

A NONPARTISAN PUBLICATION ★ ★ ★

SESSION Weekly

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

MARCH 2, 2001
VOLUME 18, NUMBER 9

In this issue:

FEBRUARY BUDGET FORECAST

YOUTH INTERVENTION, TRANSPORTATION FUNDING, AND MORE

HF1144-HF1359

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.

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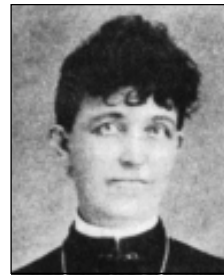
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Session Weekly (ISSN 1049-8176) is published weekly during the legislative session by the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298. Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN, and at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

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



CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

Agriculture • 5
Arts • 5
Children • 5
Crime • 6
Education • 7
Elections • 7

Energy • 8
Game & Fish • 8
Government • 8
Health • 9
Higher Education • 10

Human Services • 10
Immigration • 11
Recreation • 11
Safety • 12
Taxes • 12

FEATURES

At Issue: Children — The House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee approved three bills that would fund youth intervention programs to give children constructive skills and help them stay out of trouble. • 14

At Issue: Crime — Gov. Jesse Ventura has recommended a \$730 million 2002-03 budget for the Department of Corrections, a \$3.9 million reduction in the department's base. • 15

At Issue: Education — Legislators are mulling plans to fund after-school programs for children through district's community education departments. • 16

At Issue: Transportation — Three bills that would create funding sources for transportation in the state constitution were approved by the House Transportation Policy Committee Feb. 27. • 17

Policy: A Capitol Forum Series speech challenged lawmakers to evaluate the importance of partnerships between industry and public higher education institutions • 18

DEPARTMENTS/RESOURCES

It's A Fact: State un-official	4	The 50 States: Family pets	30
Resources: State and Federal Offices	19	Reflections: The "Minnesota Blizzard"	31
Bill Introductions (HF1144 -HF1359)	21	Minnesota Index: State	
Committee Schedule (March 5-9)	26	government finances	32

On the cover: Emei Thompson, 5, waves two flags at the Feb. 27 International Adoption Citizenship Day Event in the Rotunda. Emei attended with her mother, Kerry Thompson, and sister, Ana, 2, who received her citizenship when a federal law took affect that day. Both children are from China.

—Photo by Sara Kirk

Forecast caution

Projected budget surpluses dip slightly, but officials don't paint a bleak economic picture

BY DAVID MAEDA

When Pam Wheelock, commissioner of the Department of Finance, presented the November budget forecast, she cautioned the outlook might be overly optimistic.

Indeed the revised revenue forecast released Feb. 28 reflects a slowing economy. And while the odds of a recession have gone up since the last forecast, officials are optimistic the economy has enough momentum to carry it over any potential bumps.

The new projected numbers are those that will be used in budgeting decisions made by the Legislature this year.

According to the February forecast, there will be an \$856 million surplus left over from fiscal year 2001 which runs from July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001. That number is down from the \$924 million forecast in November.

The \$856 million is the amount available for a rebate. State Economist Tom Stinson said the final amount will be determined once the state's books are balanced at the end of the fiscal year.

Likewise, the November forecast estimated

a surplus of about \$2.086 billion for the next two fiscal years. According to the February forecast, that projection has been reduced by \$551 million to about \$1.5 billion. Far from carved in a stone tablet, the state's budget forecast is fluid, calculated using current state spending and tax sources.

Speaking about the overall February budget forecast, Wheelock said, "This is a modest adjustment to the state's revenue outlook."

She said the size of this year's sales tax rebate checks will fall in the middle compared to the previous two years — smaller than those sent out in 1999 but larger than in 2000.

Stinson said there were several factors for the reduced forecast. He said the decision by Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, to slow the national economic growth by raising interest rates accomplished the task. However, the slowing economy combined with soaring energy prices, a severe winter, and the declining stock market meant the state collected less revenue than expected.

Declining consumer and business confidence

also played a role, Stinson said, as did a growing fear the nation was entering a recession.

Stinson noted it's important to keep in mind that despite the changes from the November forecast, the economy is not shrinking but just is not growing as fast as expected.

"This is not a recession. This is not a downturn," Stinson said. "We are not going in reverse as we would be in a recession. We're just growing slower."

He said, however, there was a "substantial risk" in the rapid turnaround predicted in the forecast, and the chances of a further short-fall remain high.

Data Resources Inc., the consultant that prepares the state's budget forecasts, based its forecast on the belief that the slowdown in the economy will reverse itself in the near future. The forecast is contingent on strong growth in 2002-2003. There is a 40 percent chance for a recession according to the consultants, up from a 25 percent probability in the November forecast.

Stinson said the forecast contains a few assumptions. One is that the Federal Reserve Board will cut interest rates between now and early fall, thereby providing stimulus for growth.

Another assumption is that President George W. Bush's proposed across-the-board tax cut will be law by the end of June. Stinson said the tax cut will not have any short-term impact on the economy but in the long term, it most likely would boost consumer spending.

DRI's forecast also assumes oil prices will be reduced by fall.

Stinson said the state's Council of Economic Advisors was not in total agreement with the consultant's prediction that a quick rebound will occur.

Stinson likened the state's economy to a driver trying to plow through a snow pile at the end of a driveway.

"Most believe that the economy will have enough momentum to get through this difficult spot," he said. "But you don't really relax until the rear wheels are back on the driveway and you've made your way through it."

Stinson said while the state's economy continues to grow, certain sectors are struggling much more than others.

In particular the outlook for the state's agriculture economy is not very good. Currently, there are no plans for a disaster relief program similar to what was in place in 1999 and 2000.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

State Economist Tom Stinson uses a marker to show a nearly \$600 million "V" shaped revenue downturn from the November Forecast during a Feb. 28 press conference releasing the Finance Department's February Forecast. Finance Commissioner Pam Wheelock, right, looks on.

Also, farm payments from the federal government are expected to fall off substantially over the next year, Stinson said.

The manufacturing sector of the state is also expected to decline although not as severely as it will nationwide, Stinson said.

Alternately, the forecast is encouraging for the construction industry over the next few years with several major projects now finishing their planning stages.

Gov. Jesse Ventura said his administration put its budget together knowing the November forecast numbers might be overly optimistic.

"No major adjustments will have to be made to our budget proposal," Ventura said.

He said his tax reform package would not be greatly affected by the reduced forecast, either, and the state still can afford to cut its income and property taxes. He said the forecast was an indication of the need to change the state's current tax structure, which relies on the income and property taxes for its two highest sources of revenue.

Had his proposed decrease in the sales tax rate and expansion upon more services been in place, Ventura said, the reductions in the forecast would have been smaller.

Wheelock echoed Ventura saying consumer durables play a major part of the state's tax base and thus a shift of the sales tax to more services would help stabilize that taxing source.

The revenue collected from the state's sales tax and corporate income tax fell short of the levels forecast in November. Revenue from the sales tax was \$46 million less than expected, while the corporate income tax brought in \$47 million less than forecast. The individual income tax collection fell \$12 million below what was forecast in November.


Reaction among House leadership varied. House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) said the revised forecast didn't change the necessity to lower taxes in the state.

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) said it was even more important now with a slower economy to find the proper balance between tax cuts and investments in education and technology.

Wheelock said this was the first time since 1992 that the state's budget forecast needed to be scaled back from the previous forecast.

She said there was one constant of all the budget forecasts over the years: "They've all been wrong. The question is how big the swings are one way or the other."

She said the more the forecast is off, the more problematic setting the state's budget becomes.

"The good news is that we don't have any commitments at this time," she said. "This certainly does put a little bit more pressure on policymakers to try to make determinations of priorities." 



State un-official

Poet laureate title claimed by a few, but never officially established

Well-known poets such as Robert Penn Warren, Elizabeth Bishop and Robert Frost have all served as the poet laureate for the United States, a position officially established in 1985.

And in Minnesota, five different people have claimed the title, but the Legislature has never voted to establish the position, despite the support of poetry leagues throughout the state.

An effort to make a state poet laureate stalled in 1974. A bill was introduced that year that would have provided for the post, selected by the state arts council for a two-year term. It was approved by the House Governmental Operations Committee and was referred to the House Rules Committee.

That's where the bill died.

But that didn't stop arts organizations from bestowing the title to several Minnesotans over the year. In fact, even when a Minnesota governor got involved it didn't stem controversy.

The first claim to the title came in 1934 when Gov. Floyd B. Olson congratulated Margarette Ball Dickson for her poetry achievements in a letter.

According to the letter, now housed in the state archives, dated April 30, 1934, Olson wrote, "Permit me to extend my congratulations upon your designation as the poet laureate of this state. I have just been informed by the Poet Laureate League in Washington that you have been given this award."

From that letter, Dickson deemed herself "appointed" poet laureate by the governor. However, 30 years later a Minneapolis journalist questioned that distinction in his *Minneapolis Star* column.

The journalist, Abe Altrowitz, himself a poet, asked two officials from the League of Minnesota Poets if the action made Dickson the poet laureate and they disagreed. In the 1963 story, the league historian at the time said the absence of a law authorizing a poet laureate suggested it wasn't an official position.

During the next several years, Altrowitz

would make a push to "officially" establish the distinction. He supported the pending 1974 legislation and convinced his former editors (he retired the year before) to sponsor a contest where the public could vote for a poet laureate.

Altrowitz, who himself had been light-heartedly dubbed the state's Commissioner of Poetry by Govs. Karl Rolvaag, Harold LeVander, and Wendell Anderson, introduced readers of his column to several candidates for the position.

(He had actually resigned his appointment from LeVander and Anderson, who responded in verse that his resignation would not be accepted. At that point, Altrowitz called the appointment a labor of love that also fed his ego with flattery.)

Ultimately, the "voters" chose Laurene Tibbetts of St. Paul as poet laureate, according to the ballots compiled by the Minneapolis Star's Promotions department. However, the League of Minnesota Poets had formally nominated Norman Boe of South St. Paul, Elvira T. Johnson of Duluth, and Nan Fitz-Patrick of Minneapolis.

At the time, 20 states had active poet laureates, with another six states having appointed poets who were deceased.

During his two terms in the 1980s, Gov. Rudy Perpich actually proclaimed October 10 to be Laurene Tibbetts day.

The League of Minnesota Poets took over naming their own poet laureates since the state would not officially sanction the practice. Their first nominations were Boe and Johnson.

Others to hold the position were Robert Cary, named poet laureate of Minnesota by Embers magazine, published in Batavia, N.Y. In addition, Meridel LeSueur was named poet laureate of the Twin Cities in 1980, but newspaper accounts do not list who honored LeSueur with the distinction.

Since 1974, there has been no official proposal establishing a poet laureate for the state.

(M. KIBIGER)

Photos courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society



Margarette Ball Dickson



Laurene Tibbetts

★ AGRICULTURE

Mediation plan extension

Legislators are taking steps to ensure the ongoing viability of a program that mediates business disputes between farmers and financiers.

Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel) proposed HF640 to extend the sunset provision of the Farmer-Lender Mediation Program from July 1, 2001 to July 1, 2003.

"I happen to believe this is a good program," he told a Feb. 28 meeting of the House Agriculture Policy Committee.

The committee unanimously approved the bill. It now moves to the House floor.

The project was conceived in the 1986 Farmer-Lender bill to assist farmers in meeting the demands of overwhelming debt. Under the law, Minnesota farmers are offered the opportunity to renegotiate, restructure, or resolve debt during a 90-day period after beginning mediation.

Creditors are barred from collecting on the debt during that period. To qualify for the program and the legal protection from foreclosure, farmers must elicit assistance within two weeks of being notified of the lender's intent to collect.

Neutral mediators are available through the University of Minnesota's Agriculture Extension program.

According to a program brochure, negotiators are trained to use conflict resolution skills to facilitate effective negotiation between farmers and lenders. "The mediator leads and manages discussion without making decisions or judgments, insures that all participants get to speak and be heard, helps define issues, emphasizes common goals, looks at all options, and reduces fault finding."

Program Director Mary Nell Preisler said more than 12,000 debtor farmers had requested the services of her office since 1986. That number constitutes more than 30 percent of all circumstances in which creditors gave notice to farmers of their intent to forcibly collect on the debt.

According to Preisler, participants in the program report that "the farmer becomes more prepared to make decisions about the future, communication between lenders and borrowers is improved, and frustration and tensions between parties is minimized." If mediation fails to produce a new agreement, both farmers and lenders are free to pursue whatever other courses

of action are at their disposal.

HF640 appropriates no money because the program is already included in the University of Minnesota budget.

★ ARTS

State funding questioned, defended

Faced with a House proposal that would halve Gov. Jesse Ventura's budget recommendation for the Minnesota State Arts Board, members and supporters of the board testified to the difference state dollars can make in the arts.

Rep. Philip Krinkie (R-Shoreview), chair of the House State Government Finance Committee, is sponsoring a bill that slices millions of dollars from the governor's recommendations for state agencies. Under HF218, the State Arts Board would be given \$15 million, compared to the governor's recommended \$26 million for the 2002-2003 biennium.

Executive Director Robert Booker said the board gives back to citizens by using state dollars to support touring activity, classes for K-12 students, and creating connections with local artists. The agency makes an extra effort to promote the arts in rural parts of the state where, Booker said, "skill-building tools are rare."

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township) asked what return the state can see on its investment.

In Winona, Booker said, an artist who had received a state grant later donated artwork to city buildings. He said he also sees a lot of voluntarism, and funds help build careers.

Penelope Snipper, state arts board secretary, noted that \$28 million in 2000-2001 had the impact of \$1 billion.

David Esbjornson, who grew up in Willmar, is now directing the play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, on the calendar for the season at the Guthrie Theatre. Esbjornson, who has lived in New York for the past 20 years, said he speaks with pride about his start in the arts in Minnesota. Being in the arts, he said, has been a journey.

"It's a way of life, a process, rather than product on the stage or painting on a wall," he said. "It is important to maintain the entire fabric of an arts culture."

Esbjornson brought with him a statement from actor Patrick Stewart, who has a leading role in the play.

"The Guthrie is an artistic beacon, and

without support, that light will dim," the letter said. "My career would not have started without public funding."

After testimony was given, Krinkie asked when the agency will "get off the state welfare program."

"Public funding provides a level of accessibility for citizens that may not be there without initial dollars," Booker countered. He added it also triggers private funding.

Krinkie questioned how to determine who has the need for state money and where the need is greatest.

"It's not welfare, it's part of our culture," said Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park). "It's an opportunity for people to come from all over the state to see exhibitions that they would not get a chance to see. If we start closing up all these institutions, what kind of a life do we have?"

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) pointed out an article published recently that stated the returns generated from arts in the state, from businesses, taxes, and through tourism activity.

"The return to the state is greater than if the state didn't (contribute to the arts)," Kahn said.

The committee took no action on the bill.

★ CHILDREN

Re-examining children's needs

Legislators who make policy decisions regarding early childhood programs heard about advances in scientific knowledge that has implications for those decisions.

Megan Gunnar, professor of child development at the University of Minnesota, presented a report from the National Academy of Science to the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee Feb. 26.

The report strongly recommends dedicated funding be set aside to "improve the quality and increase the compensation and benefits of childcare workers."

Calling for a "new national dialogue," the report said policy makers must craft an agenda that will "ensure both a rewarding childhood and a promising future for all children."

Gunnar, a member of the committee of scientists who wrote the report, said an "explosion" of knowledge about early childhood development has converged with a social and economic transformation that calls for a



Megan Gunnar, professor of child development at the University of Minnesota, points to a graph while presenting a report from the National Academy of Science to the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee, Feb. 26.

re-examination of policy toward families and young children.

The importance of early brain development has been widely publicized, but Gunnar said the focus on birth to age three “begins too late and ends too soon.” She said research shows many factors affect a child’s brain development, including such hard-to-measure realities as its mother’s stress level before birth.

Gunnar’s specialty is stress in children. She said a child who suffers from prolonged stress is unable to thrive. “Neglect, physical maltreatment, and intrusive parenting” are obvious stressors. But uncertainty and inattention can also stress children.

“We need to be concerned not only with what children are *not* learning, and with what they *are* learning,” she said.

Changes in parental work patterns are having a serious impact on children, and the support system for families is inadequate, according to the report. Economic necessity often requires parents to work longer and

sometimes non-standard hours when childcare may not be available. Low-income families have the added stress of limited access to quality childcare.

“There is a striking relationship between the quality of care — both family and paid — and children’s stress levels,” Gunnar said. “Children with trouble regulating their behavior are also children with trouble regulating their stress levels.”

Studies indicate poverty has a disproportionately large effect on young children. Current statistics indicate that 22 percent of U.S. children younger than age five live in poverty, and have a much lower probability of graduating from high school than children who endure poverty at later ages. In fact, disparities in children’s knowledge and abilities are evident before they start kindergarten.

According to the report, a child needs: a sustained relationship with a caregiver; a safe, clean, and stimulating setting that is compatible with the family’s value system; and support for any special needs a child may have.

“The bottom line,” Gunnar said, “is quality.”

★ CRIME

.08 clears first hurdle

A measure to lower the legal blood-alcohol concentration limit from .10 to .08 is moving forward in the House.

The House Crime Prevention Committee approved the measure Feb. 27, and referred it to the House Transportation Finance Committee.

The limit would exist not only for driving, but also for any other activity over which the state exercises authority, including boating and hunting.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead), the sponsor of HF51, said “anywhere the law now says .10 will be changed to .08.”

He explained that “over 300 studies show that most drivers are impaired at .08.” To back up the claim, Goodno played a videotaped experiment in which a small number of Minnesotans drank until their blood-alcohol concentration reached .08 and then drove. All participants, including one liquor store owner who initially expressed opposition to .08, had significant difficulty navigating a driving course and expressed support for lowering the legal limit.

The actual number of drinks required to reach a .08 level is also a matter of some controversy. House Research estimates that a 130-pound woman could expect to have a .08 concentration about two hours after quickly drinking three “standard drinks,” a measure equivalent to a five-ounce glass of wine, a 12



Kenn Rockler, a lobbyist for the Wine, Beer, and Spirits Association of Minnesota, testifies Feb. 27 before the House Crime Prevention Committee against a bill that would lower the blood-alcohol level from .10 to .08 for drunken driving offenses.

ounce beer, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof liquor, about the potency of vodka. A 175-pound man could drink about five drinks in the same amount of time.

Emphasizing the bipartisan support for the measure, Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) explained that “President Bush and Congress have all expressed support for .08.” In fact, Congress has made some federal transportation spending dependant upon states adoption of the .08 limit by 2004.

Opponents of .08 have expressed concern that the measure would unreasonably target social drinkers and not repeat offenders. However, Lynne Goughler, the Minnesota legislative chair for Mothers Against Drunk Driving, told the committee “any reasonable person knows that the law will not affect social drinkers.”

Kenn Rockler, representing the Wine, Beer, and Spirits Association of Minnesota, argued that no data conclusively demonstrated that lowering the blood-alcohol concentration limit saves the lives of drivers who had been drinking.

★ EDUCATION

Special ed funding lag

A bill that would change the current two-year lag in special education funding to a one-year lag was introduced to the House K-12 Education Finance Committee Feb. 26.

HF602, sponsored by Rep. Rob Leighton (DFL-Austin), would not change the cap for special education, only the time-frame in which districts are reimbursed for expenses.

The committee took no action on the bill but may include it in its omnibus bill.

Leighton said the funding lag is “a huge issue statewide ... particularly for smaller districts in rural Minnesota who have more funding problems.”

Districts currently estimate special education costs two years before actually receiving payment. Because of the two-year lag, changes in the program — students added or lost — are not reflected for two years.

However, some officials are concerned the change could bring small financial inequities to districts across the state.

Sen. Grace Schwab (R-Albert Lea) testified before the committee, saying one-half of the districts would get more funding for special education and one-half would get less.

Tom Melcher, financial manager at the Department of Children, Families and Learning, said he is concerned the bill would make it more difficult for school districts to plan their budgets. Melcher said the department has “no problem administratively,” as far as budget stability and the ability to plan.

Rep. Harry Mares (R-White Bear Lake) supported HF602, saying it is “a common sense bill.”

Gifted and talented funding

Gifted and talented programs in schools across the state would receive ongoing state funding in a bill sponsored by Rep. Connie Bernardy (DFL-Fridley).

Currently, a district may allocate its own revenue or apply for grants to fund gifted and talented programs, but few exist in the state. HF216 would cost around \$10 million annually and would be effective in the 2001-2002 school year and later.

“It is simply a program designed to encourage students to reach the extents of their own potential — and it is disheartening to see any program which encourages such positive ideals diminished due to inadequate funding,” said Aly Richey, a junior at Spring Lake Park High School, who has participated in gifted and talented programs for nine years.

According to the bill, funding must be used for identifying gifted and talented students;

★ READ ACROSS AMERICA



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Lillian Kallestad, 6, of Otter Lake, sporting a Cat in the Hat hat, reads aloud in front of the House Education Policy Committee March 1 as part of a Read Across America presentation. Read Across America, a national celebration of reading, marks the birthday of Dr. Seuss, March 2.

providing educational programming for those students; and providing staff development to aid in the teaching of such students.

“Teachers can’t teach these students without training,” said Jean Colleen, a parent of three children, who testified to the House K-12 Education Finance Committee Feb. 26.

“We can’t continue to ignore the needs of gifted and talented students.”

Bernardy said each district would decide which schools would receive funding for the programs.

“These classes teach that instead of focusing on the grades a student receives, achievement really has to do with the extent to which students are able to challenge themselves,” Richey said.

The committee took no action on the bill but will consider it for inclusion in the K-12 education omnibus bill.

★ ELECTIONS

Voter's choice

Minnesota voters would choose whether to establish an initiative and referendum process in the state, under a measure heard by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee Feb. 23.

HF643, sponsored by Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie), would put a constitutional amendment question on the 2002 ballot asking voters whether the state should establish a system where voters adopt laws or amend the constitution directly on the ballot.

The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Crime Prevention Committee.

Currently 24 states now have a form of initiative and referendum. Paulsen said he deliberately patterned the bill so it would not be like California’s system that only requires a certain number of signatures before a question is placed on the ballot. The ballots in California tend to be several pages long.

Under HF643 those proposing an initiated law, or a repeal of an existing law, are required to have a petition signed by a number equal to at least five percent of statewide registered voters who voted for the governor’s seat in the previous general election. In addition the same percent of signatures must be collected from voters in at least three-quarters of the state’s congressional districts.

Paulsen said initiative and referendum increases voter turnout and creates a better-informed electorate. He also said it encourages grassroots activism and has led to important legislation in our country’s history including women’s right to vote, campaign finance reform, and tax and environment reforms.

Donald Waller, from the Minnesota Independence Party, said initiative and referendum would allow citizens of the state to bring forward questions on issues not being dealt with in the Legislature.

On the other hand, Brad Lehto from the Minnesota AFL-CIO said initiative and referendum undermines the legislative process and allows individuals and groups not accountable to voters to set the agenda.

The amount of money spent in states with initiative and referendum systems in place is a concern, Lehto said, and the United States Supreme Court has ruled the money cannot be restricted because it is being used for protected free speech.

Bill Blazar, from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce said that representative democracy relies on elected bodies to resolve complex issues.

“Initiative and referendum reduces the role

of legislative bodies but also gives those bodies a way to avoid their responsibility," Blazar said. "It weakens a fairly good and responsible approach to government."

★ ENERGY

Marketing for power suppliers

An independent power producer from Texas spoke to the House Regulated Industries Committee Feb. 22 on how to create incentives for companies that want to build power plants in Minnesota.

The committee, which is considering several energy bills, recently learned about Texas' energy deregulation plan and Pennsylvania's deregulation and restructuring plan.

"Look at what you can do to encourage generation and transmission ... to maintain reliable infrastructure for citizens of the state," said John Stauffacher, senior director of Regulatory Affairs for Dynegy in Houston, Texas.

Incentives such as tax abatements, employee job credits, and infrastructure assistance, Stauffacher said, would encourage outside companies to seriously look in Minnesota.

Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley) asked how plant siting in Minnesota compares to other states.

Certificates of need — state authorization to build a power plant — can lead to "long and rancorous debates, and any requirements can be a hindrance," Stauffacher said.

"When, two years ago, prices were at \$2, (drillers) weren't out there trying to find other ways to (provide energy)," he said. "Now, they are. If we are going to put a generation resource on the ground ... the market has indicated there is a need."

"We need to supply what the customer wants, and look at new products," such as green products, to meet need, he said.

Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson) wanted to know which technological innovations have developed or been enhanced due to the current energy situation.

"Technology has been driving the industry to more efficiency," Stauffacher said. "Turbines have gotten bigger, but more efficient," and some companies are doing energy management techniques to become more efficient.

Stauffacher warned against only importing power which, he said, may be a good strategy in the short run, but soon the demand may increase for that state. "I would advise you to not rely on any single component" for energy supply.

ELECTRIFYING TESTIMONY



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Pennsylvania Rep. Frank Tulli, Jr. gives a presentation on electric deregulation and restructuring during the Feb. 26 House Regulated Industries Committee meeting.

★ GAME & FISH

New fishing license proposed

A bill that would create a new category of fishing license was presented to the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee Feb. 22.

Rep. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) said his bill (HF753) for a conservation angling license is something he's been thinking about for a long time.

"I'm trying to get people to think about conservation," he said. "A successful day out on the water can be three walleyes, not six."

Bakk's bill would set daily and possession limits at one-half that of a standard fishing license, rounded down to the next whole number. The conservation license would be offered to residents and non-residents, and would cost two-thirds of the corresponding fee for a standard license.

Bakk modeled his bill after the approach Ontario has taken. Officials from the Canadian province told him about 50 percent of conservation licenses were bought by people who only fish occasionally or don't usually keep a limit. Their experience is that people who buy conservation licenses have less impact on the resource.

Ron Payer from the Department of Natural Resources said Ontario officials advised the limit for conservation licensees should be

lower than the average limit to be sure it has the intended conservation effect.

"The department feels the concept is a good one," Payer said. However, he said, the department is concerned about revenue loss, which he estimated could be as high as \$2 million.

"You don't kill the goose that laid the golden egg," said Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls). "Maybe we could make up for the loss from the general fund."

Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) wondered whether the new license category might not result in increased revenue from those who wouldn't otherwise buy a fishing license. "It might bring in new fisherpersons," she said.

Bakk said he anticipated more licenses would be sold.

The committee took no action on the bill but will consider it for inclusion in the committee's omnibus game and fish bill.

★ GOVERNMENT

House adopts permanent rules

The House met for nearly five hours Feb. 26 to approve its permanent rules for the 2001-2002 session.

During the discussion, members offered 15 amendments to the proposed rule changes, many of which addressed the powers of the speaker and certain committee chairs.

However, the report from the House Rules and Legislative Administration was passed by the full House on a 68 to 64 vote with the body actually accepting very few amendments.

The rules will stand as the guidelines for House action until the biennial session adjourns in 2002.

Amendments not accepted or voted down were referred to either the Rules committee or the House Ways and Means Committee for further discussion.

Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), with the assistance of Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield), presented the rules to the full House. Pawlenty proposed one amendment, that a section which would have allowed the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee to issue opinions on legislation, rather than requiring every bill that would fall under its jurisdiction to have a hearing.

However, members expressed concern over that provision and it was removed.

Members also offered several amendments regarding provisions that allowed the speaker or presiding officer to vary from the order laid out in the various calendars for the day. Tuma and Pawlenty said that provision was to streamline

proceedings, but DFL members argued those rules gave the speaker too much power.

In addition, Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) proposed amending the rule governing the powers of the Ways and Means Committee. The new rules state the Ways and Means Committee sets budget targets for net expenditures, based on the revenue forecast for major finance bills. The new rules also disallow the committee to combine finance committee bills.

Solberg suggested the House not remove language involving revenue targets and that the full House should establish budget targets, not just the Ways and Means Committee. His amendments were referred to the committee.

During a recent committee meeting, Tuma said net expenditures take revenues into account.

Rules also say any other bill that passes out of a finance committee should be counted against the committee's overall target. In the past, there has been some confusion regarding whether targets govern omnibus bills alone. Any amendment that upsets the balance would be ruled out of order. Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) was unsuccessful in his attempt to amend the language.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) also proposed a rule that would require amendments be printed in the journal even if they have been ruled not germane, or pertinent to the topic, and an appeal has been filed and tabled. He said that the amendment in that situation has not been withdrawn and should be noted for the record.

Another successful amendment noted that the House cannot meet past midnight except by a majority vote of the House to deviate from that standard.

Initially Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake) had proposed the House not meet after 10 p.m., with a variance of up to two hours allowed by majority vote of the House.

His amendment failed.

Contractor concerns

When it comes to the planning, designing, and building state projects, cheapest may not always be best. That's the issue HF724, sponsored by Rep. Jim Rhodes (R-St. Louis Park), attempts to address.

The House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee approved the bill Feb. 28 and sent it to the House floor.

Rhodes, the committee chair, said the bill would require that state agency selection of contractors regulated by the Board of Architecture, Engineering, Land Surveying, Landscape Architecture, Geoscience and Interior Design be based on qualifications and not on the lowest bid as in other state contracts.

Under the measure, a state agency would first rank contractors solely on their qualifications. Once those have been determined the agency would be allowed to get pricing information.

The bill would allow agencies to establish procedures for screening and selecting contractors, and those procedures could be adjusted to accommodate the cost, scope, and schedule of a particular project.

Jeff Coleman, a professional engineer from the board, said qualification-based selection has been in place at the federal level since 1972 and is used in at least 36 states.

Coleman said when it comes to building a state complex most would agree the building should be done well rather than just at the least expensive cost.

Kent Allin, an assistant commissioner from the Department of Administration, said the department opposes the bill because it would take away an important tool, the cost determination, in selecting a contractor.

"We agree that the selection shouldn't just be on the low bid but the current process allows qualifications to be the primary determining factor as long as there is some consideration of price," Allin said. "Price can be the tiebreaker where the qualifications are judged to be equal."

Rep. Eric Lipman (R-Lake Elmo) offered an unsuccessful amendment that would have allowed state agencies the option of using the qualification-based selection rather than make it mandatory as in the bill.

Coleman said allowing cost considerations into the qualification selection portion of evaluation would undermine the entire process because once cost becomes involved it colors the rest of the evaluation.

"It's the camel's nose under the tent," he said.

HEALTH



Birth center study proposed

A bill that would require the commissioner of health to study the regulatory system of birth centers was brought before the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 27.

Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka), sponsor of HF648, said it was an attempt to provide more options for families. No birth centers now exist in the state.

The bill would require that the commissioner examine birth center regulatory systems in other states and countries, including the health outcomes of those birth centers. A report on the commissioner's recommendations

would be due to the Legislature by Jan. 15, 2002.

Commissioner of Health Jan Malcolm said she believes a study would be appropriate. The committee passed the bill and referred it to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

"The goal of birth centers is to provide safe, sensitive, cost-effective care for women and their families in a friendly, more-relaxed environment than the bustle of a hospital," Abeler said.

Seventy-five percent of states regulate birth centers. Most have established regulations similar to those developed by the American Public Health Association in 1982, according to Kitty Ernst, director of the National Association of Childbearing Centers Consulting Group.

Currently, there are about 150 to 175 centers in the country. Care in these centers is provided by nurse midwives or licensed traditional midwives. The centers, which work in collaboration with hospitals and obstetricians, have established methods for moving patients who may need acute care to a hospital.

"It's a small market of women who use birth centers," Ernst said. "But they're very vocal and very intent on what they want in their childbirth experience."

Asked about the average length of stay, Ernst said, "Seven hours." Lawmakers looked at her in quiet astonishment.



Kitty Ernst, director of the National Association of Childbearing Center Consulting Group, testifies for a bill that would fund a study to formulate regulations for birthing centers in Minnesota.

"Most of the mothers in birthing centers have been so empowered by their program," she said, "that they're sitting up at four hours saying, 'Can I go home yet?'"

"These are normal, healthy mothers," she said. Babies and mothers who need more care are moved to hospitals.

Ernst emphasized that if the state decides to allow birth centers, it must make sure the payment system is in place.

HIGHER EDUCATION



Regent selection on hold

The selection process for members of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents has been delayed due to fears over partisan motivation.

The House and Senate were scheduled to meet jointly Feb. 26, to appoint five members to the 12-member board that is the governing body of the university. Instead, the House opted to refer a joint resolution establishing the joint meeting of the two bodies to the House Education Policy Committee.

By law, the Legislature must appoint regents by May 7 or a date agreed to by concurrent resolution. Otherwise Gov. Jesse Ventura will appoint people to fill the vacancies.

At a Feb. 20 joint meeting of the House and Senate education committees, legislators recommended five people for the positions: Angela Bos as student representative, Michael O'Keefe from the Fifth Congressional District and Patricia Spence, Richard "Pinky" McNamara, and Ray Waldron for the three at-large positions.

However, problems arose when House Republicans became concerned that Senate DFLers might introduce the name of a candidate not recommended by the committees at the joint convention and get that person elected.

Republicans contend that legislative leaders have been circumventing the established regent-selection process for many years for political reasons.

"We need some time to sort out what their intentions are," House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) said during the Feb. 22 floor session. "We're not inclined to become co-conspirators to another round of this body, for political or other reasons manipulating the merit selection process."

House Minority Leader Tom Pugh (DFL-South St. Paul) questioned House Republicans' willingness to keep the process in the open. "It sounds as though you're trying to make sure there is some arrangement with

leadership from the Senate, in some place other than this floor, that the votes are arranged in a way that is satisfactory to you."

One House DFLer questioned the ability to vote for whom he thinks is the most qualified. Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) said, "With this process we're establishing, I may not vote the way of my conscience, but how some people are going to make an agreement with another body. Quite frankly I think that is wrong."

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) countered, saying, "What we want is a fair and open process in which merit selection and the selections of the joint (education) committees are honored."

No hearing date on the resolution has yet been set.

Paying your own way

Students wishing to retake a college class may have to do so with their own money.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) has sponsored HF751 that would provide a tuition policy for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities regarding students retaking classes.

"If a student wants to retake a course the state should contribute zero to the class," he told the House Higher Education Finance Committee Feb. 28.

The policy would be enacted for students who retake a class after previously attaining a passing grade, or for those who drop a class in the final three weeks of the term.

Kuisle said the bill would give the institutions the option of setting up a policy for extenuating circumstances, such as health issues or being called for active military duty.

The proposed law would effect a handful of students.

Peter Zetterberg, director of institutional research and reporting at the University of Minnesota, said about 535,000 credit hours were taught last fall at the Twin Cities campus, with about 5,200 students dropping a class in the final three weeks.

"I believe the same (percentages) are true at our Crookston, Duluth and Morris campuses," he said.

Of those students retaking classes, of which there are about 1,000 per semester, Zetterberg said most are enrolled in lower division math, chemistry or physics courses where a grade of C or better is needed for their major. He said 75 percent of students achieve the needed grade the second time around.

Patrick Opatz, the budget director for MnSCU, said system-wide numbers indicate that 0.45 percent of students withdraw in the last two weeks and 1.65 percent retake a

course. MnSCU students are enrolled in about 537,000 credit hours per term.

The committee took no action on the bill, but it will be considered for inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

Consistency sought

A bill that seeks higher education funding equity may be included in the House Higher Education Finance Committee omnibus bill.

HF442, sponsored by Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud), requests that higher education instructional base funding be adjusted for inflation at the rate of inflation used in the November forecast during even-numbered year.

Current law requires several adjustments to post-secondary instructional base funding, including adjustments for enrollment and inflation adjustment.

Speaking Feb. 28 before the House Higher Education Finance Committee, Opatz said the November forecast is the base used for other state agencies, and should also be the standard for the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

Jim Pehler, president of The Inter-Faculty Organization, which serves the faculty of state universities, spoke in support of the bill.

He said that in other areas, salary and benefits are included in the agency's base level funding. "The intent of this bill is to level the playing field for all agencies."

Pehler also said, for example, that when another agency gets a 4 percent budget increase, the agency can use it for what it deems necessary. But in higher education, part of that money must go for inflationary increases in salaries and benefits because it is not part of the base level.

"It is unfair when others get a base adjustment and MnSCU and the University of Minnesota do not," said Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexandria).

"The issue is consistency," said Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), the committee chair.

HUMAN SERVICES



Funeral funding goes forward

Asset limits imposed by the Minnesota Medical Assistance Program restrict the options for people who want to prepay their funeral expenses.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) presented a bill (HF574) to the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 22 that would eliminate a disparity in medical assistance eligibility requirements.

To qualify for medical assistance a person must meet certain asset criteria, including no more than \$2,000 in an irrevocable burial trust. Current law, however, is inconsistent in that it allows a person to put as much as he or she wants into a burial insurance policy without losing eligibility.

As the law stands, a person with more than \$2,000 in a burial trust must spend it down before qualifying for medical assistance. The law has not changed that limit in more than a decade, despite the reality that even the most modest funeral costs well above \$2,000.

David's bill would affect only the type of funding a person can use. There is no anticipated fiscal impact on the medical assistance program from this change.

Tim Hoff, a funeral director from St. Charles, said many of the people with whom he works are more comfortable keeping their money in a bank than buying insurance.

"It makes no difference to the funeral director whether families use insurance or a trust, but it makes a difference to many individuals," Hoff said.

"There's no abuse in this system. We have the most stringent consumer protection laws in the country regarding funeral trusts," said Kelly Guncheon, executive director of the Minnesota Funeral Directors Association.

"A death is a very emotional time for families," said Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls). "We don't want to make it harder than it is."

The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

Income standard may change

People on medical assistance have to struggle more than is fair to make ends meet, said supporters of a bill that would raise the income and asset standards for individuals who are aged, blind, or disabled, allowing them to keep more of their money.

Rep. Kevin Goodno (R-Moorhead) presented HF1132 to the House Health and Human Services Policy Committee Feb. 27. The bill was approved and referred to the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee.

"This bill is very critical to the economic survival of people dependent on medical assistance," said Gene Martinez, representing the Minnesota Consortium of Minnesotans with Disabilities.

The income standard represents the amount of money that people on medical assistance are allowed to receive if they are unable to work. Currently, that amount is \$482 per month for an individual, about 30 percent

below the federal poverty guideline of \$696. For a couple, the Minnesota standard is \$602 versus the federal poverty guideline of \$938.

People receiving more than the income standard are subject to a "spend-down" option in order to qualify for medical assistance. Under a spend-down, individuals must incur medical bills in an amount equal to or greater than the amount by which their income exceeds the income standard.

People on medical assistance are also subject to asset limits — currently \$3,000 for an individual and \$6,000 for a married couple.

"We know first hand the difficulty low income seniors have," said Beth Nelson, speaking for the Minnesota Board on Aging. "Their meager income is not enough for food, clothing, and other needs."

HF1132 would raise the income standard to 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and provide that increases in Social Security benefits are not counted as income until the first day of the second month following the publication of the poverty guidelines.

The bill would also increase asset limits to \$10,000 for a single adult and \$18,000 for a married couple, the same standard the state prescription drug program uses.

In addition, the bill provides that money from child support, social security, and certain other benefits be excluded as income for children receiving medical assistance.

"I receive \$651 a month and \$149 is taken off the top for my medical assistance spend-down leaving me with only \$502 a month to live on," wrote Ellen Hansen in a letter to the committee. Hansen, who is from Burnsville, has multiple sclerosis. "Sometimes I don't eat as well as I should because I can't afford food."

"We often see people who are unable to meet their needs because of spend-down," said Sue Krey, program supervisor in long term care for Dakota County. "This bill would help people keep more of their money, stay in their homes, and be a part of their communities."

IMMIGRATION



Council changes considered

The House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee approved a bill Feb. 26 that would change the representation on the state's Council on Black Minnesotans.

The measure now goes to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee. The Senate passed the bill 60-0 Feb. 5.

SF142 sponsored in the House by Rep. Neva Walker (DFL-Mpls) would expand the size of the council from its current 11 members to 13 members. Under the measure the additional seats would need to be filled by one

person whose ethnic heritage is from West Africa, and one member whose ethnic heritage is from East Africa.

The Council on Black Minnesotans was established in 1980 to advise the governor and Legislature on issues facing black people in the state. The council is also charged with recommending changes to laws to help address those issues.

Walker said prior to her election to the House she served on the committee that made recommendations to the governor about who should be appointed to the board.

She said the council is supposed to represent individuals of all African descent and that often issues facing African-Americans are different from those facing new African immigrants.

Lester Collins, the council's executive director, said the state's population of new immigrants from Africa is rapidly increasing. He said the state's Somali population is one example of a growing community.

"We don't have the capacity on the board to deal with some of the issues," Collins said.

Walker said the Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans is required to have representatives from different Asian countries. She said while a similar requirement is not possible in the African-American community, the bill establishes that the state's increasingly diverse black community is properly represented.

RECREATION



Forest recreation

A plan to transfer the administration of state forest trails, campgrounds, and day-use areas to other divisions of the Department of Natural Resources was presented to the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee Feb. 26.

Under the new DNR plan, campgrounds and day-use areas located in state forests will become the responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Division, and trails in state forests will be administered by the Trails and Waterways Division. This is an executive decision and does not require action by the Legislature.

"All forest campgrounds will be reassigned to the closest park," said Bill Morrissey, director of the Parks and Recreation Division. He said the transfers would happen over a three-year period, beginning July 1 with regions one and five, the northwest and southeast sections of the state, respectively.

When the transfer is complete, the administration of more than 1,000 campsites at 46 campgrounds and 44 day-use areas will be moved from the Forestry Division to parks and recreation.

The Forestry Division's fiscal year 2000 budget allocation for managing those facilities was about \$646,000. Approximately \$240,000 of that will be transferred to the parks division to cover enforcement expenses, subject to approval by the Department of Finance.

Campsites not in official campground areas, such as boat-accessible sites, will become the responsibility of the Trails and Waterways Division beginning July 2003.

Currently, the Forestry Division operates almost 2,000 miles of multi-use recreational trails, including ATV, snowmobile, and cross-country ski trails. The Trails and Waterways Division, which already has some involvement in the management of these trails, will assume full responsibility July 1. The following year the division will take over hiking, biking, and multiple use trails and related facilities.

In 2003, the Trails and Waterways Division will begin administering canoe and boat accesses and campsites, along with water-related facilities that are now under the jurisdiction of the Forestry Division.

The rationale behind the transfer is a desire on the part of DNR Commissioner Al Garber for the Division of Forestry to focus its efforts on the sustainable management of state forests "with an emphasis on timber, forest health, forest protection, and private forest management assistance."

★ SAFETY

More bleachers exempted

In 1999 the Legislature approved a law requiring that bleachers taller than 30 inches have gaps between seats, floorboards, and guardrails that do not exceed four inches. The previous standard for the size of the gaps was nine inches.

Last year exemptions to the four-inch gap requirement were granted to the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, and private colleges and universities for retractable bleachers that were in place as of Jan. 1, 2001.

The House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee approved a bill (HF427) Feb. 28 that would grant a further exemption to the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission. The measure now goes to the House floor.

Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine) said not providing an exemption to the commission, a state agency, was an oversight.

The commission oversees the National Sports Center in Blaine. Paul Erickson, the executive director of the commission, said the

center has more than 2.7 million visitors every year. He said he knew of no instances when a child fell through the 8,000-seat portable bleachers at the facility.

Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) offered an amendment that was approved, exempting bleachers installed at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome from the four-inch requirement. The dome will host the men's college basketball Final Four this March.

The cost to retrofit the bleachers at the dome would be greater than \$100,000, said Steve Maki, executive director of the Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) said providing exemptions solely to state agencies didn't address the "unfunded mandate" imposed under the original legislation on other entities such as school districts, cities, and counties.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said there are other safety issues of greater importance than the issue addressed by the original bleacher safety bill. She said, as an example, many more individuals are injured when they bike without wearing helmets.

Cigarette standards revived

The House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Policy Committee reconsidered, and then approved, a bill Feb. 28 that would require the state's fire marshal to establish rules regarding cigarette fire retardant standards.

TRANSIT TALK



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Metropolitan Council Chair Ted Mondale gives a Metro Transit budget presentation to the House Transportation Finance Committee Feb. 28.

The bill was sent to the House Commerce, Jobs, and Economic Development Policy Committee without recommendation by an 11-9 vote.

Two weeks earlier the committee failed to approve the measure on an 8-8 vote. At that hearing several members expressed concern about the scope and costs of the rulemaking authority in the bill.

HF175, sponsored by Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), would require that cigarettes offered for sale or manufactured in the state must comply with the adopted rules.

State Fire Marshal Tom Brace said a preliminary cost estimate of writing the rules indicates it would come to around \$24,000.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) said that figure seemed low in comparison to the costs generally associated with rulemaking procedures.

Ozment encouraged the committee not to kill the measure because of the rulemaking provision but to allow the bill's supporters to argue the merits of developing cigarettes designed to go out if the smoker does not take a puff.

He said technology for safer cigarettes exists and many lives could be saved as a result.

"This is one of the most important pieces of legislation I've carried," the nine-term member said.

Tobacco industry representatives testified at the Feb. 14 hearing that technology for fire retardant cigarettes does not currently exist and that the bill would set Minnesota apart from every other state.

Ozment said whether safer cigarettes can be or already are made and the economic impact of establishing standards is the issue that will be discussed by the Commerce committee. He said safer cigarettes are already on the market.

"Why cut the process short when we can save lives? We know cigarettes can be made safer," he said.

★ TAXES

More renters aid possible

Renters would be eligible for a larger property tax refund under a proposal sponsored by Rep. Mark Gleason (DFL-Richfield).

The House Taxes Committee Property Tax Division heard Gleason's bill (HF158) Feb. 22 but took no action on the measure. Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina), the division chair, said the bill would be considered for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax package.

Currently renters can claim a property tax refund if the household's income exceeds a certain percentage of income. The state has schedules that determine the income thresholds and refund amounts.

Gleason said his bill would increase the percentage of rent constituting property taxes

from 19 percent to 28 percent. The Department of Revenue estimates the bill would cost more than \$70 million annually.

Rachel Callanan, representing the Minnesota Housing Partnership, said the state's lower-to-moderate income families are facing increasing hardships due to the growing lack of affordable housing in the state.

According to a recent Legislative Auditor's report, the average two-bedroom apartment in the Twin Cities metropolitan area has a monthly rent of \$794. The report says the vacancy rate in the metropolitan areas of the state is 1.5 percent, much below the "healthy" rate of 5 percent.

Callanan said the partnership supports proposals to lower rental property taxes but the auditor's report showed those tax reductions would not mean lower rents for consumers.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) asked if the \$72 million would be better spent on affordable housing or providing the additional rental refund amounts in Gleason's bill.

Gleason said he thought the refunds would have an impact on renters' ability to afford housing. He said the current system allows homeowners to deduct their interest on mortgage payments from their taxes and thus discriminates against renters.

Fairness in vending

When you buy a carton of milk at your local convenience store you do not pay sales tax on the item. Purchase the same carton from a vending machine, and you are paying sales tax.

The House Taxes Committee Sales and Income Tax Division heard two bills March 1, that would address this inconsistency. The committee took no action on either measure, but Rep. Elaine Harder (R-Jackson), the division chair, said both would be considered for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

HF502, sponsored by Rep. Erik Paulsen (R-Eden Prairie), would exempt drinks containing milk and milk products, fruit and fruit products, vegetables, granola, breakfast and energy bars, yogurt and pudding purchased from a vending machine from the sales tax.

Mark Young, president of the Automatic Merchandising Council and a food service vendor from St. Louis Park, said the inequity of taxing food from a vending machine puts vending machine merchants at a disadvantage with their main competitors, convenience stores.

He said currently vending machine owners most often absorb the additional costs rather than pass them on to consumers and that ultimately the sales tax exemption would lead to lower prices.

TAXING HEARING



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Nick Dawkins, 18 months, takes a nap as his father, Rep. Andy Dawkins rocks the stroller and asks a question during a Feb. 22 hearing of the Sales and Income Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee.

Tom Briant, the executive director of the council, said 30 years ago a Minnesota Supreme Court decision established that food sold in vending machines was more like food served in restaurants than food sold in grocery stores. Thus, vending machine items, like restaurant food, is subject to the sales tax.

Rep. Connie Bernardy (DFL-Fridley) said she supports the effort to exempt the healthier foods and hoped the exemption would mean that vendors stocked the machines with more healthy foods.

HF858, sponsored by Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina), would exempt all types of food sold in vending machines that is currently exempt when sold at grocery and convenience stores.

"The bill is a little more pricey (than Paulsen's bill) but much cleaner," Erhardt said.

The Department of Revenue estimates the cost of HF502 to be around \$1.3 million in 2002-03, while the cost of HF858 would be \$11.5 million over the biennium.

Manufactured home savings

The National Mobile Home Construction and Safety Standards Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1974 began defining manufactured homes more as buildings rather than vehicles.

The House Taxes Committee Property Tax Division heard a bill (HF914) Feb. 26 that would tax that type of housing in a manner similar to other residential housing.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester), the sponsor of the measure, said reducing the class rate on manufactured home park land from

1.65 percent to 1.2 percent would stimulate the growth in some affordable housing.

Currently the tax rate on single-family, residential non-homestead property valued at less than \$76,000 is 1.2 percent.

To prevent a loss of tax base and tax shifting to other types of properties, the bill would increase the state Homestead Agricultural Credit Aid to taxing jurisdictions.

Mark Brunner, the executive director of the Minnesota Manufactured Housing Association, said there were more than 3,300 manufactured homes produced in the state last year. The industry employs more than 4,800 people.

Mark Lambert, a manufactured park owner, said the rate reduction would lead to a growth in the number of manufactured home parks in the state.

"This brings the benefits of a manufactured home owner more in line with single family home owners," Lambert said.

Rep. Mark Gleason (DFL-Richfield) asked Lambert if the tax rate reduction would be passed on from the manufactured home park property owners to the homeowners.

Lambert said that while the rate reduction goes directly to the park owners, residents would benefit too because the bill would allow park owners to hold down their costs.

The Department of Revenue estimates the cost of the measure would be around \$1.4 million a year.

The committee took no action on the bill, but Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina), the division chair, said it will be considered for possible inclusion in the omnibus tax bill.

Youth intervention

Three bills would give millions now to programs that proponents say would save millions later

BY THERESA STAHL

Jim Carter is making amends. As a board member of Minnesota Youth Intervention Program Association, he wants to help prevent children from making the same mistakes he did.

Shoplifting at age eight was his first crime, and others would follow. He eventually served two years for armed robbery. He says he has hurt many people in his life, but it could have all been prevented if someone had intervened after he was caught shoplifting.

Carter, 21, told members of the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee that government should foster a safe society, he said, by supporting programs that prevent youth from ending up in courts and prisons.

Carter, who is now a business owner, testified Feb. 28 for two bills (HF20 and HF348) that would grant funds to youth intervention programs.

"This really doesn't cost money, but reaps benefits," said Rep. Bob Gunther (R-Fairmont), the sponsor of HF348.

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls), sponsor of HF20, says the programs save millions in criminal activity. His bill would appropriate \$2.5 million to fund 50 youth intervention programs.

HF348 calls for almost \$1.5 million to be given to youth intervention programs, and 1 percent allocated to the Youth Intervention Program Association. "Funding will be used to expand existing programs to serve unmet needs and to create new programs in underserved areas of the state," the bill reads.

Scott Beaty, executive director of the association, says HF348 "promotes and encourages communities to help their youth." The ratio of community dollars to state money for the programs, including the association, is two to one.

Both bills were laid over and will be considered for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

A third bill appropriating money to a youth intervention program was given an informational hearing by the committee. HF1137,

sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), would allocate \$1.5 million between 2002-2003 to Youthbuild programs.

Clark says the 25-year-old organization is "impressive," serving urban, suburban, and rural youth. Youthbuild, which has 12 sites throughout the state, provides specialized training in construction and the building trades fields, computer technician fields, leadership and basic academic skills, and construction-based work experience for youth-at-risk of not completing their high school education.

During the 2000-2001 biennium, the program received about \$1.5 million. Some of the needs for the coming biennium include funding to assist program alumni and funding for more computers.

Those interested in the program must go



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Esmeralda Barboza, a student at City Academy, tells members of the House Jobs & Economic Development Finance Committee Feb. 28 how participants in the Youthbuild program "work as a team."

through an application process, and many are turned away due to funding limitations. Target groups include high school dropouts and potential dropouts, youth-at-risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system, chemically dependent and disabled youth, homeless youth, teen parents, and public assistance recipients.

Christina Sweatt, Youthbuild coordinator in Bemidji, said there are already more than 20 people on the waiting list for the June orientation, and they will have more. They hold two orientations every year.

"We have evolved," Sweatt said. "We use building and teaching trades to teach what young people will need to succeed."

"Most of them do not fit into traditional ways of teaching," she explained. "They are not weak links. They are stronger than any youth out there if we give them the opportunity."

Katrinka Jack is a sophomore in high school. Through a program at The City, Inc., she has learned more math skills, how to use levels, and how a house is built, along with roofing, concrete work, and teamwork.

"You can't build a house alone," Jack said. "The more people that are there, the more fun and educational experience it is."

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) asked what happens if someone misses a day or shows up late for work.

"You miss out on learning — someone has to take up my job," Jack replied. "They treat it as a real job, and there are consequences if you're late."

In 2000, Minnesota Youthbuild programs served 387 young people. Ninety-five units of affordable housing were constructed or renovated, affecting more than 300 low-income and homeless persons.

Last year 72 percent of participants successfully completed the program, 85 percent of those who successfully completed the program obtained their high school diploma or GED, and 35 percent enrolled in post-secondary institutions. One-third entered the building trades, and 70 percent entered employment with a starting wage averaging \$9 an hour.

Mahoney, a pipe fitter by trade, said there is a need for more than just carpenters, and asked if they received any training in fields such as plumbing, masonry, or pipe fitting.

Youthbuilders shadow workers in different trades, and "we try to expose them to a number of different fields," said Salvador Pachew,

Continued on page 31

Close scrutiny

Governor's recommended \$730 million budget for corrections prompts skepticism among House members and employees

BY MICHELLE KIBIGER

Corrections officials are asking for nearly \$730 million during the next biennium, including an aggressive reduction plan in average per diem cost for adult inmates at the state's nine correctional facilities.

The recommendation, forwarded by Gov. Jesse Ventura, actually reflects a \$3.98 million reduction in the base budget for the Department of Corrections. In addition, the per diem plan would result in about \$18 million in re-allocations throughout the department for other programs.

However, members of the House Judiciary Finance Committee, which heard budget requests Feb. 22 and Feb. 26, expressed concern that the department's needs were greater than the governor's recommendation would suggest.

And members of labor unions representing corrections employees also suggested that plans to re-allocate money might create a hardship for employees.

Commissioner Sheryl Ramstad Hvass said it's the first time in the department's history officials have not asked for an increase in the budget.

"I think it's wonderful for the first time ever that we're not asking for increases," said Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown). "But I'm really concerned that the numbers are being cut too far. We've got to make sure that our numbers are absolutely correct."

Ramstad Hvass said the budget is based on Ventura's Big Plan principles of getting the "best bang for the buck." She said the depart-

ment has undergone an extensive review of programs and developed a strategic plan. In addition, the department is embarking on a significant plan to reduce the cost of housing inmates each day at the adult facilities.

That plan would reduce per diem costs to \$77.78 by the end of the fiscal year and further reduction to \$68.72 in the future. Ramstad Hvass said she hopes to accomplish that goal in three years.

The plan would also add about 500 beds system-wide to help cut costs. In addition, the department is keeping about 190 positions open and re-assigning other management and line staff to cut per diem costs.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VON BANK

Tim Walsh, director of juvenile services for the Minnesota Department of Corrections, presents the department's budget overview at the Feb. 27 House Judiciary Finance Committee hearing.

"I think we're all concerned how far we go," said Deputy Commissioner Dennis Benson. "I don't think there's anything wrong with looking at the national average and using that as a guideline. But where it makes sense, I believe it's in our best interest to get as close to that average as we can."

"We shouldn't be asking the taxpayer to bring \$98 to the table every time we have a new inmate."

Among the changes in the budget is a request for \$1.5 million to continue the department's efforts toward integrating the CrimNet system.

In addition, the governor has proposed \$3 million for cost-efficiency improve-

ments, including enhancements to electronic fencing at the St. Cloud prison, electronics on the walls at the Stillwater prison, and electronic locks at certain facilities, particularly those converted from former state mental hospitals.

The governor adds \$13.7 million to the department's budget for community

supervision, including \$2 million for caseload reductions and \$1.5 million for intensive supervised release.

Over the past four years, the Legislature has appropriated about \$17 million to reduce caseloads for probation agents. Since then, caseloads have dropped about three per case worker, said Deputy Commissioner Mark Carey.

He said probation is probably the least understood aspect of corrections. Probation officers do all the behind the scenes work to make sure inmates get back on track and don't end up back in the prison system.

At the Feb. 26 hearing, Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), committee chair, asked how much the department had requested from the governor for this purpose. He said he didn't think \$2 million would go far enough.

"What do we really expect to get for \$2 million?" Stanek asked. "Rep. (Dave) Bishop (R-Rochester) has a bill for \$16 million over the biennium. Now that would get us somewhere."

Several other members, including Murphy and Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), said they also wondered what the original request from the department had been.

Bishop responded that he had tried to get original requests from the Department of Finance but was denied. He said he's concerned that the governor's administration is withholding important information.


Several representatives from the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees attended the meeting to express their concern over the tight budget and the per diem reduction plan.

Jim Monroe, executive director for the group, cautioned members not to rely on technology to compensate for reduced staff. He said he came from Ohio where such a plan did not work.

Bob Haag from MAPE also said case workers are concerned they won't have adequate time to prepare inmates to go back into the public sector and succeed.

Representatives from AFSCME Council 6 also testified briefly, saying overtime costs are high due to the positions being held open by the reduction plan.

Though corrections officials say they solicited staff input in developing the per diem reduction plan, Haag said employees were not given a good enough opportunity to comment about the plan.

"A union should not have to come to a committee like this with our concerns," he said. 

Staying after school

Youth development programs in community education seek more state funds

By MARY KAY WATSON

After-school community education has had no increase in state funding in 13 years.

"The time has come for us to give them a little bump," said Rep. Barb Sykora (R-Excelsior).

The "bump" Sykora offered the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee Feb. 28 was a bill that would authorize \$11 million a year for youth programs in community education.

HF646, authored by Sykora, would provide for supervised youth programs during non-school hours within established community education programs.

To receive state funding for these programs, a school district would have to levy according to a revenue formula. Money received from the state must be used for "activities that support the development of social, mental, physical, and creative abilities of school-age youth."

The intent of Minnesota's Community Education Program is to make use of public school facilities to provide lifelong learning opportunities for all community members. Programs offered may be wide-ranging, including those for children and youth. It has always been a state aid and levy program.

And after-school programs are important, officials say, because they give children supervised, constructive activities and keep them out of trouble.

Schools across the state are currently struggling to keep their after-school programs going. More than 100 Minnesota school districts are now either at a zero balance or are spending at a deficit in their community education budgets.

The problem is especially severe in rural areas. The average total population of districts with deficits is 6,000 and their average deficit is \$46,000, according to Dennis Carlson of the Minnesota Community Education Association.

Tom Searcy, director of community education for New London-Spicer schools, said youth programs in his district have had no increase in funding in 13 years.

On a recent Sunday, Searcy had to cancel



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Carol Thomas from the Department of Children, Families and Learning testifies before the House Family and Early Childhood Education Finance Committee, Feb. 28 on community education funded after-school programs.

programs because of snowstorms. In listening to be certain the radio announced the closings, he heard of six other schools that closed programs.

"Six years ago, none of our schools were open on weekends," he said. "Without HF626 they will all be closed again. And I don't believe it will be weather-related."

There is an increasing need for these programs in all areas of the state. Thirty-four percent of Minnesota's 6- to 12-year-olds and 56 percent of 10- to 12-year-olds are left alone for some time each week, according to a study by the Urban Institute of Washington D.C.

"As an educator, farmer, parent, and grandparent, I'm concerned about the future of our rural communities," said Bev Struxness,

director of the Lac qui Parle Valley Community Education Program. "Community education programs are the link between education and the local economy."

Asking for support of Sykora's bill, Struxness spoke eloquently of the time it takes to make a program work: finding volunteers, organizing activities, and helping those youth who are "sitting on the fence."

"It's especially important to reach out to high-risk children," she said.

Minnesotans have historically given strong support to after-school programs for children. According to a recent poll survey by the Afterschool Alliance, 92 percent of voters say there is a need for places where children can go after school for organized activities and learning opportunities, and 79 percent say the state should help foot the bill.

Other programs in Minnesota reach out to children after school, and the committee heard from some of them.

In 1996, in response to concerns about unsupervised youth and rising juvenile crime rates, the Legislature established after-school enrichment grants. An appropriation of \$10.4 million was made for 2000-01 to 34 grantees who provide programming for high-risk 9- to 13-year-olds.

It is the priority of this grant initiative to involve youth who are struggling academically, at-risk of becoming involved with the criminal justice system, and/or not supervised by an adult during non-school hours.

Club Fed is a collaboration of 65 different agencies in North Minneapolis that received such a grant.

"Without the programs provided by Club Fed," said Farzaneh Kia, the organization's program director, "kids would be in the street, hanging around. They would rather be in the structured programs — playing sports, being with their friends."

The program is located at 42 sites and offers programs such as tutoring, mentoring, arts, and sports. Kia said school attendance of participants in Club Fed has increased overall.

Lawmakers voiced concern about measuring outcomes for these programs. Carol Thomas, of the Department of Children, Families and Learning, acknowledged the difficulties of evaluating after-school programs. She said data is being collected, and a system of

Continued on page 31

Road funding concerns

With the reduction of license tab fees, legislators seek a more steady funding mechanism for transportation projects

BY JONAS M. WALKER

Legislators are wrestling with the responsibility of ensuring the viability of Minnesota's transportation infrastructure, a task made all the more difficult in the wake of reductions in license tab fees, once a mainstay for highway funds.

Now, Minnesotans may have the opportunity to vote on guaranteeing transportation funding in the state constitution.

The House Transportation Policy approved three bills on the matter Feb. 27, and referred them all to the House Transportation Finance Committee. All would amend the state constitution, which requires approval by the majority of voters in the general election.

Though the committee forwarded the bills to the finance committee, discussion at the hearing centered around the conflict between funding roads and funding transit systems.

HF9, sponsored by Rep. Connie Ruth (R-Owatonna), would dedicate all revenue from the sales tax on motor vehicles to the highway user tax distribution fund. HF11, sponsored by Rep. Andrew Westerberg (R-Blaine), would dedicate not less than 32 percent of revenue from the sales tax on motor vehicles to the highway user tax distribution fund. HF860, sponsored by Rep. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove), would establish a multi-modal transportation fund for highway and transit projects. Her bill proposes that all revenues from the motor vehicle sales tax be dedicated to the new fund.

One-third of revenue generated by the motor vehicle sales taxes now goes to the highway distribution fund, with the remainder appropriated to the general fund. Money from the general fund has been used to compensate the highway distribution fund for revenue that would have been deposited from the collection of license tab fees.

Beginning in 1967, motor vehicles, like most other sellable merchandise, became subject to a 3 percent general state sales tax. In response to criticism that the tax was among the highest in the United States, Minnesota later

divided revenue from taxes on a vehicle purchase into a sales tax and a motor vehicle excise tax. That name was later changed to the motor vehicle sales tax.

Since then, the Legislature has added two additional taxes directly affecting automobile owners: license registration fees and the gasoline tax. Each contributes about one-half the value of the highway tax distribution fund, which is dedicated exclusively to the trunk highway fund and the county and municipal state-aid highway and street funds.

In light of recent declines in state license tab fee revenue, some legislators are concerned an important funding source for road construction and maintenance has been neglected. According to the Department of Revenue, the license tab reduction will result in a revenue reduction of \$175 million to the highway user tax distribution fund by fiscal year 2003. That figure is nearly 15 percent of the fund's total revenue.

Statewide, residents and government entities are clamoring for what seems to be an ever-shrinking pot of funds available for transportation projects. However, there is a significant difference in the solutions legislators are proposing. The variation in the plan underscores the differences in transportation sensibility found among lawmakers.

Sorenson said his group favors the restoration of dedicated highway funding to levels that existed prior to tab fee reduction.

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul)

expressed her support for Marko's bill, HF860. She explained that highways cannot adequately function if planners ignore the benefits of transit solutions.

"Perhaps it's time we begin rethinking (the assumption that) highways are separate from transit systems," Hausman said.

Sam Grabarski, representing the Minneapolis Downtown Council, echoed her thoughts.

His organization represents the largest employers in downtown Minneapolis, an area that is the daily destination and departure point for more than 220,000 commuters.

"We are completely dependant on multi-modal transportation systems," he said. Grabarski said running express buses along the

shoulders of congested Twin Cities' highways mitigates the need for building additional lanes, something that local groups have begun to oppose and, in some cases, successfully prevent.

Rep. William Kuisle (R-Rochester) asked Grabarski about what he saw as the irony of using automobile sales taxes to assist in the funding of alternative transportation systems. Grabarski responded that drivers polled by his organization routinely supported additional transit programs by an overwhelming majority.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) expressed concern that suburban businesses might disfavor transit funding, and that a statewide multi-modal fund could politically alienate central commercial districts.

Grabarski countered that suburban businesses were increasingly in agreement with his organization. "Even I was surprised to learn that


(suburban) chambers of commerce now say transit is their number one priority." 



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Robert E. Vanasek, former speaker of the House and now a lobbyist from Robert Vanasek & Associates, testifies Feb. 27 before the House Transportation Policy Committee on constitutional amendments providing a revenue stream for transportation projects.

Public-private partnership

Speakers emphasize strong bonds between industry and public universities in research and innovation

By JONAS M. WALKER



Lawmakers got a lesson Feb. 22 from regional economic and technological powerhouses on the importance of partnerships between private venture capital and public universities.

The event was part of the annual Capitol Forum Series, sponsored by Minnesota Technology. This year's topics focused on developing technology and how it will shape Minnesota's future.

On Feb. 22, the topic was "Integrating a Research University into a Regional Technology Forum."

Kitty Forbes Vogt of the Georgia Research Alliance told House and Senate members of her state's investment in public university-led research and development.

Via specially designed offices funded by the state, Georgia industry has expanded its relationships with universities, which in turn leads to "gains in venture capital investment." The result is that Georgia, and Atlanta specifically, has benefited from an explosion in the number of high-tech jobs, she said.

"Georgia has a proven model for turning university research into economic growth," said Vogt. "Through the Georgia Research Alliance, we connect business, scientific and government leaders to generate start-ups, attract industry, enhance jobs and create wealth."

"Technology-driven economies tend to reinforce themselves over time. They are the key to sustained economic growth."

David Allen, assistant vice-president for technology partnerships at The Ohio State University, explained Minnesota could harness the economic power of the high-tech industry by taking advantage of such partnerships.

He said traditional relationships between universities and industry were strictly "buy-sell. Now, industry needs brand identity for capturing the best students." In other words, industry wants access to student innovation throughout the educational career of that student.

Allen suggested that industry would likely feel more comfortable making long-term investment in specific programs if universities could guarantee access to students as early as their sophomore year.

He also said successful traits of university/industry collaboration include the sharing of costs and rewards, the building of relationships beyond key actors on both sides, and accountability to "diverse constituencies." He emphasized such partnerships are not appropriate for all faculty members, or for all educational programs.

He also said that cultural barriers between industry and academia constitute significant barriers to the success of partnerships. For

example, industry exists to maximize profit for shareholders, while universities are generally focused on merely generating ideas and original thought.

For those who seek such partnerships, Allen said, the Georgia and Ohio models can be economically lucrative for business, intellectually stimulating for academics, and a boost in esteem for a metropolitan area or state.

The seminar comes at a time of conflict within the Legislature over the future of the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. Allen emphasized that, instead of trying to be all things to all people, the best universities must intentionally pursue "selective excellence."

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) expressed concern that universities might compromise their "Aristotelian virtue of learning for its own sake" by allowing industry to guide publicly-funded research.

"After World War II people had the same concerns," Allen responded. "If you leave (major research decisions) to faculty members, we can make sure that good people do the right thing."

He also added The Ohio State University's ethics commission vigorously monitors the relationships. "The key is disclosure," said Allen, referring to the tension between industry's need for secrecy and the public trust, which necessitates transparency.

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township) said, "It takes leadership of the University to guide this." Expressing the generally optimistic mood of the assembled lawmakers regarding the possibility of the University of Minnesota engaging in such partnerships, he said, "There is great potential."

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar) was impressed with the idea of tying compensation of professors to the success of their ideas in the marketplace, a scheme he said he "would like explored more" at the University of Minnesota.

"We need risk takers" in the development of agricultural technology, he said.



PHOTOS BY ANDREW VON BANK

Kitty Forbes Vogt, program manager for the Georgia Research Alliance, and David Allen, assistant vice-president for technology partnerships at The Ohio State University speak at the Capitol Forum Series Feb. 22.

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Monday, February 26

HF1144—Wilkin (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Attorney general access to health data limited.

HF1145—Boudreau (R)
Agriculture Policy
Veterinary medicine cease and desist orders authorized.

HF1146—Ozment (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Salt distribution stockpiles design, construction, and use requirements established.

HF1147—Mullery (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Landlord and tenant property covenant clarified.

HF1148—Mullery (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Judges authorized to set bail at levels that protect the public safety.

HF1149—Mares (R)
Education Policy
Educational data classification and dissemination provided.

HF1150—Bishop (R)
Ways & Means
Budget and forecast procedures technical provisions modified.

HF1151—Mulder (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Psychologist disciplinary actions penalty provisions modified.

HF1152—Mulder (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Emergency medical services buildings in rural Minnesota construction matching grants provided through the Minnesota Investment Fund, and money appropriated.

HF1153—Mulder (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local government building project architect requirement exemption provided.

HF1154—Greiling (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Metropolitan Mosquito Control Commission insecticide use restricted.

HF1155—Abeler (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Health care provider affirmative consent to participate in a network under a category of coverage and disclosure of provider's contract changes required.

HF1156—Dehler (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Prescription drug program eligibility expanded.

HF1157—Dehler (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
St. Stephen water and wastewater systems grants provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF1158—Osskopp (R)
Taxes
MinnesotaCare provider and premium taxes repealed, tobacco settlement proceeds allocated to health insurance account, personal income tax exemption for dependents provided, health care access fund repealed, and money appropriated.

HF1159—Pawlenty (R)
Capital Investment
Local bridge replacement and rehabilitation and Gillette Children's Specialty Health Care facility prior funding provisions modified.

HF1160—Davids (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Physician assistants prescribing medication review provisions modified.

HF1161—Sertich (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Minnesota State Retirement System refunds of contributions authorized for employees who terminated service at any time in the past.

HF1162—Swapinski (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Duluth; St. Louis River community recreation, service, and learning center grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1163—Gray (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Adolescent parenting grant program funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1164—Gray (DFL)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Homeless prevention school stability project funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1165—Gray (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Head Start grantee minimum funding ensured and money appropriated.

HF1166—Mulder (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Lamb and wool research, education, and marketing assistance program funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1167—Skoe (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Red Lake Watershed district manager position authorized to represent the Red Lake Indian Reservation.

HF1168—Juhnke (DFL)
Regulated Industries
Telecommunications infrastructure redundancy required.

HF1169—Dorman (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Employer safety committee requirements modified.

HF1170—Dawkins (DFL)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Early childhood care and education pilot project grants authorized and money appropriated.

HF1171—Kalis (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Faribault County Soil and Water Conservation District Quad-Lakes project grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1172—Ruth (R)
Transportation Policy
School bus driver's licenses checked twice annually.

HF1173—Howes (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Minnesota Conservation Corps funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1174—Howes (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Propane education and research council established.

HF1175—Vandever (R)
Taxes
Electronic tax filing requirements modified.

HF1176—Vandever (R)
Taxes
Electronic tax filing requirements modified.

HF1177—Gunther (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Blue Earth County board grant provided for study of Rapidan Dam, and money appropriated.

HF1178—Lenczewski (DFL)
Taxes
Metropolitan fiscal disparities program study required and money appropriated.

HF1179—Lieder (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Public safety employees assigned to state patrol to enforce motor vehicle size and weight laws defined as public safety officers for purposes of survivor benefits.

HF1180—Lenczewski (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Aspergillosis; public benefits for diagnosis and treatment of aspergillosis provided as provided for tuberculosis.

HF1181—Anderson, B. (R)
Education Policy
Independent School District No. 877, Buffalo, permanently authorized to start school prior to Labor Day.

HF1182—Clark, J. (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Invention developer contract requirements modified.

HF1183—Nornes (R)
Taxes
Ambulance service supplies, equipment, repair, and replacement parts sales tax exemption provided.

HF1184—Clark, J. (R)
Education Policy
Pupil unit count increased for kindergarten pupils.

HF1185—Smith (R)**Civil Law**

Revenue recapture act use authorized for collection of specified judgements, priority of claims provided, service of process requirements modified, and money appropriated.

HF1186—Abrams (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Integration revenue provided for all members of a multi-district integration collaborative.

HF1187—Mulder (R)**Taxes**

Education agricultural property tax credit increased.

HF1188—Gunther (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Fire training exercise ash disposal regulated.

HF1189—Vandever (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Election of municipal council members provided after annexation.

HF1190—Dorman (R)**Taxes**

Agricultural processing facility construction materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

HF1191—Juhnke (DFL)**Agriculture & Rural Development Finance**

Turkey respiratory disease control and prevention research grant provided to University of Minnesota and money appropriated.

HF1192—Abeler (R)**Education Policy**

Applicants for temporary limited teaching license or personnel variance permitted to submit applications by July 1, and conforming rule changes provided.

HF1193—Goodno (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Home and community-based options for individuals with disabilities access improvements provided, consumer control provisions modified, and consumer-directed home care demonstration project established.

HF1194—Rukavina (DFL)**K-12 Education Finance**

Declining pupil aid provided for economically distressed school districts and money appropriated.

HF1195—Mariani (DFL)**Education Policy**

Student loans; public institutions required to adopt student assistance policy for loans in default, and grant eligibility conforming changes provided.

HF1196—Tingelstad (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Tobacco settlement fund modified, medical education endowment fund sunset extended, healthy kids learn endowment fund established, and money appropriated.

HF1197—Hackbarth (R)**Transportation Policy**

Metropolitan Council demonstration project funding provided for express bus service between downtown Minneapolis and one or more cities located outside the transit taxing district, and money appropriated.

HF1198—Tingelstad (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Foster care, adoption assistance, and relative custody assistance advisory task force convened.

HF1199—Tingelstad (R)**Taxes**

Adoption expenses income tax deduction provided.

HF1200—Tingelstad (R)**Taxes**

Adoption expenses income tax credit provided.

HF1201—Westrom (R)**Taxes**

Poultry litter biomass electrical generating facility construction materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

HF1202—Westrom (R)**Taxes**

Poultry litter biomass electrical generating facility property tax exemption provided.

HF1203—Gunther (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Home energy assistance trust fund account established and money appropriated.

HF1204—Jacobson (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Laurentian Environmental Learning Center funding provided to Mounds View school district and money appropriated.

HF1205—Sykora (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Wine; off-sale wine licenses authorized for supermarkets in metropolitan counties.

HF1206—Evans (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Prescription drug rebate program established and money appropriated.

HF1207—Pugh (DFL)**Education Policy**

Special School District No. 6, South St. Paul, chemical and alcohol-free school grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1208—Pugh (DFL)**Higher Education Finance**

Debt service tuition rebate provided to public post-secondary students and money appropriated.

HF1209—Slawik (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Patient rights and protections established, coverages regulated, carrier and provider duties specified, and remedies provided.

HF1210—Evans (DFL)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Patient rights and protections established, coverages regulated, carrier and provider duties specified, and remedies provided.

HF1211—Daggett (R)**Taxes**

Water treating and pressurizing materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided.

HF1212—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Health maintenance organizations authorized to offer greater flexibility in enrollee cost-sharing.

HF1213—Peterson (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Drug dog alert defined as probable cause for searches for controlled substances, training objectives required for dogs, grants provided for purchase and care of dogs, and money appropriated.

HF1214—Lipman (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Election provisions clarified, and specified election procedures and requirements modified.

HF1215—Jennings (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Teachers retirement association service credit purchase authorized for a teacher at Independent School District No. 279, Osseo.

HF1216—Mulder (R)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Comprehensive advanced life support educational program funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1217—Ness (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Telecommunication access revenue and other connectivity funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF1218—Rhodes (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Metropolitan Radio Board expiration date extended to 2005.

HF1219—Gunther (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

State fund mutual insurance company state involvement reduced.

HF1220—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Long-term care; consumer information and assistance and community-based care, system reform and reimbursement, workforce recruitment and retention, and regulation of nursing pools provided; and money appropriated.

HF1221—Mares (R)**K-12 Education Finance**

Children's mental health integrated services pilot projects funded and money appropriated.

HF1222—Dawkins (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Manufacturer's duty to repair, refund, or replace specified new computers defined.

HF1223—Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Licensed nursing facility annual rate increases established.

HF1224—Davids (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Medical response unit registration provided.

HF1225—Osthoff (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Saint Paul Greenway Corridor funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF1226—Sertich (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

State lands exchange requirements modified.

HF1227—Carlson (DFL)**Health & Human Services Finance**

Hennepin County nursing facility rate increase authorized and money appropriated.

HF1228—Paymar (DFL)**Family & Early Childhood Education Finance**

Ramsey County ACE (All Children Excel) program and Hennepin County Delinquents Under 10 programs funded, and money appropriated.

HF1229—Mullery (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Actions restricted against a driver for violation of condition of abstinence.

HF1230—Boudreau (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Library for the blind telecommunications system funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1231—Erickson (R)
Education Policy
School media program staff position established, school media center study initiated, and money appropriated.

HF1232—Rukavina (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
St. Louis County school trust land long-term lease authorized.

HF1233—Haas (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Brooklyn Park city economic development authority tax increment use authorized.

HF1234—Eastlund (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Regional library telecommunications aid grants provided and money appropriated.

HF1235—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Forest management money appropriated.

HF1236—Rhodes (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
House and Senate confirmation of members of the Metropolitan Airports Commission required.

HF1237—Seifert (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Lac Qui Parle-Yellow Bank Watershed District Prairie Farm Preservation and Exhibit Center grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1238—Otremba (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Minnesota Dairy Supply Management Act established.

HF1239—Vandever (R)
Local Government a& Metropolitan Affairs
Forest Lake special election authorized on whether to increase the size of the city council and establish wards.

HF1240—Bernardy (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Restrictions on the purchase of retirement plan service credit for prior military service eliminated.

HF1241—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy
Feedlot permitting delegation in certain counties required and support funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF1242—Nornes (R)
Family & Early Childhood Education Finance
Library basic support grant money appropriated.

HF1243—Ness (R)
Agriculture Policy
Feedlot specialist program established and money appropriated.

HF1244—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Early and periodic screening, diagnosis, and treatment program requirements established, report required, and money appropriated.

HF1245—Stang (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Dishonored check collection charges provisions modified.

HF1246—Dorman (R)
Civil Law
Gas; civil remedies provided for theft of motor fuels.

HF1247—Eastlund (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Veterans home board administration of planned giving donations provided.

HF1248—Eastlund (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Veterans homes resident deposit accounts modified.

Thursday, March 1

HF1249—Bishop (R)
Crime Prevention
Sex offender assessments ordered.

HF1250—Rhodes (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Military discharge certificates classified as private data.

HF1251—Osskopp (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Sustainable and organic foods programs base funding levels restored and money appropriated.

HF1252—Pawlenty (R)
Jobs & Economic Development Finance
Veterans; homeless or at-risk veterans housing projects loans and grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1253—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
School district reserve accounts authorized.

HF1254—Workman (R)
Transportation Policy
Driver's license reinstatement fee alcohol-impaired driver education account allocation modified.

HF1255—Haas (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
County social service agencies reimbursed for out-of-home juvenile placement costs and money appropriated.

HF1256—Holberg (R)
Civil Law
Best interests of the child factors clarified relating to custody proceedings.

HF1257—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Family and adult self-sufficiency program provisions modified.

HF1258—Hilstrom (DFL)
Transportation Finance
Brooklyn Center replacement transit hub design and construction provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF1259—Erickson (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Fingerhut, Inc., of Mora employees provided extra unemployment benefits.

HF1260—Dawkins (DFL)
Civil Law
Custodial and non-custodial parent terminology neutralized relating to family law.

HF1261—Bishop (R)
Crime Prevention
Corrections; obsolete language repealed referencing Regions Hospital, predatory offenders required to demonstrate full compliance with supervised release, and risk level review and reassessment provisions modified.

HF1262—Wenzel (DFL)
Taxes
Personal and dependent exemption income tax deduction provided.

HF1263—Greiling (DFL)
Education Policy
Special education services provisions modified and money appropriated.

HF1264—Kahn (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Urban rivers act draft preparation required.

HF1265—Greiling (DFL)
Education Policy
Charter schools board established and money appropriated.

HF1266—Ness (R)
Agriculture & Rural Development Finance
Dairy diagnostics and modernization program additional funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1267—Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Sports wagering games authorized, sports bookmaking licenses provided, and Minnesota active recreation fund established.

HF1268—Kahn (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Genetic information insurance company use regulated under the Genetic Discrimination Act.

HF1269—Kahn (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance
Mississippi whitewater trail funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1270—Entenza (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Currency exchanges, real estate brokers, real property appraisers, residential contractors, and collection agencies continuing education, fees, costs, duties, rights and recovery fund amounts regulated.

HF1271—Jaros (DFL)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Chiropractors; licensed chiropractors included in preferred provider networks.

HF1272—Jaros (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Administration department directed to decentralize state agencies and departments.

HF1273—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Nursing facility operating cost reimbursement floor established.

HF1274—Anderson, I. (DFL)
Regulated Industries
Biomass mandate modified to include new facility in northern Minnesota that utilizes biomass residue wood and wood byproducts.

HF1275—Peterson (DFL)
Agriculture Policy
Organic, natural, and locally grown foods promotion periodical established, and money appropriated.

HF1276—Mullery (DFL)**Civil Law**

Crane operator certification and regulation provided, rulemaking required and civil penalties imposed.

HF1277—Molnau (R)**Transportation Policy**

Interregional transportation corridor financing procedures, statewide communications system, and transportation revolving loan fund provisions modified, and clarifying changes provided.

HF1278—Kubly (DFL)**Transportation Policy**

Recreational vehicle combination maximum length increased to 65 feet.

HF1279—Hilstrom (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Homeowner notice provided prior to cancellation of insurance for nonpayment of premium by a mortgage escrow servicer.

HF1280—Seagren (R)**Education Policy**

Elementary reading specialist licensure provided, and elementary school teacher license requirements modified.

HF1281—Holberg (R)**Transportation Policy**

Light utility trailers lifetime registration provided.

HF1282—Osskopp (R)**Agriculture Policy**

Rural finance authority provisions modified.

HF1283—Seagren (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Internet sales and leases regulated, and domain names and agents for service of process information disclosure provided.

HF1284—Rhodes (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Lottery funds not dedicated to natural resources trust fund allocated to arts fund and amateur sports fund.

HF1285—Winter (DFL)**Transportation Finance**

Nobles County joint powers transit authority grant provided for operation of prairieland transit system and money appropriated.

HF1286—Ruth (R)**Transportation Finance**

Traffic flow improvements funded to eliminate bottlenecks in metro area, at-risk interregional corridors outside metro area improved, annual reports required, and money appropriated.

HF1287—Ruth (R)**Transportation Finance**

Trunk Highway 14 four-lane expressway segment constructed, environmental impact statement prepared, and money appropriated.

HF1288—Daggett (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Living-at-home block nurse program numbers and funding increased and money appropriated.

HF1289—Dawkins (DFL)**Crime Prevention**

Prostitution crimes aggressive initiative provided, criminal penalties increased and mandatory minimum sentencing imposed, presentence investigations ordered for all prostitution, firearm, or drug offenses, and money appropriated.

HF1290—Howes (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

County offices made appointive positions under certain circumstances.

HF1291—Boudreau (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Health plan subrogation clause limitation provisions modified.

HF1292—Goodno (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Family and adult self-sufficiency program provisions modified.

HF1293—Davids (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Public service commissioner's remaining duties transferred to commissioner of commerce after reorganization order No. 181.

HF1294—Mares (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Post-retirement health care savings plan for state employees established and money appropriated.

HF1295—Haas (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Volunteer firefighter relief association consultant conditions imposed.

HF1296—Abrams (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Legislative days limit repealed and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1297—Dempsey (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Office of Strategic and Long-range planning Authority transfer from municipal board statutory conforming changes provided, and delegation by the director authorized.

HF1298—Jennings (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Joint powers wastewater treatment boards authorized to issue bonds.

HF1299—Jennings (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Driveway damage caused by snowmobile metal traction device reimbursement provided.

HF1300—Jacobson (R)**Transportation Policy**

Motor vehicle sales tax funds deposited in the highway user tax distribution fund and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1301—Osthoff (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

St. Paul Roy Wilkins Auditorium planning and design grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1302—Hackbarth (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Natural resources; specified advisory committee expiration dates extended, hunting stamp provisions modified, snowmobile safety grants carry forward provided, and money appropriated.

HF1303—Boudreau (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Children's health insurance provisions modified.

HF1304—Nornes (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Lead poisoning prevention provisions modified, property sellers required to provide well water test results, and obsolete laws repealed.

HF1305—Hackbarth (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Environmental assistance revolving loan account established and money appropriated.

HF1306—Howes (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Minnesota Conservation Corps program and decorative forest products provisions modified, sustainable forest resources provisions repeal delayed, study required, civil penalties imposed, and money appropriated.

HF1307—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services Policy**

Guardianship service providers defined, duties specified, and money appropriated.

HF1308—Kelliher (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

County biological survey funded and money appropriated.

HF1309—Dibble (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Brewers; retail and wholesale sales of a licensed brewer's own products permitted.

HF1310—Abrams (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy**

Construction; state building official authorized to interpret the state building code, annual reports on construction-related fees required, construction fees regulated, and waivers of rights requirements prohibited.

HF1311—McElroy (R)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Minnesota money transmitters act established.

HF1312—Koskinen (DFL)**Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development**

Hearing aids for children insurance coverage required.

HF1313—Ozment (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Soil and water conservation district grants provided for non-point engineering technical assistance, feedlot water quality management program, and special projects cost-share program; and money appropriated.

HF1314—Mares (R)**Transportation Policy**

Seat belt offense designated as a primary offense.

HF1315—Fuller (R)**Crime Prevention**

State fire marshal additional duties specified, fire marshal account recreated, and money appropriated.

HF1316—Dawkins (DFL)**Taxes**

Publicly owned parking facilities tax exemption provided.

HF1317—Dawkins (DFL)**Taxes**

Tax increment financing district pooling qualifications and permission process modified.

HF1318—Ozment (R)**Environment & Natural Resources Policy**

Environmental fund revenues and expenditures provided, remediation fund established, and money appropriated.

HF1319—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Nursing home pass-through reimbursement extended.

HF1320—Lindner (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Hassan Township economic development authority authorized.

HF1321—Ruth (R)
Taxes
Steele County aggregate materials production tax imposed.

HF1322—Buesgens (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Council and other related commissions abolished, ownership of metro sports facilities transferred to Minneapolis, wastewater control commission established, duties transferred, and money appropriated.

HF1323—Jennings (DFL)
Regulated Industries
Minnesota Energy Security and Reliability Act enacted.

HF1324—Bradley (R)
Health & Human Services Policy
Long-term care provisions modified.

HF1325—Johnson, S. (DFL)
Crime Prevention
Asian-American juvenile crime intervention and prevention grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1326—Mares (R)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
PERA; service credit purchase for a specific individual employed by White Bear Lake school district authorized.

HF1327—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Bear hunting; use of dogs for bear hunting allowed.

HF1328—Ness (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Limited English proficiency programs revenue increased.

HF1329—Goodwin (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Dental service coverages extended to porcelain-fused-to-metal crowns for adults and bridges.

HF1330—Clark, J. (R)
Crime Prevention
Felony penalty for aggravated cruelty to pets imposed.

HF1331—Skoe (DFL)
Taxes
Designated housing projects within Native American Indian reservations exempted from property taxes.

HF1332—Daggett (R)
Health & Human Services Finance
Becker County nursing facility rate increase provided.

HF1333—Wolf (R)
Education Policy
Teacher contract January 15 deadline date and penalty repealed.

HF1334—Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Former University of Minnesota hospital employees disability coverage provided.

HF1335—Slawik (DFL)
Taxes
Maximum income tax dependent care credit increased, phaseout extended, and money appropriated.

HF1336—Mulder (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Health insurance; stop-loss fund account created and money appropriated.

HF1337—Mulder (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Health insurance; purchasing alliance stop-loss fund account created and money appropriated.

HF1338—Haas (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Insurers, agents, coverages, benefits, costs, claims, investments, notifications, and disclosures regulated; commissioner powers and duties provided, and regulation of nonprofit legal services plans eliminated.

HF1339—Schumacher (DFL)
Transportation Policy
Motor vehicle registration taxes limited, motor vehicle sales tax funds dedicated to highway user tax distribution fund, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1340—Anderson, B. (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Wright County recorder appointment permitted.

HF1341—Davnie (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Special education revenue increased, funding for related programs increased, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF1342—Marquart (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance
Education; isolation index distance factor increased for sparsity revenue.

HF1343—Evans (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Prescription drug program expanded.

HF1344—Thompson (DFL)
Health & Human Services Policy
Medical assistance income standard for persons who are aged, blind, or disabled increased.

HF1345—Cassell (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Minnesota Association of Resource conservation and development grants provided and money appropriated.

HF1346—Howes (R)
Taxes
Sustainable forest property tax program established, refunds provided to certain property owners, tree growth tax law repealed, and money appropriated.

HF1347—Rhodes (R)
Civil Law
Tenant impact statement provisions modified and civil penalties imposed.

HF1348—Holberg (R)
Judiciary Finance
Dakota County criminal justice information system improvements grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1349—Molnau (R)
Taxes
County levy for watershed management separate certification provided.

HF1350—Ozment (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Dakota County authorized to provide services to Metropolitan Inter-county Association, Dakota County Agricultural Society, and specified employees included in PERA.

HF1351—Abeler (R)
K-12 Education Finance
Local learn and earn programs allowed to add additional program slots, subsequent evaluation of student outcomes provided, and money appropriated.

HF1352—Murphy (DFL)
Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy
Teachers retirement association annuity formula computation modified.

HF1353—Stanek (R)
Crime Prevention
Interstate compact for adult offender supervision adopted, existing compact repealed, advisory council created, administrator appointed, reports required, and money appropriated.

HF1354—Holsten (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Petroleum tank release cleanup provisions modified.

HF1355—Holberg (R)
Crime Prevention
Center for Crime Victim Services reorganized as a division of the Department of Public Safety, powers and duties transferred, grants authorized, and rulemaking provided.

HF1356—Dorman (R)
Agriculture Policy
Agricultural operation nuisance liability protection expanded.

HF1357—McElroy (R)
Taxes
Commissioner of revenue authorized to reissue checks for refunds in cases of hardship, and certain uncashed tax refunds listed as unclaimed property.

HF1358—Stang (R)
Commerce, Jobs & Economic Development
Entertainment agencies regulation repealed.

HF1359—Ozment (R)
Environment & Natural Resources Policy
Lottery ticket in lieu tax disposition modified, state wildlife management area additions provided, land exchanges authorized, and Roseau County conservation land sale permitted.

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MONDAY, March 5

7:30 a.m. departure

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport
6040 28th Ave. S.

Minneapolis, Minn. 55450

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: Airport tour.

Members and staff: Meet on east steps of State Office Building (outside Secretary of State's office) at 7:30 a.m.

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF550 (Eastlund) Edvest; higher education services office rulemaking authority extended.

HF116 (Mulder) Respiratory Care Practitioner Advisory Council sunset delayed, and athletic trainer registration cancelled for nonrenewal after two years.

HF70 (Seifert) Presidential electors designated and duties specified.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Continuation of Department of Health and Department of Human Services deep budget overview.

MDH, Management and Support Services.

MDH, Health Care Access Fund.

Meeting will resume 15 minutes after session in 10 State Office Building.

DHS, Economic Support Management.

JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Budget review of the Department of Economic Security.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF209 (Hackbarth) Shooting ranges generally accepted practices defined, relation to local ordinances specified, closing and relocation requirements provided, and nuisance action liability granted.

HF281 (Greiling) Civil commitment mentally ill definition and emergency hold standard modified, early intervention hospital stay extended, and specified hearings on medications combined with civil commitment proceeding.

HF919 (Dawkins) Civil commitment definitions and procedures modified, patient rights specified, coverage and cost of care provided, voluntary consent procedures expanded, court records sealed, and money appropriated.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry budget presentation.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: HF342 (Dehler) Higher education grants terms and conditions modified.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF480 (Kielkucki) Relating to education; authorizing funding to establish a voluntary accreditation program to assist school districts to provide optimal educational support services; appropriating money.

HF776 (Kielkucki) Relating to education; appropriating money for the Minnesota Learning Resource Center.

HF398 (Seifert) Relating to education finance; exempting agricultural lands from the school district levy for debt service.

HF434 (Wagenius) A bill for an act relating to education; ensuring that all children are able to read by second grade; appropriating money.

Property Tax Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Erhardt

Agenda: Overview of Tax Increment Financing by Joel Michael, House Research.

Presentation on Tax Increment Financing Report by Office of the State Auditor.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

NOTE ROOM

500N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Elaine Harder

Agenda: HF939 (Howes) Exempts the purchase of equipment and materials used to make improvements to certain resorts from sales and use taxes.

HF612 (Nornes) Exempts certain purchases by licensed child care facilities.

HF627 (Holsten) Exempts the purchase of certain property used in constructing a Hugo city hall from sales & use taxes.

HF1018 (Milbert) Removes access to amusement devices from the definition of a taxable service.

HF633 (Osskopp) Provides for use of tax refunds to pay debts for child support before tax offsets.

12:30 p.m.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: HF786 (Abeler) Relating to education; community education programs; modifying the adults with disabilities program.

Chris Orr, Anoka-Hennepin Community Education.

Toni Lippert.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey

Agenda: HF652 (Anderson, B.) Eminent domain proceedings owner costs and fees provided.

HF665 (Kielkucki) Regional development commissions and other regional organization local planning assistance funding provided and money appropriated.

HF867 (Seagren) Hennepin; suburban regional park district authorized to set commissioner compensation, boundaries clarified, open meeting law conformity provided, donations accepted, and joint powers agreements authorized.

HF891 (Olson) Lake improvement districts; modifying percent of property owners necessary to petition for creation, termination or holding a referendum on creation.

HF1016 (Holberg) City and county obligations payment by electronic transfer or credit card authorized.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ken Wolf

Agenda: HF118 (Kielkucki) Resolution memorializing television networks to reduce violent and sexually explicit material and produce material that promotes wholesome family values. Presentation by Larry Sawyer, Director of Government Relations and Civic Affairs for General Mills.

Presentation by Larry Schedin, President of Schedin & Assoc.

HFXXXX (Jennings/Wolf) Energy Reliability and Regulatory Flexibility Act.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

15 minutes after session

HEALTH & HUMAN

SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Continuation of morning agenda.

**6 p.m. or immediately following session
(whichever is later)**

Elections Subcommittee/GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Eric Lipman

Agenda: HF857 (Kielkucki) Election day registration to require picture identification, additional registration information required, certain felony convictions reported, and rulemaking authorized.

HF479 (Lipman) Election day voter registration identity and residence requirements modified, election administration practice study requested, election equipment purchase revolving loan fund created, and money appropriated.

6 p.m.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

112 State Capitol

Chr. to be elected

Agenda: SF451 (Pogemiller); HF712 (Mares) PERA-Corr; Contribution rate reductions. SF625 (Tomassoni); HF474 (Rukavina) Eveleth P&F; Post retirement increase.

SF358 (Betzold); HF557 (Haas): Osseo Volunteer Fire; Special appropriation to offset liability increase.

HF1295 (Haas); SFXXXX (Betzold) Volunteer Fire; Requiring bonding or insurance for financial consultants.

SF190 (Scheevel); HF207 (Rifenberg): Volunteer Fire; Increase in lump sum supplemental benefit and state reimbursement.

SF810 (Pogemiller) PERA; Contribution increases, benefit modifications, and coverage changes.

HF855 (Mares) PERA; Contribution increases, benefit modifications, and coverage changes.

TUESDAY, March 6

8:15 a.m.

EDUCATION POLICY

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Harry Mares

Agenda: HF915 (Cassell) Pledge of allegiance required in all public schools.

HF1028 (Olson) Freedom from censorship in Minnesota public schools act enacted.

HEALTH & HUMAN

SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: HF376 (Bradley) Community care options for older adults act providing comprehensive senior care, and money appropriated.

HF1220 (Bradley) Long-term care; consumer information and assistance and community-based care, system reform and reimbursement, workforce recruitment and retention, and regulation of nursing pools provided; and money appropriated.

HF1324 (Bradley) Provisions for long-term care modified.

HF7 (Eastlund) Nursing facilities, intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation and related conditions (ICF/MR), and direct care provider rate adjustments provided.

HF559 (Goodno) Nursing facility, intermediate care facilities for persons with mental retardation (OCF/MR) and other program rate increase provided and money appropriated.

HF124 (Folliard) Home care providers required to provide notice of service termination, and state health care program reimbursement rates increased for home care providers.

HF470 (Abeler) Nursing home operation cessation or curtailing notice period extended and modified.

Note: This meeting will continue at 4 p.m. in Room 10 of the State Office Building. The bills on the agenda will be presented in the a.m. and public testimony will be taken in the p.m. meeting time. The discussion surrounding HF 376, HF 1220, and HF 1324 is intended to be a review of the provisions included in the bills in their current form.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: Budget overview for the Minnesota Trial Courts.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Workman

Agenda: The DM&E report.

Bills to be announced.

10:15 a.m.

CRIME PREVENTION

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Tuma

Agenda: HF505 (Stanek) Racial Profiling - Statewide policies and training objectives.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL

RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: HF362 (Westrom) Diesel fuel minimum biodiesel fuel content specified.

HF208 (Workman) Resolution urging authorization of funding for modernization of waterways.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF218 (Krinkie) State Government Finance Bill.

Section 13, proposed budget for Department of Employee Relations.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: "Competiveness Under the Governor's Plan."

Testimony from various major Minnesota employers.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE & RURAL

DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Bob Ness

Agenda: Association proposals for Minnesota's farmers, Minnesota Farm Bureau; Minnesota Farmers Union.

Overview of Minnesota Veterinarians' priorities, Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Knobloch

Agenda: Overview of Wastewater Infrastructure Fund.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF926 (Haas) Relating to health; modifying content and form at requirements for Minnesota uniform health care identification

cards; requiring uniform prescription drug information to be included on cards; establishing requirements for issuance of cards.

HF903 (Gerlach) Relating to motor vehicles; repealing restrictions on the sale of wagon covers and similar items.

HF252 (Seifert) Relating to state government; repealing obsolete rules.

HF1084 (McElroy) Relating to financial institutions; modifying investment authority and recordkeeping requirements; regulating certain rates, charges, fees, and disclosures; exempting certain unstaffed after-hour drop boxes from detached facilities regulation.

HFXXXX (Entenza) Commerce Insurance Bill.

2:30 p.m.

**Subcommittee on Gaming/
GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS &
VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY**

400S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mike Osskopp

Agenda: HF894 (Osskopp) Casino; card club wagering system definitions modified.

HF995 (Buesgens) Horse racing license applicant requirements modified, and anti-inflammatory medication content maximum amount increased.

HF1021 (Buesgens) Casino licensee authorized to detain persons suspected of cheating.

HF1069 (Osskopp) Lawful gambling organization annual audit requirements modified, noon hour bingo authorized, and natural disaster relief expenditures permitted from gambling proceeds.

HF1070 (Osskopp) Lawful gambling premises permits to run concurrently with license of organization and permit fees clarified.

4 p.m.

**HEALTH & HUMAN
SERVICES POLICY**

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: Continuation of morning agenda.

7 p.m.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

Minneapolis YMCA

3335 Blaisdell Ave.

Minneapolis, Minn.

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: HF511 (Sviggum) Governor's Tax Bill.

WEDNESDAY, March 7

8:15 a.m.

**GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS &
VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY**

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF289 (Daggett) Four-year terms provided for representatives and senators and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF18 (Mares) Amateur Sports Commission new soccer field grants authorized, criteria established, and money appropriated.

HF172 (Mares) Cities authorized to provide housing assistance for volunteer firefighters or ambulance personnel.

**HEALTH & HUMAN
SERVICES FINANCE**

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Review of November and February Forecast changes.

**JOBS & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT FINANCE**

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Continuation of budget reviews for the Department of Trade and Economic Development and Department of Economic Security, if necessary.

Bills to be announced.

TRANSPORTATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Carol Molnau

Agenda: HF998 (Lieder) Greater Minnesota transit assistance funding provided and money appropriated.

HF645 (Marko) Local road improvement fund created, uses specified, fund transfers provided, advisory committee established, and money appropriated.

HF140 (Molnau) Local bridge replacement and rehabilitation authorized, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

10:15 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Steve Smith

Agenda: HF810 (Swenson) Court administrators required to send notice of payment of judgments to specified credit reporting agencies.

HF319 (Bishop) Trial court judgeships increased in specified judicial districts and money appropriated.

**ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL
RESOURCES FINANCE**

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry budget presentation continued.

Department of Natural Resources Operations Support budget presentation.

HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCE

300S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Peggy Leppik

Agenda: HF977 (Leppik) Minnesota State Colleges and Universities technical and community college employee unions merged.

Witnesses: Ed Schones, Co-President, Minnesota State College Faculty; Larry Oveson, Co-President, Minnesota State College Faculty; Bill Tschida, Vice Chancellor for Human Resources, MnSCU.

HF291 (Seifert) Higher education grant stipends calculation modified relating to Pell grants.

K-12 EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Alice Seagren

Agenda: HF1186 (Abrams) Relating to education; providing integration revenue for all members of a multidistrict integration collaborative.

HF1008 (Juhnke) Relating to education finance; qualifying all school districts that implement an integration plan for integration revenue.

HF1107 (Rukavina) Relating to education; making non-mining secondary vocational programs more widely available; appropriating money.

HF63 (Ness) Relating to education finance; restoring funding for secondary vocational programming; appropriating money.

HF8 (Ruth) Relating to education finance; restoring funding for secondary vocational programming; appropriating money.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Ron Abrams

Agenda: Discussion of proposed changes to HF511 (Sviggum) Governor's Tax Bill.

Continuation of HF1129 (Abrams) Sales Tax Recodification.

Other agenda times may be added.

12:30 p.m.

AGRICULTURE POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tim Finseth

Agenda: HF791 (Kuisle) Requires a waiver of the civil fine in excess of amount required on diary farmers.

HF1002 (Ness) Allows an additional member on the Agriculture Utilization Resource Institute (AURI) board of directors.

HF1009 (Finseth) Clarifying the definition of agricultural land.

HF406 (Jennings) Relating to the state agricultural society, authorizing establishment of a nonprofit corporation.

COMMERCE, JOBS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Greg Davids

Agenda: HF285 (Ness) Relating to liens; regulating agricultural liens; revising and consolidating crop liens and agricultural liens on livestock.

HF778 (Stang) Relating to commerce; regulating motor vehicle sales and distribution; specifying unfair and illegal practices by manufacturers, distributors, and factory branches.

HF779 (McElroy) Relating to commerce; modifying provisions dealing with motor vehicle dealer franchise transfers and objections to establishment or relocation of a franchise.

HF1245 (Stang) Relating to commerce; amending provisions relating to charges recipients of dishonored checks may collect from persons who write the checks.

FAMILY & EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION FINANCE

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Barb Sykora

Agenda: HF681 (Rhodes) Relating to young people; appropriating money for youth outreach services.

Budget Accounts: Abused Children; Children's Trust Fund; Adolescent Parenting; Male Responsibility, Carol Thomas, Department of Children, Families and Learning.

HF1163 (Gray) relating to education; appropriating money for the adolescent parenting grant program.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jerry Dempsey

Agenda: HF326 (Ozment) Local and state government agency denial of requests for action clarified.

HF371 (Workman) Aggregate resource protection and development included in local government land use comprehensive plans.

HF416/SF400 (Rifenberg/Kierlin) Hokah authorized to vacate roads if necessary due to extensive damage.

HF1153 (Mulder) Local government building project architect requirement exemption provided.

1:45 p.m.

Subcommittee on Metropolitan Council and Agencies/

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mark Buesgens

Agenda: HF444 (McElroy) Metropolitan Council membership increased to include nonvoting affiliate members from adjacent Minnesota and Wisconsin counties.

HF981 (McElroy) Legislative commission on metropolitan government established, oversight of Metropolitan Council provided, and legislative authorization required for council budget and programs.

THURSDAY, March 8

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: Presentation on Dental Access Report by DHS.

HF278 (Nornes) Dentists; medical assistance reimbursement rate increased for specified dentists, dental hygienists permitted to perform services under supervision, grant program for community clinics established, and money appropriated.

HF693 (Goodno) Dentists loan forgiveness program established, donated dental services program created, dental services and provider requirements modified, reimbursement rates increased, immunities provided, and money appropriated.

HF1212 (Bradley) Health maintenance organizations authorized to offer greater flexibility in enrollee cost-sharing.

HF 1014 (Boudreau) Medical assistance reimbursement for special transportation services provisions modified.

Note: The following bills will be discussed during the evening meeting which will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Room 10 of the State Office Building.

HF934 (Bradley) Alternative quality assurance licensing system project for programs for persons with developmental disabilities expiration date extended, requirements modified, and money appropriated.

HF587 (Huntley) Detoxification services provided by counties reimbursed by state funds.

HF642 (Kahn) National health services corps state loan repayment program; disciplinary action grounds established for physicians failing to meet obligations or repay loans.

HF1081 (Jacobson) Health care review organization provisions modified, participation in Internet-based information sharing systems authorized, and specified data release permitted.

Brief presentation of the following health care tax bills:

HF194 (Mulder) Ambulance services excluded from MinnesotaCare provider tax.

HF279 (Huntley) MinnesotaCare premium and other provider taxes repealed, pass-through of savings required, tobacco settlement disposition provided, health care access fund contingent repeal provided, and civil penalties imposed.

HF380 (Kubly) MinnesotaCare provider tax and health plan premium taxes repealed, health care access fund eliminated, hospital surcharge repealed, and money appropriated.

HF383 (Haas) Health insurance premium tax and premium tax on nonprofit health plan companies repealed.

JUDICIARY FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Rich Stanek

Agenda: Budget overview for the Minnesota Trial Courts continued.

Budget overview for the Minnesota Supreme Court.

Budget overview for the Minnesota Court of Appeals.

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: HFXXXX (Boudreau) MN Personal Protection Act - Permits to Carry Pistols.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES POLICY

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dennis Ozment

Agenda: Groundwater Subcommittee Report, Rep. Rod Skoe.

Survey of the Groundwater Act of 1989, John Helland, House Research.

Minnesota's Water Supply, DNR Waters.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

NOTE ROOM

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Elaine Harder

Agenda: HF575 (Kuisle) Expands the individual income tax subtraction for educational expenses.

HF499 (Rhodes) Allows an education subtraction or credit for musical instruments used in school.

HF548 (Mulder) Allows an education subtraction or credit for musical instruments used in school.

HF545 (Anderson, I.) Eliminates the expiration date for a Biomass electricity facility construction materials sales tax exemption.

HF1201 (Westrom) Exempts from the sales tax purchases of materials and equipment used in constructing a biomass electrical generating facility.

STATE GOVERNMENT FINANCE

300N State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Philip Krinkie

Agenda: HF218 (Krinkie) State Government Finance Bill.

Section 16, proposed budget for Department of Revenue.

12:30 p.m.

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: HF1053 (Abrams) Relating to insurance; revising certain provisions involving state regulation of private health coverage; transferring certain regulatory control; establishing requirements for managed care plans.

HF905 (Haas) Relating to insurance; simplifying regulation of health insurers and health maintenance organizations; establishing a task force on small business health insurance; providing appointments.

3 p.m.

THE HOUSE MEETS IN SESSION.

6:30 p.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES POLICY

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Fran Bradley

Agenda: See morning agenda.

FRIDAY, March 9

8:15 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS & VETERANS AFFAIRS POLICY

Basement Hearing Room

State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Rhodes

Agenda: HF252 (Seifert) Repeal of obsolete rules.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Kevin Goodno

Agenda: Budget overviews of the Veteran's Home Board, the Disability Council, Ombudsman for Mental Health and Mental Retardation, and Ombudsman for Families.

JOBS & ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dan McElroy

Agenda: Budget review of the Minnesota Historical Society.

10:15 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Mark Holsten

Agenda: Department of Natural Resources Operations Support budget presentation continued.

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: Presentation of the Department of Revenue's Tax Incidence Study.



Family pets

Tennesseans can collect when beloved family members are killed

In Tennessee pets are now legally recognized as family members rather than just personal property.

During 2000, a state law was passed that allows pet owners to collect non-economic damages when the pet is killed by an unlawful, intentional or negligent act of another person or their animal. The law allows the owner to collect up to \$4,000 in compensation for the emotional damage that is associated with the loss of a pet.

Prior to the passing of the law, pet owners could only recover the cost of replacing the animal plus the cost of veterinary bills.

The law's chief sponsor, Sen. Steve Cohen, a Democrat from Memphis, lost his 12-year old Shih-Tzu, T-Bo, in August 1999 when a

larger dog roaming the neighborhood attacked and killed the Shih-Tzu, who was outside doing his business.

Cohen introduced the legislation because he was frustrated with state law that offered no recourse other than suing for the monetary value of the pet — putting pets on par with any other personal property loss. He said the law attempts to address the grief issues connected with losing a pet.

No other state has a similar law, which only applies to incorporated areas of counties with populations of 75,000 or more. The law exempts farmers who kill dogs that are killing or "worrying" their livestock.

(D. Maeda)



FYI

Committee deadlines set

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

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

The first committee deadline will be **Friday, March 30**. By that date, bills must pass out of necessary policy committees in their house of origin.

The second committee deadline will be **Thursday, April 12**. By that date, bills other than those containing appropriations will have to be passed out of all policy committees in both the House and the Senate.

The third deadline will be **Wednesday, April 25**. All omnibus finance bills will have to pass out of committee by that date.

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

Continued from page 14

a site manager for Youthbuild at The City, Inc., in Minneapolis. He noted that carpentry companies are most aggressive in pursuing Youthbuild workers.

Jamie Janezich is a case manager for the Arrowhead Youthbuild program in Virginia. He said that area is losing a lot of jobs, but the people in the program are on their own, earning money, and many have moved into unsubsidized housing. It gives youth a sense of community, and respect for community, he said.

"This erases a stigma that they're just running around," Janezich said. "It gives them opportunities to meet their goals."

Lonnie Thomas, Jr., who attends Summit Academy in Minneapolis, said there was a time when he hated to go to school, but now he loves it. He wants to go into real estate and business, and buy houses he could fix up and sell. Youthbuild paved the way.

"At first I didn't see my future; now I see it," he said. 🐾

Continued from page 16

measurement is being developed.

Rep. Dale Swapinski (DFL-Duluth), who lives in the area served by a grant-funded, after-school enrichment program, said the juvenile crime rate in his neighborhood "seems to have fallen" since the program went into effect.

"Juvenile crime has gone down in the north side in the past four years," said Kia. "Can I say it's all due to after-school enrichment programs? No, but I know it's a big factor."

Another program previously receiving state financing is Guard Our Youth, which uses National Guard armories for after-school programs for at-risk and under-served youth.

Gary Bloedel, of the state Department of Military Affairs, said the program serves 75,000 youth each year at 13 locations. State funds go to pay a coordinator for the programs. The facilities are open on a gratis basis.

Gov. Jesse Ventura has recommended a budget increase of 4.8 percent for after-school enrichment grants. He has not supported any increases for community education programs, nor has he supported continuing the Guard Our Youth program.

The committee took no action on HF646, but will consider it for inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill. 🐾

Reflections

Visits by more diverse groups to the Capitol are likely the result of an ongoing effort to educate the general public about the legislative process. The more citizens learn that they can make a difference in what bills are introduced and how lawmakers vote, the more they show up to make their voices heard.

Positive activities by organizations like the League of Women Voters and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits have greatly increased know-how for people to be directly involved in public policy.

Associations and constituents from many legislative districts throughout the state all have a "Day at the Capitol."

And there are a few individuals who seem to spend days, and even weeks, at the Capitol promoting their cause.

One visitor, who is still fighting taxes imposed on her property 15 years ago, continues to bring flyers and written materials to the House Post Office for the members' mailboxes. Another is seen daily as he talks to lawmakers or testifies about the rights of the homeless.

Another visitor literally set up an office in the hallway on the first floor of the State Office Building for preparing and collating materials to hand out to the Legislature.

While these actions are all demonstrations of people being involved in a democratic process, one Minnesotan of note is possibly the most colorful. Born Maria Jane Quiggle, she did not go unnoticed, for she was tall, imposing in stature, and vocal. She married a Civil War veteran and, through her advocacy, helped to make the Blaisdell name well known in the state.

Mrs. Blaisdell "had an obsession that she was a person of consequence politically." She made a nuisance of herself on many visits during the 1880s from the Blaisdell home in Pelican Rapids to St. Paul and Minneapolis. Here she would call on prominent political leaders and needle them to try and

get her husband's government allowance increased.

Blaisdell was not successful with state elected officials, so she made trips to Washington D.C. to confront the Minnesota congressional delegation. She soon was given the name the "Minnesota Blizzard," for "storming" the halls of Congress on her own behalf.

The "Blizzard" would converge on the offices of members of Congress with belligerence and determination to get a bill introduced for her husband. She also tried to get a pension for herself, having served

as a nurse at Fort Snelling.

She was such a terror for almost 20 years, that members of the Minnesota delegation such as Knute Nelson, who was the state's governor from 1893-95, would often go into hiding when she was in town.

The "Blizzard" continued to nag politicians and businessmen back at home to pay for her many trips to Washington. Once there, U.S. senators and representatives gave her small

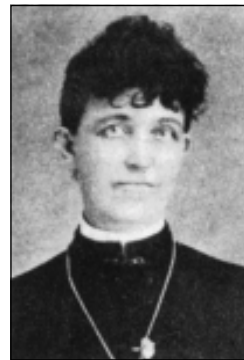
sums to return home after she could make no headway for her cause.

Like Blaisdell's actions in the past, and a couple of individuals who now show up at the State Capitol, staff and members can always be assured of having visitors.

One unforgettable visitor shows up to complain each year, not at the Capitol, but at the House and Senate Information booths at the Minnesota State Fair. Her issue, while not reliable, is about eliminating placement of human waste on public property. She wants to see public toilet kiosks in neighborhoods and downtown.

She has ranted and complained for four or five years now. Someday her problem may be solved. At least she's learned where to express her concerns.

LECLAIR GRIER LAMBERT



Maria Jane Blaisdell

Photo of Maria Jane Blaisdell from the book 101 Best Stories of Minnesota by Merle Potter, 1956, © Schmitt Publications Inc. Minneapolis, Minnesota

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA 55155-1298

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
MAJORITY LEADER: TIM PAWLENTY
MINORITY LEADER: THOMAS W. PUGH

MINNESOTA INDEX

State government finances

Total state revenues for fiscal year 2001, excluding federal grants, in billions	\$15.86
Revenue from individual income tax, in billions	\$5.93
Revenue from sales tax, in billions	\$4.50
Revenue from other taxes (motor vehicle fuels and licenses, cigarettes and tobacco, etc.), in billions	\$2.05
Total state spending, for fiscal year 2001, excluding federal funds, in billions	\$16
Amount for Pre K-12 education, including family and early childhood education spending, in billions	\$4.51
Amount for health and human services, in billions	\$3.32
Amount for transportation, in billions	\$2.06
Amount for property tax aids, in billions	\$1.71
Amount for higher education, in billions	\$1.40
General Fund spending for fiscal year 2001, in billions	\$13.12
Fiscal year 2001 state sales tax rate for general items and motor vehicles, as percent	6.5
For liquor, wine and beer sales, as percent	9
For motor vehicle rentals, as percent	12.7
2000 sales tax rebate, in millions	\$635
1999 sales tax rebate, in billions	\$1.3
State motor fuels tax, per gallon	\$2.0
Corporate franchise tax, as percent of federal taxable income after numerous adjustments	9.8
Cigarette and tobacco products tax per pack	\$48
As percent of wholesale price of tobacco products	35
Insurance premiums basic tax, as percent of premium paid	2
Gambling revenue in fiscal year 2000, in millions	\$160
Percent from the lottery	54
Percent from lawful gambling	45.3
State debt obligations outstanding as of Nov. 1, 2000, in billions	\$6.6
General obligations, in billions	\$2.61
Equipment leases, in millions	\$46
Agency obligations, in billions	\$3.94
Largest agency obligation (Housing Finance), in billions	\$1.98
General obligation debt authorized, but not yet issued, in millions	\$772

Source: *Minnesota Data Book for Legislators*, House Research Department, January 2001.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For general information, call:
House Information Office
(651) 296-2146 or
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