careless smoking, he said.

HF175 would allocate \$23,000 to pay for rulemaking. The fire safe cigarettes would not be required as the only type of cigarette sold in the state until a bill stating so received legislative approval.

The industry has been working on fire retardant cigarettes since the 1980s, but has consistently met much opposition, said Mike Stockstead, representing the Minnesota Professional Firefighters. The federal government was asked but never mandated the cigarettes.

Ozment said a resolution sent from the state to the federal government would not be effective, rather the state needs to create rules so the federal government can see what states are doing. "We're still in limbo unless we have a standard," he said. "We have waited long enough."

The fire retardant cigarettes are made with a special paper that some worry might be toxic. Jim Gould, a Washington D.C. attorney, distributed several documents, the majority dated in the early 1990s, from groups stating problems with the fire-safe cigarettes. Most of the reports concluded that smoke from the cigarettes produced dangerous levels of toxicity.

Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) countered Gould's claims, producing his own documents making similar claims that he said were drafted by "professionals" who had billed the tobacco industry. Entenza said Gould's information was "old data on the issue of toxicity," and now they are not found to be toxic and do reduce the risk of fire.

Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont) said he supports the idea of the fire-safe cigarettes. However, 85 percent of the state's population lives along state borders, and he fears people will go to other states to purchase cigarettes, and possibly gas, which would result in the state losing taxes and retail sales.

Safety seat progresses

A proposal to expand child safety seat requirements now advances to the next stop in the committee process.

HF735, sponsored by Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), would require the use of a child restraint system for children age 8 and under, weighing fewer than 80 pounds.

The House Transportation Policy Committee approved the measure March 23 and referred it to the House Judiciary Finance Committee.

The bill would increase the penalty for violating this provision from \$50 to \$75. Leppik said, "We are not here to penalize, but to educate parents about the best way to keep kids safe." HF735 would allow the waiving of the fine if the parent demonstrates the acquisition of an approved child-safety seat.

The bill would also require children less than 12 months old be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system. Leppik said more children between the ages of 4 and 8 die in automobile crashes than from any other accidental injury.

Leppik said most states "are behind the times" in requiring only that safety seats be used for only the first few years of childhood. "This is a very good place to lead," she said.

Emergency response teams

A bill that would increase the proposed level of funding for emergency response teams in the state stirred much debate among members of the House Judiciary Finance Committee March 22.

HF764, sponsored by Rep. Dale Swapinski (DFL-Duluth), would appropriate about \$2.2 million during the 2002-03 biennium to the Department of Public Safety's Division of Emergency Management for Emergency Response Teams.

Gov. Jesse Ventura's budget recommended reducing funding for the teams by \$345,000 during the biennium.

Currently, the state has four emergency response teams that are trained and ready to be deployed in the event of a major disaster, such as a chemical spill. Part of those larger teams are smaller chemical response teams whose job is to consult on the best course of action for a local fire department and its hazardous materials team.

The four large teams are located in the Twin Cities, Duluth, Rochester, and Moorhead.

According to the department, a study of needs throughout the state determined the chemical response teams are used on a regular basis, and the department should invest more time and resources to beef up those teams.

Statistics show the smaller chemical teams were used 70 times last year. The large emergency response teams have only been deployed twice since 1995.

But Swapinski and other witnesses said the teams need to be there in case of an emergency.

Duluth Fire Chief Dan Haus testified that the larger response teams are able to go into the "hot zone" of an incident and take care of the problem. The chemical teams cannot.

But it's the training and preparedness that

are important.

"One (hazardous materials) incident in the state of Minnesota is tens of millions (of dollars in cost) if we're not prepared," Haus said.

Several legislators questioned the teams' usefulness if they've only been deployed twice in five years.

"I'd like that chart to say zero every year," responded Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls). "I don't buy the numbers of two here and four there. I want zero."

Charlie Weaver, commissioner of public safety, said the budget request was a result of plans to respond more efficiently, not budget cuts.

"Thank you, but we can't accept it," Weaver said of the increased funding offered in Swapinski's bill. "And we don't think we need it. We think we can do better."

"I think it's a small price to pay to have those teams in place, in case," Swapinski concluded. "If something happens we're all going to pay the price."

The bill will be considered for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

TAXES

Adoption assistance

Families who adopt children would be eligible for a tax break under two measures heard by the House Taxes Committee Sales and Income Tax Division March 26.

HF1200, sponsored by Rep. Kathy Tingelstad (R-Andover), would allow an individual income tax credit of up to \$5,000 for adoption expenses. The credit amount for special needs adoptions would be \$8,000.

HF1199, also sponsored by Tingelstad, would allow an income tax subtraction for expenses equal to the amount allowed under the federal tax adoption credit.

Tingelstad said that prior to her election to the House she voluntarily helped work on the state's adoption laws for 15 years.

Currently, federal law allows an adoption credit for the first \$5,000 for qualifying expenses and \$6,000 for special needs adoptions. The credit will only be available for special needs adoptions at the end of this year. According to the nonpartisan House Research staff, it is unclear whether federal tax laws will extend the credit for all adoptions following 2001.

Margi Miller, an international adoptions supervisor from the Children's Home Society of Minnesota, said last year the organization helped Minnesota families adopt 386 children and families outside the state adopt 280 youth. She said the costs for the adoption ranged from \$7,000 to \$40,000.

Miller said complexities in adoption laws, the travel necessary to pick up the children, and medical expenses are among the factors involved in high costs of adoptions. She said agency fees account for about 25 percent of the overall costs.

Scott Parker, an adoptive parent of twin daughters from Vietnam, said he had to take out a second mortgage to help pay for the \$30,000 cost of adopting the girls.

"Whatever sacrifices were worthwhile. But the cost is a big obstacle for families," Parker said.

The committee took no action on the bills, but Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson), the division chair, said both will be considered for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

TRANSPORTATION

Pro-life plates

A plan to create license plates bearing the expression "choose life" that would contribute money for adoption agencies was passed by a House committee.

HF2193, sponsored by Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake), creates an "adoption support account" in the state's general fund and transmits money from that account to counties.

It specifies that "each county receiving funds shall distribute the funds to nongovernmental, nonprofit agencies whose services are limited to counseling and meeting the physical needs of pregnant women who are committed to placing their children for adoption. Funds may not be distributed to any agency that is directly or indirectly involved in or associated with abortion activities."

Vandever testified before a March 27 House Transportation Policy Committee meeting that "at least 70 percent (of a \$25 fee in addition to normal charges for special plates) would provide for the material needs of pregnant women who have made the choice to put their child up for adoption." The committee approved the measure, referring it to the House Transportation Policy Committee.



House members have proposed creating a "Choose Life" license plate, like the one pictured here, the proceeds from which would benefit women who choose to give their children up for adoption.

Minnesota Citizens Concerned for Life Executive Director Jackie Schwiertz said HF2193 is modeled after a Florida plate first made in 1999. She said it is the most popular special plate in that state, having raised \$317,000 for adoption agencies by selling an average of 105 daily. Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska) emphasized that "there is no state tax money donated" under the bill.

Connie Perpich, director of public affairs for Planned Parenthood of Minnesota, objected to what she described as the measure's "extremely odious gag rule," which would prevent any receiving agency from offering, in the bill's language, "counseling for or referrals to abortion clinics" or "pro-abortion advertising." Perpich went on to suggest the state could better promote the bill's intent by increasing the tax deduction for adoption.

Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston) said, "I hate to be in this position. I am pro-life, but we're setting up the state to be a collection agency for private organizations." Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) made reference to the state's existing special-interest plates. "I sort of agree with you that this is a bad idea, but we have been doing this for a while."

Bonding options explored

Legislators are moving forward with a proposed constitutional amendment allowing general obligation bonds to be sold for the construction of trunk highways.

HF1861, sponsored by Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), would eliminate the constitutional requirement that bonds sold for trunk highway improvements must be designated "trunk highway bonds" and repaid directly into the constitutionally dedicated trunk highway fund.

Holberg told the House Transportation Policy Committee March 22 that bonding allows the state to completely fund large transportation projects before construction begins, rather than building piecemeal as the Legislature slowly appropriates money over the course of several years. The bill was approved and referred to the House Capital Investment Committee.

The alternative to increased bonding, officials say, is to raise the gas tax in order to adequately fund transportation needs.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) said, "We already have trunk highway bonding. We ought to increase the gas tax to pay off those bonds."

Chair Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) expressed interest in exploring "alternatives to get these projects done." He asked for an

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Got relief?

State may create a board to aid dairy farmers in getting top dollar for their product

By JONAS M. WALKER

In the wake of what some farmers describe as the lowest milk prices in 20 years and the subsequent exodus of dairy production from the state, lawmakers are advancing legislation to create a Milk Control Board that would establish minimum prices for raw milk.

The House Agriculture Policy Committee approved HF1238, sponsored by Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie), in a March 27 hearing. The bill was referred to the House Civil Law Committee without recommendation.

The federal government currently regulates milk prices via the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Federal Milk Marketing Order (FMMO) Program, under which farmers are guaranteed a minimum price for the milk they produce. The program dates back to the 1920s, when dairy processing and transportation technology necessitated federal intervention to assure a consistently safe and affordable supply of milk nationwide.

According to the USDA Web site, the milk program protects both farmers and consumers by legally mandating a minimum price that milk processors, such as cheese or butter manufacturers, must pay farmers for milk. Consumers are protected from “wild fluctuations in price through periods of heavy and light milk production” by ensuring farmers will have a reliable source of income. Likewise, farmers are insulated from economic or environmental variables beyond their control.

Critics claim the system is outdated and inconsistent with technological advances and economic conditions that permit the production and processing of milk in almost any region. For example, the federal milk program has always determined the price of milk by calculating a given area’s distance from Eau Claire, Wis., once the center of American dairy production.

The farther from Eau Claire, the higher the price a farmer is guaranteed. The program was successful in encouraging fledgling local dairies to support large populations far from

Wisconsin. The restrictions, though, have remained salient largely because of the strong political power of dairy producers outside the Upper Midwest.

Otremba said five other states have similar boards, including Wisconsin, and her bill is based on a similar panel in Montana.

The plan calls for the governor to appoint five members, none of whom could be “connected in any way with the production, processing, distribution, or wholesale or retail sale of milk or dairy products.” No public official could hold a board seat within two years of leaving office.

In addition to setting milk prices guaranteed to farmers, the board could institute a quota system limiting the growth in the quantity of milk that any farmer could produce. Producers could sell, barter, or otherwise exchange the quotas that would permit the production of only as much milk as was being produced when the quotas were set.

Otremba offered an amendment removing provisions that, according to nonpartisan House Research, may have been unconstitutional.

In its original version, HF1238 would have set a state minimum price on raw milk purchases by Minnesota processors, even when those purchases are made from an out-of-state

farmer. This would have the effect of extending state-regulated prices to commerce in other states, which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1986 is a violation of the U.S. Constitution’s Commerce Clause.

According to House Research, that part of the constitution has been interpreted “as prohibiting states from passing laws which discriminate against interstate commerce by favoring in-state economic interests over out-of-state economic interests.”

In addition, experts say, the bill’s original form could be unconstitutional because it “has the

purpose and effect of shielding Minnesota dairy farmers from out-of-state price competition for the purpose of promoting their economic welfare.”

According to State Attorney General Mike Hatch, “The main thrust of the act is to set a minimum price to be paid to the dairy producers of Minnesota. Courts have routinely confirmed that state minimum milk prices do not offend the federal commerce clause.”

About 10 years ago, a federal district judge struck down a Minnesota law establishing a minimum milk price because it required processors to pay out-of-state producers a minimum price. Hatch wrote that the amended bill “should survive Constitutional scrutiny because it does not disadvantage

out-of-state dairy producers.”

As amended, the bill would still create a board based on Montana’s regulatory authority. Unlike a small number of other states, Minnesota would remain part of the federal milk program. The price set by the Minnesota Milk

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PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Perham dairy farmer Karl L. Hanson testifies before the House Agriculture Policy Committee March 27 in support of a bill that would establish a milk price control board, provide for minimum pricing of raw milk and maximum pricing of milk at wholesale and retail, create the option for a milk supply quota system, and allow for pooling of milk payments.

Profile of Learning

House committee approves bills that would revise or abolish Minnesota's high standards for graduation

BY THERESA STAHL

Although members of the House Education Policy Committee haven't decided whether to eliminate or revise the Profile of Learning, they took action to revamp Minnesota's graduation standards.

Two bills were approved March 28 after testimony of a student and parents pleading for a change. "This educational experiment needs to stop now," said Gina Fitzsimmons, mother of three children and co-chair of a learning committee.

Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) sponsored HF2057, a bill that would repeal the Profile of Learning and establish new statewide tests in third, fifth, and 10th grades.

HF2064, sponsored by Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan), would establish a task force to work with the Council for Basic Education to create new standards in English, math, science, history, and geography.

Both bills just met the March 30 deadline for initial committee hearings. Rep. John Dorn (DFL-Mankato) asked how bills for the Profile of Learning showed up on the calendar just now when passage will be much more difficult and unlikely.

Kielkucki said he was waiting to receive a report on the standards and for the Department of Children, Families and Learning to respond to an information request. He has been working on the bill since last session, he said, and it took him this long to figure out what to do.

More than an hour of testimony supported his plan. Fitzsimmons explained she hasn't been able to help her kids with their homework since the implementation of the Profile because of how they are now expected to show they have learned.

"Parents have been alienated and left in the dark," she said. "If HF2057 became law, I would feel like my input would matter again.

"It's the only bill with local control," she continued. "Other bills are a fix."

Barbara Cook Smith saw a "strong difference" in what her second child was bringing home compared to what her older child had

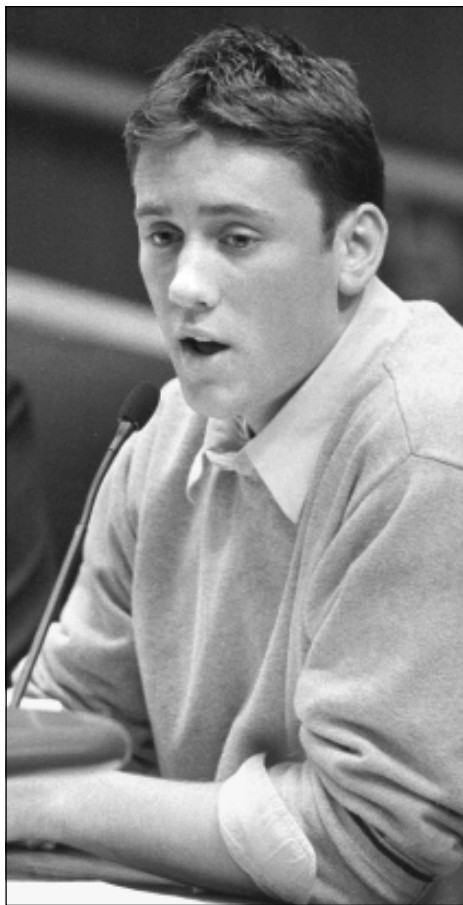


PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Joshua Robinson, an 11th grader from Forest Lake High School, testifies in front of the House Education Policy Committee March 27 in support of HF2057, a bill that would repeal the Profile of Learning graduation standards.

for homework before the Profile. The content, she said, was endlessly repeated questions.

"There was no testing, just a check-off list of what they had learned," said Cook Smith, parent of students attending Southwest High School in Minneapolis and former PTA president. "Learning had become secondary to processing paperwork."

"We have a diverse state — the Profile of Learning is 'one size fits all,'" said William Wenmark, a parent of two and member of the Minnetonka School Board.

Rep. Paul Marquart (DFL-Dilworth) questioned Kielkucki's bill. He was worried that "by scrapping the Profile, how do we ensure we can measure results to see if students can be successful?"

Kielkucki said he is taking a different approach of allowing teachers to decide what's best rather than creating a mandate for every classroom.

"I really have a problem putting every student through the same loophole," he said. "I think the system is ultimately flawed. We need to let every district make up its mind."

Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) said teachers are compromising academic and instruction time to do paperwork, but it bothers him that the thrust of the bill is to repeal the Profile and require a significant amount of testing. "Is there a reason why you want to focus on testing?" he asked.

Kielkucki replied the only difference is how the test is designed. "If we teach to the test, then we've lost our ambition as educators."

Barbara Devlin, superintendent of Richfield Public Schools, testified against the bill. Richfield schools were a pilot site for the Profile, helping to develop, test, and implement the graduation standards.

"The State of Minnesota has invested years of time, human energy, and financial resources in the development and implementation of the Profile of Learning," she said.

HF2057 was sent to the K-12 Education Finance Committee.

Buesgens' bill attempts to address the problems of the Profile, he said. "We do not have standards that are academic, rigorous, or measurable."

The committee approved an amendment by Rep. Leslie Schumacher (DFL-Princeton) that would prohibit schools from making the Profile a condition for graduation. In essence, it does what Kielkucki's bill does until new standards are created by the state-appointed task force and adopted by the Legislature.

"The amendment will allow the task force to move forward through a fundamentally flawed system," she said.

Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal) offered an amendment to remove the Council for Basic Education as the contracted organization to develop the content standards and let the department seek requests for proposals. Buesgens and Rep. Sondra Erickson

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Help wanted

Legislators consider a plan to merge two state agencies that focus on workforce issues and economic development

BY DAVID MAEDA

Many of the state's workforce programs have traditionally been geared toward unemployment issues. But a proposed merger between the Department of Economic Security and Department of Trade and Economic Development would shift focus to the development of skilled workers.

The House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee approved a bill (HF1859) March 23 that would combine the functions of the agencies responsible for the state's workforce and economic development programs. The bill was referred to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee.

That committee approved the bill March 26 and referred it to the House Commerce, Jobs and Economic Development Committee, where it was scheduled to be heard while this issue of *Session Weekly* went to press.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), the sponsor of the measure, said the legislation comes as a result of Gov. Jesse Ventura's mini-cabinet and advisory council's recommendations to merge the state's employment related programs.

McElroy said unlike the merger between the departments of Commerce and Public Service, the proposed reorganization is not being done by executive order but with collaboration between the administration and the Legislature.

He said the Department of Economic Security was created in the days when unemployment was a major concern. The agency administers the state's unemployment compensation system.

"We've operated with the belief that there are more workers than jobs," McElroy said. "But now we have more jobs than workers."

Although the state's unemployment rate continues along at an all time low, McElroy said of the 2.5 million workers, around one million have jobs that pay less than \$10 an hour. To continue to compete in the national and global economies, the state has to focus its attention on creating a highly skilled, and highly paid workforce.

He said as part of the merger, some func-



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

MnSCU Chancellor Morrie Anderson testifies in front of the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee March 26 during a discussion concerning proposed reorganization of the Department of Economic Security and the Department of Trade and Economic Development.

tions that have been traditionally housed in St. Paul would be spread across the state to the 16 local workforce councils to move more control to the community level.

"The departments haven't responded very rapidly to the changing economy," McElroy said, pointing to rigid federal regulations. "We need to move control closer to the people and the community."

The workforce councils established by state law are responsible for assessing community

workforce development needs and coordinating services to best meet those needs. They are comprised of business leaders, organized labor representatives, economic development agencies, community organizations, and educational institutions.

Morrie Anderson, chancellor of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and head of the governor's transition team, said the top goal of the reorganization is to build the best possible workforce in the state. He said the new approach would link workforce and economic development together, and "aggressively develop" partnerships with business, nonprofit and education institutions.

The bill would create a new department called the Department of Economic and Workforce Development, which would be responsible for administering the state's job training and placement programs. Unemployment compensation service would be transferred to the Department of Labor and Industry.

McElroy said he did not expect to see layoffs because of the merger but that over time the department probably would have fewer employees due to attrition.

The transition team would be required to report back to the Legislature by March 15, 2002 with its recommendations for the implementation of the merger that would take place on July 1, 2002.

Rep. Sondra Erickson (R-Princeton) expressed concern about primarily focusing on developing the "best workforce possible," saying a narrow approach would lead to the creation of a workforce composed of "worker bees" that are skilled but lacking in necessary knowledge. She said a knowledge-based education is crucial to workforce development.

Comprehensive workforce development, Anderson responded, requires involvement from all sectors of the community including government, educational institutions, parents and families, businesses and the nonprofit sector.

Rep. Tony Kielucki (R-Lester Prairie) said he was concerned that combining workforce and economic development would lead to the government choosing winners and losers among the state's varying industries.

He said the state's largest employer — the state of Minnesota — would now also be involved in picking industries that will be targeted for the developing workforce.

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Monday, March 26

HF2175—Swenson (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
 Natural resources citizen oversight committees provisions modified.

HF2176—Milbert (DFL)
Taxes
 Non-mixed municipal solid waste disposal tax rate clarified.

HF2177—Mahoney (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
 Long-term vocational rehabilitation services for persons with brain injuries pilot program established and money appropriated.

HF2178—Kielkucki (R)
State Government Finance
 Government Training Service grant provided to Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning, and money appropriated.

HF2179—Mullery (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
 Welfare-to-work transportation funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2180—Kielkucki (R)
K-12 Education Finance
 Independent School District No. 2687, Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted, grant provided for development of an agricultural high school, and money appropriated.

HF2181—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
 School buses; pilot project established to allow specified type A school buses to be operated by holders of Class D driver's licenses under limited conditions, and misdemeanor penalty provided.

HF2182—Lieder (DFL)
Transportation Policy
 Local road improvement fund established, expenditure criteria specified, and money appropriated.

HF2183—Entenza (DFL)
Civil Law
 Courts required to destroy investigatory files when child protection petitions are dismissed, and background studies of relatives required prior to placement of juveniles.

HF2184—Entenza (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
 Martin Luther King Jr. nonviolent institutional child development program authorized and money appropriated.

HF2185—Jacobson (R)
K-12 Education Finance
 Independent School District No. 621, Mounds View, parallel block schedule pilot project grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2186—Erickson (R)
Education Policy
 Diabetes; care requirements provided for students with diabetes.

HF2187—Kelliher (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
 Minneapolis Coldwater Springs area property acquisition by the Metropolitan Airports Commission authorized.

HF2188—Leppik (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
 Adult Basic Education supplemental service grants provided and money appropriated.

HF2189—Molnau (R)
Transportation Policy
 Local road improvement program established, motor vehicle sales tax proceeds dedicated to the highway user tax distribution fund, Greater Minnesota transit appropriations provided, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF2190—Wilkin (R)
Taxes
 Taxable income definition and rates modified.

HF2191—Ozment (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
 Local road wetland replacement funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2192—Gunther (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
 Pseudorabies in swine continued testing and vaccination funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2193—Vandever (R)
Transportation Policy
 Special "choose life" motor vehicle license plates authorized, adoption support account established for grants to counties, and money appropriated.

HF2194—Fuller (R)
Education Policy
 Profile of Learning; school districts authorized to implement profile or offer other learning experiences, state and local testing provided, and money appropriated.

HF2195—Abeler (R)
K-12 Education Finance
 School finance simplification, clarification, and equity provided.

HF2196—Abeler (R)
K-12 Education Finance
 Legislative task force on reducing the complexity of K-12 education funding statutes and rules created.

HF2197—Winter (DFL)
Civil Law
 Discrimination by processors prohibited against producers who exercise rights, including joining producer associations; enforcement provided, and criminal penalties imposed.

HF2198—Mullery (DFL)
Education Policy
 Community approval required before naming or renaming a school facility.

HF2199—Stanek (R)
Civil Law
 Workers compensation coverage provided for bomb disposal unit employees when acting outside the state, and liability limited for bomb disposal personnel and equipment suppliers.

HF2200—Wagenius (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
 Arsenic-treated wood disclosure required in real estate transactions.

HF2201—Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
 Bicycle commuting by state agency employees promoted.

HF2202—Dibble (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
 Classification of electronic access, Edvest, human rights intake file, and automobile insurance financial data provided, reporting redundancy eliminated, and administrative remedies provided.

HF2203—Clark, J. (R)
Transportation Policy
 Judicial review of public purpose and necessity for taking property for county highways or town roads allowed.

HF2204—Wagenius (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
 Arsenic-treated wood use notice required by retailers and contractors.

HF2205—Pawlenty (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
 Even-year sessions convened by the Legislature authorized if a budget deficit is forecast, and agenda limited.

HF2206—Juhnke (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
 Low-cost deep rural facilities rate increases modified and money appropriated.

HF2207—Mulder (R)
Civil Law
 Family support payment dates clarified.

HF2208—Ness (R)
Education Policy
 Profile of Learning amended to focus on core academic content areas, "A to F" grading system allowed, statewide software package to record student performance recommended, and nationally norm-referenced proficiency tests required.

HF2209—Tingelstad (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
 Health coverage outreach campaign established, preventive services pool created, income verification requirements for medical assistance reduced, continuous coverage provided, MinnesotaCare premiums limited, and money appropriated.

HF2210—Ness (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
 Agricultural product shipper organization grants provided and money appropriated.

HF2211—Osskopp (R) K-12 Education Finance Independent School District No. 806, Elgin-Millville, fund transfer authorized.	HF2220—Opatz (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Benton County land conveyance to county historical society authorized.	HF2230—Carlson (DFL) Higher Education Finance Higher education asset preservation and replacement funding provided for University of Minnesota and MnSCU, bonds issued, and money appropriated.	HF2241—Stang (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Stadium review commission established to evaluate sports stadium construction proposals.
HF2212—Wagenius (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Arsenic-treated wood; state purchase prohibited, grants provided for corporations that convert their treatment operations, and money appropriated.	HF2221—Otremba (DFL) Health & Human Services Policy Minnesota universal health board, universal health program, and health care trust fund established; statewide and regional health care budgets provided; and money appropriated.	HF2231—Slawik (DFL) Health & Human Services Finance Nursing facility, ICF/MRs, and other programs 5 percent rate increase provided, and money appropriated.	HF2242—Hilty (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources Policy Radioactive material prohibited in recycled materials.
HF2213—Gray (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development Home Mortgage Market Predatory Lending Act adopted and money appropriated.	HF2222—Dehler (R) Higher Education Finance MnSCU state share of expenditures provision modified, fee collection procedures modified, purchasing and contracting requirements provided, tuition refunds clarified, reporting requirements abolished, and obsolete references deleted.	HF2232—Larson (DFL) Transportation Policy School bus driver's endorsement cancellation authorized in the case of a gross misdemeanor conviction or series of violations that show the person represents a risk to public safety.	HF2243—Pelowski (DFL) Transportation Finance Midwest regional rail initiative preliminary engineering and environmental analysis provided and money appropriated.
HF2214—Mares (R) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Major league professional baseball stadium financed, private funding required, interest-free loans and temporary tax-free zone provided, site selection commission created, disposition of the Metrodome provided, and money appropriated.	HF2223—Tuma (R) K-12 Education Finance Minnesota Valley Academy grant provided for a residential academy, and money appropriated.	HF2233—Kelliher (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources Policy Watercraft restricted to slow-no wake speed within 150 feet of shoreline.	HF2244—Abrams (R) Judiciary Finance State funding of trial courts provided in unfunded judicial districts.
HF2215—Mares (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Retirement contribution payment provided at Frederick Douglass and other specified charter schools and money appropriated.	HF2224—Bakk (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources Policy Individual sewage treatment system funding provided.	HF2234—Erhardt (R) Taxes Long-term care insurance income tax credit maximum increased, lifetime benefit requirement reduced, credit extended to employers, and credit sunset provided.	HF2245—Bradley (R) Health & Human Services Finance Olmsted County nursing facilities rates increased and money appropriated.
HF2216—Bradley (R) Health & Human Services Policy Mental health crisis services provided, mobile mental health crisis teams established, mental health emergency triage protocols required, mental health crisis plans developed, crisis line established, and money appropriated.	HF2225—Nornes (R) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development Workers' compensation technical provisions modified, special compensation fund interest revenue deposited in fund, pilot program extended, and penalties paid to Department of Labor and Industry.	HF2235—Bakk (DFL) K-12 Education Finance Independent School District No. 696, Ely, transitional transportation grant provided and money appropriated.	HF2246—Bradley (R) Health & Human Services Policy Nursing facility operating rates compensation-related portion increased and money appropriated.
HF2217—Marquart (DFL) Education Policy School districts encouraged to devote a staff development day for teacher workshops on assessment packages.	HF2226—Seagren (R) Higher Education Finance Advance placement and international baccalaureate students merit grant established and money appropriated.	HF2236—Mulder (R) Taxes Wind energy electricity production tax provided in lieu of property tax.	HF2247—Bernardy (DFL) Taxes Teachers' purchase of classroom materials income tax deduction provided.
HF2218—Kuisle (R) K-12 Education Finance Independent School District No. 535, Rochester, integration revenue specified; special education cross-subsidy aid provided; referendum revenue restoration authorized; and money appropriated.	HF2227—Stanek (R) Crime Prevention Gang prevention and intervention grant pilot project authorized and money appropriated.	HF2237—Bernardy (DFL) Taxes Dependent care income tax credit expanded.	HF2248—McGuire (DFL) Family & Early Childhood Education Finance MFIP and basic sliding fee child care assistance programs consolidated.
HF2219—Kuisle (R) Transportation Finance Olmsted County; metropolitan public safety radio system expanded into Olmsted County, and money appropriated.	HF2228—Stanek (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy Pension coverage extended to part-time metropolitan transit police officers.	HF2238—Bradley (R) Health & Human Services Finance Olmsted County transferred to geographic group III for nursing facility reimbursement, Olmsted County facilities rate increase provided, and money appropriated.	HF2249—Leighton (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development Adverse medical examinations regulated.
	HF2229—Bernardy (DFL) Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Early childhood education definition of child modified, and pool of up to 2 percent of annual appropriation for child care assistance established for assistance to children age 13 and 14.	HF2239—Greiling (DFL) Education Policy Student release time from school for religious instruction repealed.	HF2250—Abeler (R) K-12 Education Finance Alternative facilities program and aid provisions modified.
		HF2240—Hausman (DFL) Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development Nonprofit organizations authorized to receive funding under the contamination cleanup, livable communities tax base revitalization, and livable communities demonstration account programs.	HF2251—Kubly (DFL) Agriculture & Rural Development Finance Passing on the Farm Center continued funding provided and money appropriated.
			HF2252—Hilstrom (DFL) Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs Hennepin County Soil and Water Conservation District supervisor appointment and transition from an elected to an appointed board provided.

HF2253—Davids (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Insurance agent minimum education requirements modified.

HF2254—Tingelstad (R)
Taxes
Andover water treatment facility construction materials and equipment sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2255—Tingelstad (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Tobacco settlement and medical education endowment funds modified, healthy kids learn endowment fund created, and money appropriated.

HF2256—Bernardy (DFL)
Taxes
Education subtraction and income tax credit authorized for extracurricular activities and musical instruments.

HF2257—Johnson, R. (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Nicollet County Onan Power Electronics employees provided extra unemployment insurance benefits.

Wednesday, March 28

HF2258—Lindner (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Housing finance and development programs consolidated, loan forgiveness time period lengthened, tenant income limits eliminated, project-based rental assistance authorized, aggregation of earnings authorized, and technical changes provided.

HF2259—Gunther (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Martin County nursing home rate increase provided and money appropriated.

HF2260—Gunther (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Martin County nursing home rate increase authorized and money appropriated.

HF2261—Daggett (R)
Taxes
Charitable organizations sale of personal property sales tax exemption provided, and lottery definition clarified relating to employer distributions to persons who have made charitable deductions.

HF2262—Fuller (R)
State Government Finance
Bemidji Headwaters Science Center construction provided and money appropriated.

HF2263—Erickson (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Tribal identification cards usage for Election Day registration authorized.

HF2264—Walz (R)
Crime Prevention
Mandatory minimum sentences provided for offenders convicted of first and second degree criminal sexual conduct crimes.

HF2265—Skoe (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Fosston Public Library accessibility project grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2266—Jacobson (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Beverage container mandatory deposit required, redemption centers established, report required, and money appropriated.

HF2267—Lipman (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Maximum residential density requirement of long-term agricultural land exception permitted in metropolitan counties.

HF2268—Skoe (DFL)
Taxes
Small resorts included in limited market value.

HF2269—Gunther (R)
K-12 Education Finance
State equalization aid for school district debt service levies and operating referendum revenue increased.

HF2270—Kahn (DFL)
Civil Law
Judgement creditor disclosure provided.

HF2271—McGuire (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Violent video games; juvenile access report required, and scientific study on how violent video games encourage aggressive acts by juveniles provided.

HF2272—Abeler (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Anoka County nursing facility rate adjustment provided.

HF2273—Knoblach (R)
Capital Investment
Capital improvements corrective amendments reenacted.

HF2274—McGuire (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Adult Basic Education programs authorized to apply for telecommunications access grants and revenue, and money appropriated.

HF2275—Anderson, B. (R)
Education Policy
United States flag etiquette, display, and respect education provided.

HF2276—Kahn (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Outdoor light pollution restricted.

HF2277—Jennings (DFL)
Education Policy
Learning year program required with sufficient time to complete district graduation requirements, continual learning plan described, and audit penalty prohibited for Independent School District No. 138, North Branch.

HF2278—Otremba (DFL)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Mental health consulting support to farm families and business operators provided and money appropriated.

HF2279—Dawkins (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
St. Paul housing district authorized and income limits prescribed.

HF2280—Milbert (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
MSRS general state employees retirement plan service credit purchase authorized for a specified Department of Transportation Laborer 1.

HF2281—Swenson (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 2589, Glencoe-Silver Lake, fund transfer and additional levy authorized.

HF2282—Osskopp (R)
Taxes
Hastings and Lake City city halls improvements construction materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

HF2283—Johnson, R. (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Strontium 90 level in teeth of small children study provided and money appropriated.

HF2284—Stanek (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Hennepin County tax-forfeited land sale bordering public water authorized.

HF2285—Carlson (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minneapolis Teachers Retirement Fund Association prior service credit purchase authorized for a former teacher.

HF2286—Erickson (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Mentoring program for probationary teachers established; loan repayment program created for recruitment of excellent teachers in science, math, industrial technology, and special education and in rural areas; and money appropriated.

HF2287—Smith (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Corrections agents included in correctional employees retirement plan, and coverage for prior state service provided.

HF2288—Ness (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Feedlots; state cost-share money provided for environmental review expenses, and money appropriated.

HF2289—Osskopp (R)
Education Policy
United States flag etiquette, display, and respect instruction provided.

HF2290—Opatz (DFL)
Higher Education Finance
MnSCU facilities acquisition provisions and prior St. Cloud State University capital improvements funding source modified.

HF2291—Skoglund (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Automated victim notification system implemented, report required, and money appropriated.

HF2292—Stanek (R)
Transportation Finance
Metropolitan Council demonstration project funded to provide express bus service between downtown Minneapolis and locations outside transit taxing district, and money appropriated.

HF2293—Leighton (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Manufactured homes utility services rates limited to actual amount billed to the owner.

HF2294—Clark, K. (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Pre-adoption health care coverage regulated.

HF2295—Mullery (DFL)
Taxes
Tax court jurisdiction provided in specified Hennepin County property tax cases.

HF2296—Otremba (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Parent education pilot program for parents of children ages 5 to 18 created and money appropriated.

HF2297—Marquart (DFL)
Taxes
Limited market value formula modified, and sunset date on limited market value extended.

HF2298—Clark, K. (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Opportunities Industrialization Center programs funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2299—Davnie (DFL)
Education Policy
Special education caseload rules prohibition repealed, and special education caseloads measurement established.

HF2300—Haas (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Health coverage mandate proposal assessment provided.

HF2301—Rhodes (R)
Taxes
Investment coins and bullion sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2302—Ness (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Deer hunting limit imposed of one deer annually.

HF2303—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services Finance
Duluth nursing home moratorium exception provided.

HF2304—Kielkucki (R)
Education Policy
Non-public school students required to be fully eligible to participate in extracurricular activities.

HF2305—Hausman (DFL)
Transportation Policy
I-94 directional signs required for colleges and universities in St. Paul.

HF2306—Jennings (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Wastewater and drinking water funding requests coordinated and rulemaking authorized.

HF2307—Pugh (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Firefighter probationary period extended to 12 months.

HF2308—Kuisle (R)
Taxes
Road project purchases sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2309—Kuisle (R)
Transportation Policy
Trunk highway project construction considerations clarified.

HF2310—McGuire (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Video game sale and rental restricted to persons under age 17, public display of restricted games prohibited, study required, and penalty provided.

HF2311—McGuire (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Early childhood developmental screening provisions expanded.

HF2312—Walker (DFL)
Civil Law
Parental rights termination proceeding presumption modified.

HF2313—Opatz (DFL)
Education Policy
Tenth grade college readiness statewide testing provided.

HF2314—Schumacher (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Reshape program director correctional plan retirement coverage provided.

HF2315—Knoblach (R)
Judiciary Finance
St. Cloud Police Department crime lab equipment grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2316—Wenzel (DFL)
Civil Law
Attorney fee lien provisions modified.

HF2317—Knoblach (R)
Higher Education Finance
St. Cloud State University and Independent School District No. 742, St. Cloud, teacher recruitment collaborative program funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2318—Rhodes (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Political party expenditures limited, additional public disclosure required, public subsidy distribution procedures changed, multi-candidate expenditures limited, contributions limited, civil penalties imposed, and money appropriated.

HF2319—Johnson, R. (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Dislocated homemaker program funded and money appropriated.

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HF2320—Knoblach (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Job training program grants made available to employers who hire qualified low-income graduates of non-profit job training programs.

HF2321—Erickson (R)
Taxes
Milaca street reconstruction project construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF2322—Penas (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Livestock farmers reimbursed for losses due to anthrax.

HF2323—Penas (R)
Taxes
Fuel tax partially refunded for commercial owners of recreational fishing launches, and money transferred from the general fund to the water recreation account in the special revenue fund.

HF2324—Kuisle (R)
Transportation Policy
Professional and technical services contracts for state transportation projects regulated.

HF2325—Pugh (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
West St. Paul authorized to implement ordinance amortizing certain signs.

HF2326—Milbert (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Independent School District No. 199, Inver Grove, grant provided for a library of computer on-line courses, and money appropriated.

HF2327—Evans (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Mounds View park shelter replacement grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2328—Walz (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Woodland education publication grant provided for use in sixth-grade classrooms, and money appropriated.

HF2329—Jennings (DFL)
Taxes
Pine County Government Center and jail construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF2330—Howes (R)
Taxes
Property tax payment by commissioner of natural resources required in counties having a reduced tax base due to acreage in state ownership.

HF2331—McElroy (R)
Higher Education Finance
High technology; investment tax provisions modified, seed capital fund created, industry in rural areas promoted, out-of-state tuition waived, lifetime learning grants and North Star Research Coalition created, and money appropriated.

HF2332—Stanek (R)
Civil Law
Government agencies exempted from court fees for civil and criminal instrument proceedings.

HF2333—Dawkins (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
St. Paul Osceola-St. Clair housing tax increment financing district authorized.

HF2334—Thompson (DFL)
Taxes
Vending machine items sold for 50 cents or less exempted from sales tax.

HF2335—Carlson (DFL)
Taxes
Higher education expenses tax credit authorized.

HF2336—Harder (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Child care assistance employment eligibility modified.

HF2337—Greiling (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Teacher grant program to promote professional teaching standards matching funds requirement modified, school district program to promote professional teaching standards provided, and money appropriated.

HF2338—Osthoff (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

St. Paul Port Authority customized job training funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2339—McElroy (R)**Taxes**

Utility generation property tax provisions modified, utility rate adjustments provided, trust fund established, rebate authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2340—Penas (R)**Taxes**

Roseau County mixed municipal solid waste transfer station construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF2341—Davnie (DFL)**Education Policy**

School district flexibility provided in determining eligible students' level of performance.

HF2342—Osthoff (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Empire Builder property in St. Paul compensation for environmental contamination remediation provided, claim priority provided, and money appropriated.

HF2343—Jennings (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Lower St. Croix Wild and Scenic River Act implemented and money appropriated.

HF2344—Goodno (R)**Taxes**

Property tax class rates reduced, debt service and operating referendum equalization revenues increased, general education levy decreased, local government unit purchases sales tax exempted, and money appropriated.

HF2345—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Oral language interpreter services coverage required of health plans.

HF2346—Daggett (R)**Taxes**

Income tax deduction provided for health insurance premiums.

HF2347—Evans (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Existing and new housing programs funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2348—Mulder (R)**Taxes**

Small scale wind energy conversion system property tax exemption modified.

HF2349—Davnie (DFL)**Taxes**

Fort Snelling upper bluff area project construction materials sales and use tax exemption provided.

HF2350—Lenczewski (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Hennepin County multi-jurisdictional programs financing means specified.

HF2351—Carlson (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Higher education grant stipends calculation modified.

HF2352—Bishop (R)**State Government Finance**

Rochester National Volleyball Center grant provided, matching in-kind grants required, and money appropriated.

HF2353—Seagren (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Alternative teacher compensation program system created to enhance student performance, and money appropriated.

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MONDAY, April 2

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF1938 (Kahn) Administration department provisions modified.
HF1379 (Krinkie) Modifying state procurement provisions.
HF1914 (Erickson) Creating the technology enterprise fund and board.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: HF7 (Eastlund) Nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation and related conditions (ICF/MR), and direct care provider rate adjustments provided.
HF1064 (Bradley) Consumer support grant services expanded, waivers provisions clarified, developmental disabilities services provisions modified, and money appropriated.
HF1193 (Goodno) Home and community-based options for individuals with disabilities access improvements provided, consumer control provisions modified, and consumer-directed home care demonstration project established.
HF1288 (Daggett) Living-at-home block nurse program numbers and funding increased and money appropriated.
HF1729 (Kubly) Senior congregate dining and home-delivered meals funding provided and money appropriated.
HF1721 (Goodno) Medical education program distribution formula modified.

HF1622 (Goodno) Health care safety net preservation program established and voluntary agreements to expand intergovernmental transfers allowed.

HF711 (Penas) Rural hospital grants provided and grant provisions modified, health care technician and rural hospital nurse loan forgiveness programs established, telemedicine coverage sunset repealed, and money appropriated.

Note: Meeting will continue in the evening at the call of the chair.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF1736 (Bakk) Taconite plant capital improvements loan fund established and money appropriated.
HF235 (Rukavina) Minnesota Investment Fund targeted funding provided for specified areas, and money appropriated.
HF1105/SF960 (Rukavina/Tomassoni) Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation commissioner authorized to acquire discontinued mining property.
HF157 (Bakk) LTV mining specified employees and suppliers extra unemployment compensation benefits provided.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: HF2118 (Haas) Inter-regional trunk highway corridor coalitions grants provided and money appropriated.
HF1776 (Lieder) Trunk highway bridge construction, reconstruction, and rehabilitation provided and money appropriated.
HF1281 (Holberg) Light utility trailers lifetime registration provided.
HF1277 (Molnau) Inter-regional transportation corridor financing procedures, statewide communications system, and transportation revolving loan fund provisions modified, and clarifying changes provided.

8:30 a.m.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

316 State Capitol

Chr. Sen. Dean Johnson

Agenda: SFXXX; HF855 (Mares) and SF810 (Pogemiller); HFXXX: PERA; Funding deficiency correction. Consideration of other PERA funding deficiency correction options.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF245 (Juhnke) Licensed peace officers authorized to determine necessity of patient restraints.

HF1892 (Clark, K.) Creditor discriminatory practices definition extended to include discrimination based on receipt of public assistance including medical assistance or housing assistance.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: HF1071 (Bakk) State park and recreation area boundaries modified and boathouse lot leases in Soudan Underground Mine State Park administration provided.
HF240 (Rukavina) Mesabi station on Mesabi trail construction completion provided, and money appropriated.
HF853 (Ozment) State park land acquisition provided and money appropriated.
HF1269 (Kahn) Mississippi Whitewater Trail funding provided and money appropriated.
HF529 (Workman) Hennepin County land conveyance to city of Eden Prairie, and money appropriated.
HF2092 (Olson) State park fees modified, camping facilities required to remain open as scheduled, and report required.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF328 (Dorman) Relating to education finance; increasing the amount of referendum revenue subject to equalization.
HF1907 (Biernat) Relating to education finance; making the general education levy a state-determined, state-collected levy.
HF1534 (Tingelstad) Relating to education; creating high performance school facilities pilot projects in Independent School Districts Nos. 728 and 535, Elk River and Rochester; requiring an integrated facilities plan.
HF1605 (Harder) Relating to education finance; creating a revolving loan fund for school district emergency fuel assistance.
HF1723 (Nornes) Relating to education finance; authorizing school districts to include home school pupils in their pupil counts for certain funding purposes.
HF1650 (Penas) Relating to education; providing for a new teacher mentoring pilot program.

HF1890 (Seagren) Relating to education; authorizing grants for collaborative urban educator training programs; appropriating money.

HF1653 (Gleason) Relating to education; increasing the crime-related costs levy.

HF1371 (Dehler) Relating to education finance; authorizing an increase in referendum authority without an election in certain circumstances.

HF1370 (Dehler) Relating to education finance; authorizing a school board to transfer excess revenue in the debt redemption fund to the operating capital account in the general fund.

HF2081 (Biernat) Relating to education finance; specifying the calculation to determine an excess in the debt redemption fund; authorizing certain fund transfers.

HF2079 (Lieder) Relating to education; providing for a grant to Independent School District No. 600, Fisher.

HF1430 (Winter) Relating to education; appropriating money for a grant to Independent School District No. 175, Westbrook, for a student entrepreneurship project.

HF1682 (Kubly) Relating to education; providing for additional disabled access levy authority for Independent School District No. 2159, Buffalo Lake-Hector.

HF893 (Sertich) Relating to education; providing for historic building revenue.

HF1420 (Sertich) Relating to education finance; extending the school district levy for retired employee health benefits.

HF1253 (Ness) Relating to education; authorizing the establishment of reserve accounts.

HF93 (Entenza) Relating to education; establishing a school guidance counselor to student ratio.

Note: The committee will reconvene in 10 State Office Building after session. All bills after HF1653 will probably be heard post-session (about 6 p.m.)

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: HF2020 (Kubly) Agricultural parcel homestead classification allowed.

HF2142 (Gleason) Low-income rental housing class rate established.

HF2169 (Lieder) Payments in lieu of taxation provided for certain wetlands acquired by the department of transportation.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

500N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Elaine Harder

Agenda: HF1679 (Paulsen) Provides retailers a deduction from the amount of sales tax remitted to compensate for costs of collecting the tax.

HF583 (Hackbarth) Exempts sales tax on diesel fuel used to operate commuter rail systems.

HF584 (Hackbarth) Exempts sales tax on materials and equipment used to provide commuter rail service.

HF1731 (Kuisle) Exempts transit vehicles and parts for transit vehicles from the sales tax and the motor vehicle sales tax.

HF1985 (Pelowski) Provides that a portion of the general sales and use tax be paid to cities for transportation purposes.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: HF2248 (McGuire) Relating to family and early childhood education; consolidating the MFIP and basic sliding fee child care assistance programs.

HF1429 (Sykora) Relating to child care; requiring annual market rate surveys; appropriating money.

HF1437 (Skoe) Relating to family and early childhood education finance; modifying child care market rate survey.

HF1745 (Nornes) Relating to children; child care; creating an annual bonus for accredited child care centers.

HF1548 (Nornes) Relating to early childhood; appropriating money for child care resource and referral programs.

HF1478 (Wagenius) Relating to children; requiring notice to parents and employees when a Head Start program or child care provider plans to use certain pesticides.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey

Agenda: To be announced. Monitor paper and electronic bulletins.

After Local Government meeting at the call of the chair

Subcommittee on Metropolitan Council and Agencies/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Buesgens

Agenda: To be announced.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

Immediately following session

RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION

400S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty

Agenda: Calendar for the Day for Thursday, April 5, 2001.

House Budget.

TUESDAY, April 3

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF1947 (Mulder) Vital statistics act modified, access to adoption records modified, and criminal penalties imposed.

HF322 (Rhodes) Minnesota utilization review act and practice of medicine definition modified.

HF1255 (Haas) County social service agencies reimbursed for out-of-home juvenile placement costs and money appropriated.

More bills may be added.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: To be announced.

10:15 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Tuma

Agenda: HF1330 (Clark, J.) Felony penalty for aggravated cruelty to pets.

SF7/HF165 (Wasiluk) Killing or harming animals trained to assist persons with disabilities; criminal penalties imposed.

HF1925 (Walker) Crime victim services director authorized to adopt rules to administer the battered women's shelter per diem program.

HF1808 (Clark, J.) Methamphetamine; MDMA added to list of Schedule I controlled substances; MDMA and MDA added to controlled substance penalty enhancement provisions.

Note: Additional bills will be added.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF790 (Davids) Blufflands trail system requirements modified.

HF1146 (Ozment) Salt distribution stockpiles design, construction, and use requirements established.

HF1782 (Otremba) Long Prairie River declared a canoe and boating route.

HF1827 (Swenson) Pollution Control Agency authority to expedite permits clarified.

HF1968 (Marquardt) Red River of the North designated a canoe and boating route and money appropriated.

HF1491 (Fuller) Environmental review concerning sunken log removal clarified, local approval required, and money appropriated.

Note: If agenda is not completed, the committee will meet in 5 State Office Building at 2:30 p.m.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF351 (Stanek) DWI; felony level driving while impaired offense established.

The following bills are for discussion only:

HF673 (Stanek) Emergency 911 telephone services maximum allowable fee increased.

HF389 (Dempsey) Mississippi River Parkway Commission extended and membership modified.

HF218 (Krinkie) State Government Finance Bill. Section 12, Department of Administration.

Additional bills may be added.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF1120 (Pugh) Dakota County tax-forfeited land conveyance free of the trust in favor of tax district authorized.

HF2121 (Daggett) Provides for valuation and deferral of certain property whose current use and potential alternative use are not the same.

HF2126 (Leppik) Allows taxpayers to request notices be given to holders of powers of attorney.

HF2160 (Milbert) Makes certain property tax public hearings optional; requires a reverse referendum for property tax increases in counties and certain cities.

HF2152 (Folliard) Authorizes the city of Hopkins to impose a food and beverage tax.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: HF1814 (Swenson) Providing inflationary increases for County Ag Societies.

HF2048 (Ness) Providing environmental compliance grants for feedlot upgrades.

HF2052 (Ness) Providing for an agricultural trade specialist within the Department of Agriculture.

HF2192 (Gunther) Pseudorabies prevention in Minnesota's swine herd.

HF2210 (Ness) Providing for market expansion through a shippers cooperative of identity preserved commodities.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF661 (Stang) Relating to professions; creating the Accountancy Act of 2001; authorizing rulemaking; imposing penalties.

HF1467 (Holberg) Relating to payment bonds; regulating notices of claims.

HF1086 (Gunther) Relating to community development; providing management and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations.

HF1951 (Goodno) Relating to insurance; regulating the use of HIV and bloodborne pathogen tests.

HF1615 (Entenza) Relating to insurance; regulating liquidations and investments of insurers.

HF632 (Luther) Relating to employment; requiring paid leave for organ donation.

Other bills may be added.

6 p.m.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF1311 (McElroy) Minnesota Money Transmitters Act established.

HF1408 (Gunther) Minnesota State University, Mankato, rural policy and development center funding provided and money appropriated.

HF916 (Erhardt) Securities fees modified for certain securities issued by open-end management companies and unit investment trusts.

HF2017 (Clark, K.) Deaf and hard of hearing employment center grants provided and money appropriated.

HF2010 (Gunther) Home ownership assistance and homebuyer education funding provided and money appropriated.

HF2094 (Dorman) Albert Lea Port Authority grant to remodel a building for use as a business incubator authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2095 (Dorman) Albert Lea Port Authority grant provided to remodel a building for use as a business development center, and money appropriated.

WEDNESDAY, April 4

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF2241 (Stang) New sports facilities; creating a proposal review and recommendation process.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: HF23 (Mullery) Work first; nontraditional career assistance training programs TANF block grant funding authorized, and programs required to make available information about nontraditional women's opportunities.

HF1004 (Abeler) Supportive housing and managed care pilot project county and individual eligibility provisions modified and money appropriated.

HF1832 (Goodno) MFIP sanctions and program eligibility requirements for noncompliant recipients modified, and hardship extensions established.

Note: If needed, the meeting will continue at 4 p.m. in 10 State Office Building.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF467 (Hilty) Moose Lake Area History museum addition grant provided and money appropriated.

HF475 (Wenzel) Little Elk Heritage Preserve designated as a historic preserve, and money appropriated.

HF892 (Kahn) Mill City museum operation funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1675 (Wasiluk) Maplewood historic Bruentrup farm restoration grant provided and money appropriated.

HF2166 (Jennings) Pine City; North West Company Fur Post operation funding provided and money appropriated.

Presentation on the Agricultural Interpretative Center (FarmAmerica).

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: HF204 (Molnau) Bridges; payment of engineering costs authorized from town bridge account.

HF2193 (Vandever) Special "choose life" motor vehicle license plates authorized, adoption support account established for grants to counties, and money appropriated.

HF2138 (Mahoney) St. Paul Phalen Boulevard construction grant provided and money appropriated.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF411 (Clark, K.) Retaliatory eviction defense limitation extended.

HF1807 (Skoglund) Child support collection and enforcement improvement measures and civil penalties provided.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: HF532 (Harder) Minnesota river basin Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program easements acquired and conservation practices implemented, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: HF2226 (Seagren) Advance placement and international baccalaureate students merit grant established and money appropriated.

Witnesses: Duane Benson, MN Business Partnership; Jim Bartholomew, MN Business Partnership; Stu Lade, AP Teacher; Kathy Fleming, IB Teacher.

HF428 (Gunther) Minnesota talented youth math project expanded and money appropriated.

Witness: Quintin Pettigrew, Program Director, Minnesota Talented Youth Math Program, Minnesota State University, Mankato.

HF2222 (Dehler) MnSCU state share of expenditures provision modified, fee collection procedures modified, purchasing and contracting requirements provided, tuition refunds clarified, reporting requirements abolished, and obsolete references deleted.

Witness: John Ostrem, Deputy to the Chancellor for Legislation and Policy, MnSCU.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF880 (Solberg) Authorizes additional levy for Independent School District 319, Nashwauk-Keewatin.

HF2037 (Abrams) Public finance bill.

12:30 p.m.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF2258 (Lindner) Housing finance and development programs consolidated, loan forgiveness time period lengthened, tenant income limits eliminated, project-based rental assistance authorized, aggregation of earnings authorized, and technical changes provided.

HF1541 (Mullery) Relating to landlords and tenants; requiring landlords to accept current tenant reports on prospective tenants if available.
HF608 (Harder) Relating to economic development; providing money to promote wireless Internet access in rural southwestern Minnesota.

HF1182 (Clark) Relating to commerce; modifying requirements for invention developers.

Other bills may be added.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: HF1746 (Nornes) Relating to education; providing that a community or nonprofit organization in the after-school enrichment program must be a charitable organization; establishing an additional priority for applicants of after-school enrichment grants; appropriating money.

HF2188 (Leppik) Relating to family and early childhood education; appropriating money for adult basic education.

Continued discussion of Governor's initiatives (found in HF1088).

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey

Agenda: To be announced. Monitor paper and electronic bulletins.

**After Local Government meeting at the call
of the chair**

Subcommittee on Metropolitan Council and Agencies/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Buesgens

Agenda: To be announced.

2 p.m.

Legislative Reference Library

Subcommittee/Legislative Coordinating Commission

500N State Office Building
Chr. to be elected

Agenda: Introductions.

Selection of subcommittee chair.

Library background and review of library 2002-2003 budget.

THURSDAY, April 5

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: To be announced.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: To be announced.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: To be announced.

10:15 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Tuma

Agenda: House Resolution #10 (Molnau) Commending Chaska Police Officers Brady Juell and Mike Kleber.

SF229/HF372 (McGuire) Crime victim notice of expungement proceedings [continued from March 1 hearing]

SF773/HF782 (McGuire) Electronic alcohol monitoring recidivism and conditional release violation rates study required.

HF1315 (Fuller) State Fire Marshal additional duties specified; Fire Marshal account created; and money appropriated.

Note: Additional bills will be added.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: To be announced.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: HF2133 (Gunther) Waste tire-fueled electric generation facility tax exemptions provided.

HF2045 (Dawkins) Biomass electrical generating facility machinery and property exempted from property taxes.

HF2236 (Mulder) Wind energy electricity production tax provided in lieu of property tax.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Elaine Harder

Agenda: HF1848 (Knoblach) Reduces the marriage penalties on individual income taxation.

HF1976 (Knoblach) Exempts the purchase of construction materials and equipment used in construction of a water treatment facility in the City of Waite Park from sales and use taxes.

HF1995 (Bernardy) Allows the full deductibility from individual income taxes of health insurance premiums.

HF1695 (Mulder) Sales made by certain small town businesses exempted from taxation.

HF2082 (Mulder) Exempts the purchase of construction materials and equipment used in construction of a school in Independent School District No. 2689, Pipestone-Jasper from sales and use taxes.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF218 (Krinkie) State Government Finance Bill, Section 12, Department of Administration.

Additional bills may be added.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: To be announced.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Knoblach

Agenda: To be announced.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF1950 (Gunther) Relating to employment; removing references to search firms in the employment agencies law.

HF1931 (Davnie) Relating to occupational safety and health; providing data practices provisions for occupational safety and health investigations. HF1893 (Sertich) Relating to employment; regulating payment of wages; prohibiting employers from requiring employees or job applicants to pay for background checks or training.

HF1369 (Leighton) Relating to economic security; exempting certain advisory councils from expiration; modifying requirements for the rehabilitation council for the blind.

HF1872 (Marquart) Relating to vocational rehabilitation; making technical changes; modifying procedures for grants to rehabilitation facilities.

Other bills may be added.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

After session at the call of the chair

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey

Agenda: To be announced. Monitor paper and electronic bulletins.

After Local Government meeting, after session, at the call of the chair

Subcommittee on Metropolitan Council and Agencies/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Buesgens

Agenda: To be announced.

FRIDAY, April 6

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: To be announced.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: HF985 (Knoblach) Respite care for family adult foster care providers program established.

HF1607 (Tuma) Residential and day habilitation service costs county responsibility eliminated.

HF713 (Boudreau) Day training and habilitation services medical assistance coverage provided, waiver request required, and money appropriated.

HF2272 (Abeler) Anoka County nursing facility rate adjustment provided.

HF2259 (Gunther) Martin County nursing home rate increase provided and money appropriated.

HF2260 (Gunther) Martin County nursing home rate increase authorized and money appropriated.

HF2098 (Murphy) Group residential housing supplementary service rate modified for facilities serving persons with mental illnesses or chemical dependencies modified.

HF2050 (Molnau) Carver County nursing facility rate increase provided.

HF2089 (Dibble) Minneapolis board and care facility rate increase provided.

HF1633 (Boudreau) Hennepin County group residential housing supplementary rate modified for specified facilities.

HF2238 (Bradley) Olmsted County transferred to geographic group III for nursing facility reimbursement, Olmsted County facilities rate increase provided, and money appropriated.

HF2245 (Bradley) Olmsted County nursing facilities rates increased and money appropriated.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: HF224 (Anderson, I.) Koochiching County; Big Bear Country Education Center construction appropriation provided.

HF609 (Anderson, I.) Koochiching County Big Bear Country Education Center construction grant authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF664 (Anderson, I.) Koochiching County regional cold weather testing facility construction grant provided, bonds issued, and money.

HF1475 (Walz) Ironston; Cuyuna Range technology center grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1670 (Cassell) Previous wastewater infrastructure funding program provision effective date applied.

HF1741 (Gunther) Biogas recovery facilities included in the renewable energy production incentive program.

HF1750 (Gunther) Renewable energy production incentive payments provided.

HF1712 (Kubly) Minnesota rural partners grant provided and money appropriated.

10:15 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: HF2065 (Finseth) Red River north of East Grand Forks hydraulic study grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1770 (Finseth) Ring dike construction grants provided and money appropriated.

HF1771 (Finseth) Red River Basin flood hazard mitigation grants provided. references to subwatershed projects removed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF1989 (Davids) Flood mitigation and prevention grants provided to southeastern Minnesota counties and money appropriated.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: To be announced.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF1012 (Buesgens) Scott County Housing and Redevelopment Authority references clarified and economic authority powers specified.

HF1099 (Osthoff) Authorizes the issuance of G.O. bonds to finance and implement improvements to the city's technology infrastructure.

HF1298 (Jennings) Authorizes a joint powers board that owns and operates sewage treatment facilities to issue G.O. bonds backed by the full faith and credit of the member governmental units.

HF1320 (Lindner) Authorizes an economic development authority in Hassan township.

HF962 (Cassell) Provides for county hospital borrowing authority; establishes uniform approach to governmental borrowing; modernizes hospital board membership.

12 noon

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

316 State Capitol

Chr. Sen. Dean Johnson

Agenda: To be announced.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT &
METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS**200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey**Agenda:** To be announced. Monitor paper and
electronic bulletins.**Subcommittee on Metropolitan Council
and Agencies/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT &
METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS**200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Buesgens**Agenda:** To be announced.**Moving?****Please help save postage costs by**
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(800) 657-3550.**Highlights continued from page 16**

unofficial count of those interested in considering raising the gasoline tax, prompting about half the members to raise their hands.

Fred Corrigan, speaking on behalf of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance, said additional bonding is necessary to compensate for a recent license tab fee reduction, a change he estimated reduced trunk highway revenue by \$175 million.

Richard Thomas, representing Associated General Contractors, described the arguments in favor of increasing the gas tax as "obvious," and emphasized that his organization does not oppose such an increase.

Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove) expressed concern that additional bonding would push the state into dangerous financial arrangements. "I go out on the trunk highways every spring, and I am horrified by the condition of the roads. I would hate to think that they aren't paid for yet."

Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Wells) described the measure as "more a liability than an asset," charging that the bill's sponsors were "looking for an easy way out."

Taxing along the tracks

A plan to pay for operating costs of light-rail transit lines was heard March 28.

HF1944, sponsored by Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville), would create a special taxing district to pay operating deficits for a light-rail line.

Holberg told the House Transportation Policy Committee the idea came from thinking about how to fund the Hiawatha Line from downtown Minneapolis to the Mall of America in Bloomington. She said the line will not pay for itself, with necessary subsidies forecast to increase to approximately \$14 million by 2010.

Her plan calls for a special taxing district to be created for all commercial/industrial developments and apartments within 1,000 feet of the light-rail right-of-way. "No residential taxing units will be affected," she said.

Holberg said this is important since anticipated economic development along the line will likely equal 10 structures like the IDS Center in Minneapolis and four projects like Southdale Center in Edina.

Revenues will be based on a formula involving tax increments in the established districts.

As an example Holberg said that if the city of Minneapolis sees a 5 percent increase in tax base as a whole, but the area near the Hiawatha line sees a 15 percent increase, the 10 percent

difference would go towards funding the line. "Minneapolis, Richfield, and Bloomington should not see all the profits while the state continues to subsidize the line," she said.

Reaction among her committee colleagues was mixed.

"The problem is that legislators from all over the state voted for this, and for us to now pay for it isn't fair," said Rep. Dan Larson (DFL-Bloomington).

On the other hand, Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake) said the state needs "an extraordinary way" to help pay for subsidies. "It's better than taking from the general fund."

Other legislators were just happy a funding proposal has been put forth, even if Holberg's plan may not be the answer.

"I think it's good we have a bill here finally," said Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar). "All rural people are wondering why they will pay for a Twin Cities train. I hope this is the first of many ideas over the next year or two on how to fund this thing."

Noting roads are also an economic development component, Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove) asked, "Do we then do the same for them?"

The bill was approved and referred to the House Transportation Finance Committee.

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Jesse Ventura
130 State Capitol
75 Constitution Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-3391

Lieutenant Governor

Mae Schunk
130 State Capitol
75 Constitution Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-3391

Attorney General

Mike Hatch
102 State Capitol
75 Constitution Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-6196

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Mary Kiffmeyer
180 State Office Building
100 Constitution Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-2803

State Auditor

Judith H. Dutcher
Suite 400
525 Park St.
St. Paul 55103 (651) 296-2551

State Treasurer

Carol Johnson
303 Administration Building
50 Sherburne Ave.
St. Paul 55155 (651) 296-7091

Continued from page 17

Board would prevail for dairy farmers except when the federally mandated minimum exceeded the state board's price. Unlike Montana's system, Minnesota's board would not be required to position milk prices only a certain level above the federal price, but instead would have broad discretion in the creation of price formulas.

Otremba said Montana's board has not been legally challenged in the 10 years since its inception. In the same time, she said, milk prices have risen for producers in that state although consumers pay 23 percent less. Critics point out that consumer prices reflect more the federal rules than the health of the local dairy market.

Speaking on behalf of the Minnesota Agri-Growth Council, an organization representing commercial agricultural processors, Myron Just said, "We all wish that it would be easy to save the milk price problem." He argued that price controls "defy the basic law of supply and demand."

Unless the bill were approved by all necessary policy committees by March 30 deadline, the only way it could reach the House floor is via the Rules Committee or as an amendment to another bill. 🐼

Continued from page 18

(R-Princeton) said the council has background of the Profile, and the report that evaluated it, which will be used to create new standards. Carlson's amendment failed.

Recognizing that only one of the bills can be passed into law, Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) asked, "Can we support both bills? The committee is not making a decision."

But committee members emphasized the need for action.

"We've created something that simply doesn't function," said Rep. Gene Pelowski Jr. (DFL-Winona), a teacher. He said he wants to go back to his classroom with something he can teach from.

The bill has been sent to the Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee, where it was scheduled for a hearing March 30. 🐼

Continued from page 19

McElroy said at the core of the reorganization proposal was an effort to find a better way of doing things than has been done in the past. He said, in particular, moving some of the functions of workforce development into all areas of the state so regional differences could be better addressed was an idea he thought was important.

Rep. Eric Lipman (R-Lake Elmo) said the

Reflections

As session deadlines approach and bills get passed out of committees, it is a time when legislative staff know their work can be compared — albeit unfavorably — to the Vernal Equinox. During spring, daylight hours get longer, as do the work days of House employees.

Lawmakers meet more often in the chamber, finance and conference committee meetings last later into the night, and staff work harder to meet the needs of members.

Staffers understand "overtime" is not part of their vocabulary, although work is done until it is finished. For example, on any given day those in the Chief Clerk's Office may still be at work two hours after a House session has adjourned for the evening — a time that can only be approximated.

After-session committee meetings and other legislative business require the presence of staff to assist the members, while those in other departments like supply, duplicating, and other support staff normally put in a 60- or 70-hour work week.

While hard work and dedication behind the scenes is commonplace for staff in the House and Senate, they are always available to take on extra assignments.

As a result of that camaraderie and the many hours staff members spend working together, it comes as quite a shock when a long-time staffer decides to retire or resign.

Such is true for the announcement by Richard A. Newcomb that his last day at the House is March 31. He is leaving to complete his degree in philosophy and to pursue a long-time dream — traveling to Egypt to visit the tombs of the Pharaohs, then sail up the Nile.

Most know Newcomb by his nickname, Dick. He spent 14 years in the Capitol Complex, including the last three-plus as the administrative aide and assistant manager in

House Supply. Dick began his House career as a page, then as assistant coordinator for educational programs. He also worked at the front desk in the Chief Clerk's Office, and as an assistant sergeant-at-arms.

Not too many people know the ins and outs of proceedings or actions taken by the House as he does. If anything obscure is needed, Dick knows where to find it in the nooks and crannies of the basements or hidden closets in the Capitol and State Office Building.

His interest in the legislative process was stimulated in a high school class taught by Sen. Len Price (DFL-Woodbury) when the lawmaker was a House member. Another mentor for Dick was former Rep. Pat Beard (DFL-Cottage Grove). In 1991-92 Dick served as Beard's committee administrator on the General Legislation/Veterans Affairs Committee.

Dick's talents are many. They range from building an intricate doll house for his niece, creating teddy bears of exceptional quality from old mink coats, to being a star player on the legislative staff's softball team.

The hard-working legislative "family" is losing a key individual as it begins to put in longer hours. Dick's presence — particularly his offbeat humor and unique life stories — will be missed through the end of the legislative session and beyond.

As staff, members, and others at the Capitol continue the diligent work on the business of the people, the thought of Richard Newcomb's dedication and hard work will be greatly appreciated. For unsolicited praise is "that which makes good men better."

—LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT



Dick Newcomb

transition team may want to come up with a better acronym because the pronunciation of DEWD may lead to people not taking an important issue seriously.

In the March 26 hearing of the bill, Anderson said the new department would probably be renamed.

Brian Bergson, a lobbyist for the Minnesota

Association of Professional Employees, said it was important to include representation from the labor community on the workforce transition team.

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) echoed Bergson's comments. "The more people from the bottom making policy, the better the policy is," he said. 🐼

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota Census 2000

State population in 2000	4,919,479
In 1990	4,375,099
Increase as percent	12.4
State rank	21
Most populous state (California)	33,871,648
Least populous (Wyoming)	493,782
Minnesota's population in 1980	4,075,970
In 1900	1,751,394
In 1850	6,077
Number of Caucasians in Minnesota in 2000	4,400,282
As percent of total population	89.4
Number of African-Americans	171,731
As percent of total population	3.5
Increase since 1990, as percent	80.9
Number of Hispanics or Latinos	143,382
As percent of total population	2.9
Percent increase since 1990	166.1
Number of Asians	141,968
As percent of total population	2.9
Percent increase since 1990	84.5
Number of American Indians or Alaska Native	54,967
As percent of total population	1.1
Percent increase since 1990	10.1
Number of people of other race	67,789
As percent of total population	0.5
Percent increase since 1990	196
Number of Minnesotans age 18 and older	3,632,585
Population of largest county (Hennepin)	1,116,200
Percent change from 1990	8.1
Population of second largest county (Ramsey)	511,035
Percent change from 1990	5.2
Population of largest county in Greater Minnesota (St. Louis)	200,528
Percent change from 1990	1.2
Population of largest city (Minneapolis)	382,618
Second largest, St. Paul	287,151
Third largest, Duluth	86,918
Fourth largest, Rochester	85,806
Fifth largest, Bloomington	85,172
10 th largest, St. Cloud	59,107

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Department of Commerce

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