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INSIDE: FLAG FLAP, LEGISLATORS AND REGENTS, LOVE IS IN THE AIR, MORE

This Week's Bill Introductions HF978-HF1151

Session Weekly

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On the cover: One week after temperatures exceeded 50 degrees at the Capitol complex, heavy wet snow covered the trees and grounds when lawmakers returned to work Feb. 14.

—Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

Years of school choice

One size is not best for all students to have success

By **RUTH DUNN**

Her son did well in elementary and middle school, but then he got to high school and lost his way. "The traditional high school path did not work for him," Joy Sorensen Navarre told the House Education Policy and Reform Committee Feb. 10 as part of a discussion about school choice.

She said her son has intellectual gifts, but also has disabilities that disrupt his learning, and he didn't do well in high school. "He began to believe he was a failure; that he was not smart enough to go to college and not even smart enough to complete high school," she said. He stopped caring about school and about his future.

"Then we found Avalon, a small public charter school in St. Paul," she said, "Avalon gave my son his future back. Our son goes to school every day, inspired to learn and is getting good grades. He's thinking about his future again." She and her son, who is now in 11th grade, recently toured an engineering program at a state college.

Navarre said that her son and others who were not doing well in traditional schools are thriving in public charter schools and other non-traditional school options.

Her son always had amazing teachers and caring adults at every school he attended, Navarre said, but the charter school was flexible enough to see him as an individual learner and allowed him to learn in the most effective way for him.

Navarre and others have found that one size does not fit all when it comes to finding the right school.

Beginning in 1985, several pieces of legislation opened the doors to educational opportunities and lots of children are walking through them.

During the 2003-04 school year, 216,000 students enrolled in one of the four major choice programs: post-secondary enrollment options, open enrollment, alternative programs or charter schools, according to Morgan Brown, director of school choice and innovation for the Minnesota Department of Education. That's about 26 percent of the

843,000 students enrolled in public schools kindergarten through grade 12 the same year.

More options?

Some legislators are now thinking it's time for even more schooling options.

"As policy makers, we need to take a critical look at school choice and ask tough questions within the context of limited resources: Is it working? Do we need to do more?" said Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan), the committee chair.

But before questions could be answered, members were given an overview of programs already in operation.

Off to college

The first opportunity for school choice to be approved by the Legislature was post-secondary enrollment options (PSEO), which allows juniors and seniors to take classes at eligible colleges and universities for free and earn college credits while still in high school. The cost is paid by the state with the aid that would have gone to the child's public high school. Brown said 7,169 students are participating in the program during the 2004-05 school year on a part- or full-time basis.

Open enrollment

Through open enrollment, public school students can apply to attend a public school outside their resident district and their state aid goes with them. More than 40,000 students participated in open enrollment in the 2003-04 school year.

Alternative schools

The number one reason students attend an alternative program is

for a more individualized education, according to Joe Nathan, director of the Center for School Change at the University of Minnesota. State-approved alternative programs are for students who are at risk as defined by state law, meaning they are at least a year behind academically and may face other challenges like chemical dependency.

The number of high school students attending alternative programs has remained steady in recent years, but there has been a tremendous growth in students in kindergarten through grade eight who qualify for targeted services offered before or after the regular school day or on Saturdays. More than 155,000 students participated in alternative programs or targeted services in 2003-04 compared to 4,050 students during the 1988-89 school year.

Charter schools

Enrollment in public charter schools has grown rapidly, especially in the last few years, according to Brown. During the 1995-96 school year, 1,551 students attended 17 public charter schools. This year, 17,549 students attend 105 charter schools. Brown speculates the growth is the result of greater public awareness and acceptance of charter schools as an educational option.

Charter schools are usually smaller schools with a particular learning focus like classical education, project-based, arts or service

First Reading continued on page 4



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Danielle DeRemer, left, from Prairie Center Alternative School, Emily Bohmbach, center, from Highland Park Elementary, and Amalia Armendariz, right, from the El Colegio Charter School, testify about their successes with public school choice during the Feb. 10 meeting of the House Education Policy and Reform Committee.

First Reading continued from page 3

learning. About one-half of the state's charter schools are located in Minneapolis and St. Paul, one-third are in rural areas and the remainder are in the suburbs, which had few charter schools early on but are now seeing growth, said Brown.

School at home

Most home schooling was done for religious reasons in the past, according to Nathan. Nowadays, families are home schooling their children for a greater variety of reasons including gifted and talented. There has been a steady growth of children being taught at home; it's increasing by about 1,000 students a year, according to Brown. He said 17,533 students were home schooled during the 2003-04 school year.

Online learning

The newest school option is online learning. New technology and a law passed in 2003 have

opened the door for certified school districts and charter schools, totaling 16 so far, to offer this new form of learning to an estimated 500 students who participate on a part- or full-time basis, said Brown.

Integration schools

Six interdistrict schools have been created by city-suburban collaborations in the metro area as part of voluntary integration. Attendance now numbers 2,800 students.

Intradistrict magnets, mostly within larger school districts, give families a choice within a school district to attend a particular academic program, such as arts or technology.


Early concerns

School choice legislation has always been controversial, but there's also been cross-aisle legislative support for it and parents have embraced it. "There is a clear, strong level of support for programs," said Nathan, based on a 2002 study he did.

Early concerns about school choice programs have not proven true over time, he added.

For example, school districts were concerned they'd lose their top students through PSEO but actually it's mostly students earning Bs and Cs who have enrolled in the program. "The straight-A students were doing well where they were," he said.

One of the most amazing things about PSEO is the effect it had on public high schools, said Nathan. "PSEO legislation passed in the spring of 1985. By the next fall, all high schools were offering new advanced courses for students. "PSEO legislation stimulated improvements in the schools resulting in greater academic rigor."

People also worried that PSEO would spark a rift between public high schools and post-secondary institutions, said Nathan. "Just the opposite happened. Closer working relationships developed between high schools and higher education. Cooperation was the result, not competition." 

Lost treasures

Cass Gilbert designed original Capitol furniture



Capitol architect Cass Gilbert's design realm was not limited to structural elements. His attention to detail extended to furnishings. Original Capitol plans included 74 different styles of chairs, tables and desks, some standard to the era, others specially designed by Gilbert for certain ceremonial and public spaces in the Capitol.

The furniture contract was awarded to Herter Brothers, a New York firm.

"Unfortunately, much of the original standard furniture from the Capitol was, over the years, discarded, auctioned off by the state, or relocated to other government agencies throughout Minnesota," according to the Minnesota Historical Society publication, "Attention to Detail: 1905 Furniture of the Minnesota State Capitol."

The report estimates that approximately half of the original order, roughly 800 pieces of furniture, had been located in 15 different state buildings by 1989. Capitol Historic Site Manager Carolyn Kompelien now estimates the number has risen to close to 900 pieces. "It's just wonderful that we have retained as much as we have."

The furniture is appropriate in scale, proportion and to the style of the time, Kompelien said. "If you separate that furniture from the building, you've subtracted one

of the parts of the whole that is required to make it look historical."

One of the "premier pieces" among the 1905 furniture, in Kompelien's opinion, is the large mahogany armchair used by the House speaker in the House Chamber. Gilbert designed just two, one for the House and one for the Senate.

The leather upholstered chair features ornate carvings of a star emblem surrounded by oak leaves and a scroll that reads "L'Etoile

(du) Nord"—Star of the North. It rests on claw feet placed on castors.

The House came awfully close to selling the big chair in the 1960s. Members' chairs were being replaced so the originals were offered for sale to the office holders. Fortunately, the House decided not to sell when competing offers broke out among the man who was speaker at the time and former speakers.

The chair sat behind stanchions in the House Retiring Room for years until the chamber was restored to Gilbert's original motif in 1989-1990. It was reupholstered, its swivel mechanism was fixed and it has been the seat of power ever since.

In honor of the Capitol Centennial Celebration, the historic site staff is asking Minnesotans for help in locating the remaining Gilbert-designed pieces.

They have created a form on their Web site (www.mnhs.org/places/sites/msc/form.pdf) to gather information from people who are fortunate enough to have one of the 1905 furniture pieces in their possession. The goal is to document the location of the lost pieces and let people know what they have, Kompelien said. There are no funds or plans to buy back the furniture, but any additional information would strengthen the inventory and the knowledge of the Capitol furnishings as Gilbert intended.

(N. Wood)



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

The speaker's chair is one of the premier pieces of the Capitol's furniture collection.

★ **AGRICULTURE****Evaluating atrazine**

The herbicide atrazine, commonly used on corn crops, was the source of contention in the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee Feb. 15 as it reviewed an ethanol bill.

Committee Chair Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) ruled that an amendment offered by Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) that would have added an atrazine restriction to the new ethanol proposal was not germane.

The House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee called in a federal expert Feb. 16 to present an evaluation of the herbicide and a general overview of the pesticide/herbicide registration process.

Anne Lindsay, deputy director of the Environmental Protection Agency Office of Pesticide Programs, said the agency is actively reviewing atrazine in its reregistration program. Part of this process requires that Syngenta, the maker of atrazine, produce a report on whether exposure to the herbicide has an effect on the sexual development of frogs.

The agency has adopted the view that available studies have yet to prove that atrazine has the potential to harm frogs or humans, Lindsay said.

"Unfortunately, certain mischaracterizations of our regulatory process, particularly with respect to atrazine, are circulating in a variety of public venues," she said. "These mischaracterizations call into question both the scientific soundness and the integrity of our work."

According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 90 products registered in the state contain atrazine. The European Union has banned the chemical altogether, although its approach to regulation is quite different than that of the EPA, Lindsay said.

★ **BUDGET****Agency relief**

A new law signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty Feb. 15 will avert public defender layoffs and keep the Minnesota Gang Strike Task Force on task.

Effective Feb. 16, 2005, the \$31.07 million deficiency measure will assist those state agencies and programs that were facing budget shortfalls by June 30, 2005, or sooner.

- The appropriations include:
- \$13.39 million for regional treatment centers for civilly committed sex offenders,
 - \$7.68 million to offset the loss of public defender co-pay revenue after the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that a 2003 law obligating defendants to pay \$50 for a public defender was unconstitutional,
 - \$4.71 million to the Department of Administration for relocating the Agriculture and Health departments to a joint facility, and
 - \$4.07 million to help the Department of Corrections deal with a growing prison population and rising prisoner health care costs.

The cost of the new law will be offset in part by a \$24.7 million transfer from the budget reserve in the state General Fund.

Rep. Jim Knobloch (R-St. Cloud) and Sen. Richard Cohen (DFL-St. Paul) sponsored the legislation.

HF57*/SF350/CH2

★ **BUSINESS****Billboards to stay up**

Certain locations of billboards are offensive to some St. Paul residents and they attempted to invoke the city's right to set a time limit in which those billboards would have to be removed. The House Local Government Committee heard a bill Feb. 14 addressing the issue, but rejected the idea.

HF228, sponsored by Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul), would have added nonconforming billboards to exemptions in law for a city or town to remove the property. Currently only adult bookstores, adult theaters and similar adult-only businesses are included in the zoning process known as amortization.

Nonconforming billboards would have been defined as ones that previously met land use zoning guidelines, but no longer meet those established by a municipality, according to the nonpartisan House Research Department.

Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls) added a successful amendment that would have limited the bill to the city of St. Paul.

Proponents said billboards in certain locations devalue property and make revitalization of areas difficult because they can't be removed due to lease restrictions. Additionally, the cost is too high for cities to purchase the billboards in order to remove them all together.

The bill would allow for "a slow incremental

process that would remove the most egregious boards," said Paymar.

By removing a billboard and not allowing for the possibility of building another in its place, a person is forcing a business to discontinue, testified Peter Coyle, a lobbyist for the Outdoor Advertising Association of Minnesota.

In 1999, the Legislature passed a law that restricted municipalities from using amortization to take business and residential property without just compensation. Billboards are businesses and personal property, said Coyle.

Sponsored by Sen. John Marty (DFL-Roseville), a companion, SF412, awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee.

★ **CONSUMERS****Super-size me**

Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City) wants to fight obesity through knowledge not litigation.

He is proposing a bill (HF118) that would protect food producers, processors and sellers from lawsuits filed against them on the basis that long-term consumption of a food product caused weight gain, obesity or health problems.

The House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee approved the measure Feb. 15. It now moves to the House Civil Law and Elections Committee.

Under the bill, food sellers would be granted immunity from civil liability based on a person's food consumption.

The so-called Personal Responsibility in Food Consumption Act would not prevent legal actions relating to deceptive labeling or tainted food, Urdahl said.

Minnesota has yet to see a lawsuit of this kind, though there is a well-publicized case against McDonald's pending in New York.

The concept of immunity has roots in English common law and was once limited to the king, explained Minnesota Trial Lawyers Association President Katherine Flom. Since the king could do no wrong, the king did not have to answer in court for any wrongdoings.

"This is a bill which would, in essence, elevate Burger King to being king," Flom said. "It allows them to be immune from wrongdoing."

Furthermore, the state's "loser pays" civil court structure already limits the number of frivolous lawsuits, she said in opposition to the bill.

It's overly optimistic to say court rules or sanctions would prevent them, countered

**Signed
by
the
governor**
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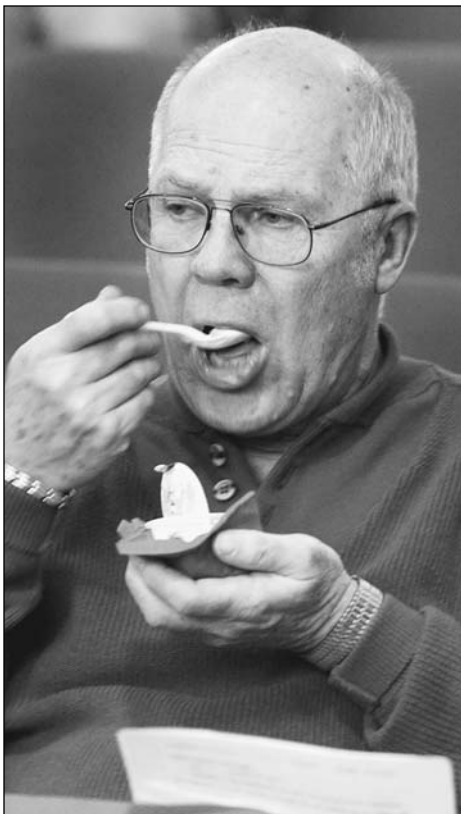


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Like members of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee, Dave Solbrack of Litchfield snacked on ice cream during Feb. 15 testimony on a bill that would protect food manufacturers and sellers from legal actions taken against them to recover damages for alleged injury or weight gain resulting from food consumption.

Joseph Price, a defense attorney with the Minneapolis law firm of Faegre & Benson. The costs to defend against civil liability claims can reach into the millions, he said.

"The Plaintiffs' Bar has gone on record saying food is 'the next tobacco,'" Price said.

A companion bill (SF631), sponsored by Sen. David Hann (R-Eden Prairie), awaits action in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

★ CRIME

Tell no lies

Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder), a former peace officer, once arrested a person who then made false accusations about what happened. However, Cornish had a device in his vehicle that recorded the whole encounter. "Lucky for me I was able to prove him wrong," said Cornish.

Cornish is now sponsor of a bill (HF618) that would make it a crime to knowingly make false reports about police misconduct.

The bill was amended Feb. 15 by the House

Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee to include the language of HF381, sponsored by Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center). The committee held it over for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

Rep. Keith Ellison (DFL-Mpls) expressed concern that citizens might be afraid to report police misconduct out of fear of facing charges. "This could chill disclosure," he said.

The bill would also make it a crime to knowingly provide false information to an on-duty peace officer about the conduct of another person.

The penalty would be a misdemeanor if the reported act were not criminal in nature, but a gross misdemeanor if the reported act is criminal. Offenders could also face restitution up to \$3,000 to pay some of the expenses resulting from the investigation of false allegations.

The bill received full support at the annual convention of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, according to Bill Gillespie, executive director of the association.

A companion bill (SF622), sponsored by Sen. Mike McGinn (R-Eagan), awaits action by the Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee.

Trespass law

When someone is charged with trespassing, they can be banned from returning to the scene of the alleged crime for 30 days. That's not enough time, said Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud) whose bill (HF483) would extend the time up to one year.

"Believe it or not, people actually come back every 30 days after being told to leave a property — 30 days on the dot, month after month," Knoblach told the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee Feb. 15. "That's a hindrance to businesses. One year is a more suitable standard."

The other proposed change to current trespass law would be extending the time from six months to one year that school officials could ban a person from school property.

Robert Allen, commander of the Minneapolis Police Department's 1st precinct in downtown Minneapolis, said 30 days is not long enough because most court cases have not even moved through the court system in that time.

Rep. Keith Ellison (DFL-Mpls) said he worries how this bill might be used. "If applied properly, it would be no problem, but if it isn't, and we know people do not always behave properly, it could be a real problem."

Allen said it must be shown that there is a legitimate reason to bar a person from a business.

Matthew Larson, director of loss prevention

for Coborn's in St. Cloud, said the problem is with repeat shoplifting offenders who return numerous times. "It's extremely difficult to keep these people out," he said, "We're looking for a tool to give us a more cost-effective way to deal with these situations."

The bill was approved and sent to the House floor.

Its Senate companion (SF87), sponsored by Sen. Dave Kleis (R-St. Cloud), awaits action by the Senate Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee.

★ ENERGY

Extension recommended

Minnesotans seeking an eligibility extension for wind incentive payments claimed a partial victory Feb. 16 as HF218, sponsored by Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder), was amended and approved by the House Regulated Industries Committee and referred to the House floor.

The bill would extend until Dec. 31, 2005, the 18-month time frame in which a wind facility must begin operating or lose its eligibility for state incentive payments, which is what advocates wanted. However, rather than receiving the 1.5 cents per kilowatt-hour as originally proposed in the Renewable Energy Production Incentive, the bill, as amended, would reduce the payments to 1 cent an hour for facilities receiving an extension or letter of approval after Jan. 1, 2005.

"We're trying to accommodate people who mean well and put good money up," said Rep. Michael Beard (R-Shakopee).

Dean Harder, along with 12 families in his community, invested tens of thousands of dollars in a dozen wind turbines. He is not sure they can go forward with the project at the reduced payment rate, but noted that the families want to recoup their investment and need the extension.

"The worst thing in the world you can do is not offer an extension of any kind," Harder said.

Cornish sponsored the legislation after the federal Production Tax Credit, which investors can use against passive income to reduce tax liability, was unavailable for 10 out of the 18 months of eligibility. Without the credit, some people were unable to secure the financial backing they needed.

A companion bill (SF817), sponsored by Sen. Julie Rosen (R-Fairmont), awaits action in the Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee.

★ EMPLOYMENT



For information on a bill (HF742) that would exempt search firms from certain employment agency regulations go the Session Weekly EXTRA page at: <http://www.house.mn/hinfo/swx.asp>

★ ENVIRONMENT

Phosphorus issue resurfaces

A proposal was introduced in 2003 to reduce the amount of phosphorus in dishwasher detergents sold in Minnesota. It drew conflicting testimony, with questions of whether the change would result in improved water quality.

At the time, Pollution Control Agency officials said they did not yet have enough scientific data on phosphorus sources, nor had they studied the chemicals that could be used as alternatives in detergents.

Phosphorus is a naturally occurring nutrient many detergent makers add to their formulas to reduce spotting on dishes. If an overabundance of phosphorus finds its way into the water stream, it can cause algae bloom choking aquatic plants and depleting oxygen in lakes and rivers.

The 2003 Legislature ordered the agency to study the sources and amounts of phosphorus entering Minnesota water bodies and also to look at how best to assist local governments with removing phosphorus at the wastewater treatment stage. Lawmakers called for a 50 percent reduction in the amount of phosphorus from sources other than human waste entering municipal wastewater treatment systems.

The House Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee reviewed the agency's assessment Feb. 16. No action was taken, but Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake) said the information would be helpful later this session when the committee looks at the overall issue of impaired waters.

According to the report, the combination of household and commercial automatic dishwasher detergent represents approximately 3 percent of the total phosphorus contributions to surface waters in the state, during an average year.

"Our perspective is we're not sure it's worth much energy in trying to manage that source as a restriction," said Mark Tomasek, PCA technical coordinator. "Again, the better way would be through effluent (wastewater that flows out of a treatment plant) limitations to

reduce what's going into surface waters."

A complete version of the assessment is available online (www.pca.state.mn.us/hot/legislature/reports/phosphorus-report.html).

★ GAME & FISH

Coyote county bounty

Coyotes are getting a little too close for comfort in some Minnesota counties and they could wind up with a bounty on their heads or hides.

HF868, sponsored by Rep. Aaron Peterson (DFL-Madison), would allow counties to offer a bounty for the taking of coyotes by all legal methods. The amount of the bounty would be left up to each county, as would the bounty boundaries and the part of the animal a hunter must produce to claim the reward.

The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the measure Feb. 10. It now moves to the House floor.

"I certainly do not want them exterminated," said Swift County Commissioner John Baker. "But we are having problems."

Statewide bounties were eliminated in 1965, said Ed Boggess, the fish and wildlife division policy section manager with the Department of Natural Resources. They were an ineffective experiment in wildlife management, he said.

Coyotes are not protected under state law, and it is legal to hunt or trap them. The bounty would provide a better incentive, proponents said.

WINTERFUL VIEW



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

The Capitol complex became a winter wonderland Feb. 14 with an ephemeral dusting of fluffy snow.

A companion bill (SF761), sponsored by Sen. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls), awaits action in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

Head of the line

The hunters and anglers among Minnesota's military personnel might receive a thank you gift from the Department of Natural Resources.

HF417, sponsored by Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar), would allow the department to give first preference in hunting and fishing license lotteries to qualified members of the armed forces, including the National Guard or veterans.

Under the bill, a Minnesota resident who is currently serving or who has served at any time during the past 24 months would qualify.

They would still be required to purchase a hunting license but they would move to the front of the line in the special lotteries conducted by the department. The preference would not apply to the moose, elk or prairie chicken hunts, but antlerless deer, bears or wild turkeys could be in the crosshairs.

The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the measure Feb. 10. It now moves to the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee.

"The logic behind this is that those young fellas and young ladies sitting over there in the sand doing the heavy lifting for the country right now can think of nothing they would rather do than be back in Minnesota out in the woods somewhere or out in some pasture where it's safe and quiet and peaceful and where they would have a chance to engage nature," said Jim Cleary, a legislative analyst with the nonpartisan House Research Department. "It's a country's way of saying thank you."

House Research does not advocate for or against any legislation, Cleary said. But he has a personal connection to the issue: his son — his hunting partner — is currently serving with the Minnesota National Guard in Iraq.

A companion bill (SF825), sponsored by Sen. Dave Kleis (R-St. Cloud), awaits action in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

★ GOVERNMENT

Nonprofit salaries

A plan to limit salaries of some charitable nonprofit personnel ran into a roadblock Feb. 11.

Sponsored by Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), HF593 was tabled by the House Governmental

Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee. The vote was 13-8, following a motion for a roll call by Rep. Michael Beard (R-Shakopee).

The bill would require charitable nonprofits that receive state appropriations or grants to spend at least 75 percent of its revenue for charitable purposes, and no official or employee could be paid more than the governor's salary, currently at \$120,303.

Hospitals and medical clinics would be excluded from the restrictions.

"We have taxpayers in my district and other districts of the state that struggle to get by to raise their families ... while, at the same time, having to pay sales and other taxes to government," said Seifert. Some charitable organizations are paying salaries eight to 10 times that of an average family income in his district, he added.

"We give these state grants because we've decided there is a positive state purpose," said Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls). She said it is counterproductive to give grants and then interfere with those who make those grants effective.

"Nonprofit employees, on average, make 12 percent less than other employees in Minnesota's economy," said Jon Pratt, executive director of the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits. It's a mistake to assume that nonprofits aren't also participating in the labor economy and competing with organizations across the country for excellent employees, he added.

A successful amendment, originally offered by Rep. Mark Olson (R-Big Lake), but withdrawn and offered again by Kahn, adds health maintenance organizations to those with a salary cap.

While disappointed with the outcome, Seifert later said that he is not "gonna let it fall to the wayside." He plans to resurrect the bill by either introducing a different version or amending it to another.

A companion bill (SF832), sponsored by Sen. Betsy Wergin (R-Princeton), awaits action in the Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee.

★ HOUSING

A home on the farm

Members of farm families who want to live on the farm, but not in the same house could benefit from a bill that would eliminate regulation on certain manufactured homes.

HF527, sponsored by Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids), would exempt some farm labor housing from regulation as "manufactured home parks."

Severson said children of farmers often-times bring manufactured homes onto the

family farm. This allows the children and their families to live and work together on the farm, but they don't have to share a single house.

Currently, these manufactured homes need to be licensed and inspected by the county. Severson's bill would allow up to two manufactured homes on the farm premises to be exempt from the county licensing and inspection process. The homes would need to be used exclusively to house people engaged in agriculture and would still need to meet the safety standards and Department of Health rules for mobile home parks.

"The counties are behind this," Severson said. "The purpose of this bill is to take the load off the county."

The House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee amended the bill Feb. 15 to require a smoke detector outside each sleeping area in the homes. It then approved the bill and sent it to the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee.

A companion bill (SF333), sponsored by Sen. Michelle Fischbach (R-Paynesville), cleared one committee and awaits action in the Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee.

Facts on homelessness

Thirteen percent of homeless girls in the state and 4 percent of homeless boys under age 17 trade sex for shelter, food or clothing, according to Michelle Gerard, a research scientist with the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.

That was just one of several sobering facts served up to the House Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance Committee Feb. 16 by representatives of the Wilder Foundation, a St. Paul nonprofit health and human services organization.

Greg Owen, a consulting scientist with the foundation, said the number and variety of problems afflicting the homeless have grown greatly since 1991. "There is a wide range of distress in this population," he said. "It's almost like we've had this population of those that are homeless in a crucible. It's like we've been heating it up and concentrating the level of distress."

The foundation has done surveys on homelessness every three years since 1991, and their most recent findings were presented to the committee.

The information was gleaned from a statewide survey taken Oct. 23, 2003. On that night, more than 700 trained volunteers counted 7,015 people in shelters, and identified 796 people in unsheltered locations. Owen said an exact count is very difficult, because it varies from night to night. That's a drastic

increase from 2,857 people in shelters and 118 unsheltered people in 1991.

Of long-term homeless people, 85 percent have some type of serious disability, and that shows how the Community Mental Health Act and legislation passed in the 1960s and 1970s to help the mentally ill had failed, Owen said. The initiative assumed the people would have places to live that they could afford.

Besides mental illness or a chronic medical disorder, 42 percent of homeless people in the survey had recently been released from prison, 38 percent had been physically abused as a child, 34 percent had been in institutional placements (such as foster care or a juvenile facility) as a child, 31 percent were women who had been victims of domestic abuse and 27 percent had been sexually abused as a child.

★ HUMAN SERVICES

Changing terminology

The term "handicapped" originates from the European war when many of the decorated veterans were returning home as amputees and were forced to beg in streets. They would take their caps off to beg with, so they were notoriously known as the "handicappers," explained Cara Ruff, president of the Minnesota Association of Centers for Independent Living.

"I don't think anyone in this room, or any of our families, or any of our friends, certainly not our children, deserve to be referred to as a retard or an idiot, or as handicapped," she told the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 10. Yet all those terms are used in state statutes.

Ruff testified in favor of HF487, sponsored by Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud), that would change terms in state law that refer to disabled people. The bill would change phrases like "mental retardation," "mentally retarded" and "handicapped persons" to terminology more desirable to those with disabilities, such as "disabled persons."

There are nearly 400 pages in state law that would need to be modified, to fall in line with a national campaign called "The People First," that advocates for changes in descriptions of disabled people, said Opatz. "We shouldn't refer to someone by some characteristic. We don't say to someone who has cancer, that's a cancerous person; it's a person who happens to have the disease of cancer," he added.

There was no opposition to the bill that next moves to the House Health Policy and Finance Committee. A Senate companion, SF525, sponsored by Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (IP-Rochester), awaits action in the Senate

County relief; state burden

Counties with intermediate care facilities for people with varying degrees of mental disabilities could see some financial relief from two bills heard by the House Health Policy and Finance Committee Feb. 15.

HF490 and HF375, both sponsored by Rep. Ray Cox (R-Northfield), would change the division of costs between the state and counties for placements in what are known as ICFs/MR facilities. Both bills were held over for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

Under current law, enacted by the 2003 Legislature, the state pays 80 percent of the funding and counties 20 percent for facilities with more than six beds.

"This change in funding has placed a burden on counties," Cox said.

HF490 would repeal the change in how costs are divided. Under the bill, the formula would revert back to the state paying 100 percent of the funding for facilities with more than seven beds. Michael Klatt, president and CEO of The Lutheran Home Association in Belle Plaine, said counties cannot afford their 20 percent share and therefore empty beds are not being filled.

"Counties do not have the resources," Klatt said.

The bill would also require the commissioner of human services to prepare recommendations and legislation for the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over health and human services policy and finance by Jan. 15, 2006, regarding future services provided to people now served by the facilities. The commissioner would be required to consult with facility providers, advocates, counties and consumer families when developing the recommendations.

HF375 would change the percentage division of costs for placements in certain facilities to a 90-10 split. The bill would not be needed if HF490 becomes law.

A companion bill for HF490 is SF932, sponsored by Sen. Becky Lourey (DFL-Kerrick), and a companion bill for HF375 is SF756, sponsored by Sen. Thomas Neuville (R-Northfield). Both await action in the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.

Raises for care providers

Long-term care providers and their employees could receive pay increases that many say are long overdue.

Sponsored by Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester), HF775 would provide a

3 percent state subsidy increase in 2006 and again in 2007 to the total operating payment rates for nursing homes, intermediate care facilities for people with developmental disabilities and community-based long-term care providers.

At least two-thirds of the increases must be used to increase employee salaries, benefits and associated costs. The facilities would be required to report how the additional funding was used.

Bradley told the House Health Policy and Finance Committee Feb. 15 that the employees need and deserve raises.

"These are people who do wonderful work," Bradley said. "Thank God they have big hearts."

He noted that operating payment rates for the facilities have been flat in recent years, and the increases would help adjust for inflation.

Nearly a dozen people testified in support of the bill. Some said the raises are needed to increase staff morale and retention. Bruce Nelson, executive director for ARRM, said some employees earn \$9 to \$10 an hour and could earn more money working in fast food restaurants. Shirley Hokanson, a consultant for REM Minnesota, said the bill recognizes the hard work and responsibility of direct care workers.

"REM considers these dedicated workers to be the foundation of the service system and believes they deserve regular, systematic recognition and compensation for their work," Hokanson said.

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

A companion bill (SF891), sponsored by Sen. Becky Lourey (DFL-Kerrick), awaits action in the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.

INSURANCE



Preventing employer "dumping"

Minnesota employers who try to lower their unemployment experience ratings by using mergers, acquisitions or restructuring schemes could find their practices prohibited by a bill seeking to stop "dumping."

Rep. Anthony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm) is sponsoring HF898, which would make changes in the Minnesota unemployment law for the purpose of curbing state unemployment tax act (SUTA) avoidance. The bill would conform Minnesota law to the federal SUTA Dumping Prevention Act of 2004.

Minnesota, like other states, distributes unemployment insurance costs among employers by taxing them with an unemployment experience rating based on the number of former employees who received unemployment

benefits. Some employers try to "dump" their poor ratings by changing or merging companies or shifting employees between companies.

Sertich said his bill would close loopholes that allow companies to avoid their unemployment insurance obligations.

Kathleen Hillegas, associate general counsel for Administaff, testified before the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee Feb. 16 in opposition to the bill. She said her company, a professional employer organization, employs 90,000 people throughout the United States and that a provision dealing with the reporting requirements of leased workers would impact their business process and adversely affect how they operate. The provision would require an employer to report leased workers on the employer's wage detail report.

Sertich said he would meet with professional employer organizations to talk about their concerns.

The committee changed the effective date from July 1, 2005, to Aug. 1, 2005, and referred it to the House Civil Law and Elections Committee.

A companion bill (SF944), sponsored by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action in the Senate Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee.

Conforming Medicare coverage

All 50 states are trying to pass state legislation or amend regulations to conform to the federal Medicare Modernization Act of 2003, including Minnesota.

Rep. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd) is sponsoring HF925 to change Minnesota laws in response to federal changes in Medicare prescription drug coverage, also known as Medicare Part D, and to provide oversight over prescription drug plan sponsors.

The House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee approved the bill Feb. 16 and referred it to the House Health Policy and Finance Committee.

The bill would bring Minnesota into federal compliance regarding the sale of policies with prescription drug coverage by Medigap carriers after Jan. 1, 2006. The coverage would be available only through private sector stand-alone prescription drug plans or as part of a Medicare Advantage plan.

Gazelka said the bill would ensure that no conflict exists between state and federal laws. It would also spell out the rights Minnesota seniors, with existing Medigap coverage, have as changes in the program are introduced.

"It's really critical that we do something," Gazelka said. "I don't know of anyone who's against this bill."

He pointed out that the departments of Commerce, Human Services, Health, and Employee Relations have all worked on the legislation, as has outside legal counsel. Without the legislation, conflicts in laws would add to the confusion of what options are legally available to seniors, Gazelka said.

"Without these changes, seniors are going to get hurt," said Lee Graczyk, legal director for the Minnesota Senior Federation. "We need to do this as expeditiously as possible."

A companion bill (SF880), sponsored by Sen. Brian LeClair (R-Woodbury), awaits action in the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.

★ RECREATION

Life jacket lifeline

A Minnesota grandfather is asking the Legislature to strengthen youth life jacket requirements to help other families avoid the same tragedy that befell his.

Allen Johnson's 5-year-old grandson, Grant, drowned when he fell from a boat on a Chisago County lake in 2003. Grant was not wearing a life jacket.

Current state law requires readily accessible flotation devices for everyone on board. It does not state that the life jackets must be worn.

Federal law requires that children under the age of 13 (who are not in the cabin or below deck) must wear a personal flotation device on waters under federal jurisdiction. This includes Lake Superior; Canadian border waters; the Mississippi and St. Croix rivers; and Cass, Leech and Winnibigoshish lakes.

HF590, sponsored by Rep. Char Samuelson (R-New Brighton), would apply the same requirement to all Minnesota waters, with an exception for commercial watercraft.

The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the measure Feb. 10. It now moves to the House floor.

"Some bills for public safety are drafted because of an incident. Unfortunately this bill is one of those," Samuelson said.

Johnson spoke of the devastation his family has felt by Grant's death. The bill, he said, is a preventative measure.

"In a tragedy, like that when a child dies, I came to realize the hard way it's the mother who takes the brunt of it. That's the person who is hurt the most because that bond is broken forever," Johnson said.

Sen. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley) is sponsoring similar legislation (SF260). It awaits action in the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

★ SAFETY

No custody for certain offenders

The intent of a bill sponsored by Rep. Joe Atkins (DFL-Inver Grove Heights) is to keep a recent newspaper headline from ever appearing again.

HF561 would prevent convicted sex offenders, murderers and perpetrators of certain other serious crimes from being granted custody of unrelated children.

Atkins told the House Civil Law and Elections Committee Feb. 14 that the bill language is "very short and to the point, and gets to the heart of the matter." He said it addresses a recent incident where a man, who was a convicted sex offender, was granted custody of his ex-girlfriend's child. Three weeks later, he was charged with molesting the 9-year-old girl.

"It shouldn't happen. I hope you will join me in preventing this headline from ever happening again," he said.

Atkins said that when he began the process of having the bill drafted, he thought this might be an isolated incident. But, as the bill gained publicity, he has heard from others who say they have ended up in situations like this.

"I am afraid it is not as rare as we might think," he said.

The committee approved the measure and referred it to the full House.

Sen. John Marty (DFL-Roseville) is sponsoring a companion bill (SF563). That bill awaits action in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

★ TRANSPORTATION

Don't change the lights

Some people in the middle of their morning commute might wish they had an automatic device to change traffic lights, and some have even been bold enough to buy and use such a device.

Under a bill approved Feb. 16 by the House Transportation Committee and referred to the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee, they'd have to stop.

HF204, sponsored by Rep. Pat Garofalo (R-Farmington), would make it a misdemeanor for people to drive a car that contains a device that can override traffic signals. Police and fire department vehicles, ambulances, signal maintenance vehicles and other vehicles authorized by the Department of Public Safety would be exempt.

Former state representative and current Lakeville Police Chief Steve Strachan said the

device uses an infrared signal to change red lights to green.

Strachan said current law prohibits possession of a flashing light, but this device doesn't really flash, so it's hard to prosecute. He knows of no accidents caused by the device, but legislation might prevent future accidents. "I think we should be ahead of the curve," he said.

The device has been around for years, but thanks to the Internet, more people have them.

A companion bill, SF533, sponsored by Sen. Sharon Marko (DFL-Cottage Grove), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Committee.

Child safety seats

State law directs that children riding in a vehicle should be restrained in special child seats until age 4, at which time many parents allow them to sit like the adults, restrained only by a seat belt.

Unfortunately, according to testimony Feb. 16 in the House Transportation Committee, the seat belt tends to move up above the child's abdomen, and the child tends to remove the shoulder belt. So in a traffic accident, the upper part of the child's body violently lurches forward, and folds over the seat belt, often causing severe internal injuries.

Rep. Duke Powell (R-Burnsville), a



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Shannon Swanson and her 5-year-old daughter, Carly, show the House Transportation Committee the proper method to restrain a child in a vehicle. The Feb. 16 demonstration was part of testimony for a bill that would require drivers to restrain certain children with an appropriate child restraint system.

paramedic at Hennepin County Medical Center, has seen that happen too many times, so he has introduced HF319, which would require children under age 9 and weighing less than 80 pounds to be fastened in a child passenger restraint system. They would also be required to sit in the back seat, if possible.

Violators would be fined \$50, but that would be waived if the person buys a child restraint system.

The bill was approved and referred to the House Public Safety Policy and Finance Committee.

Shannon Swanson and her 5-year-old

daughter, Carly, demonstrated a booster seat, which simply raises the child's body off the regular seat, making the lap belt and shoulder harness fit better. That would work as the proper restraint system, and retails for \$10-\$15, said Julie Philbrook, a nurse at Hennepin County Medical Center.

When Powell has responded to traffic fatalities where children were involved, he usually discovers one thing. "In almost every instance, the death could have been prevented if the child was properly restrained," he said.

He said it is important for the government to protect children. "We don't allow children

to be physically abused. We don't allow them to be sexually abused. We make them go to school," he said.

Dr. Josh Petrikin, a pediatrician at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, said approximately 30 percent of children between ages 4 and 8 ride in child restraint systems. "We can reduce injuries to our children by passing this legislation," he said.

A companion bill, SF298, sponsored by Sen. Mike McGinn (R-Eagan), awaits action by the full Senate.

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Flag flap

Two stars and stripes bills get committee approval

By PATTY JANOVEC

The fathers of Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) and Rep. Lynn Wardlow (R-Eagan) served in World War II, but that's about where the similarities end, especially when it comes to the issue of flag burning.

"I never knew my father because when I was 17 months old, he was killed in WWII," Wardlow told the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 16. "I've stood in front of coffins. I've seen the coffins draped with the flag, and the very thought that anyone would dare burn it is absolutely appalling to me."

"In honor of my father I am going to very proudly vote no on this bill because what he fought for was the right for people to be able to express themselves and speak freely on any statement," said Kahn.

Sponsored by Rep. Jerry Dempsey (R-Red Wing), HF801 is a House resolution asking the U.S. Congress to propose an amendment to the Constitution allowing states to prohibit the desecration of the American flag.

"What we're asking for is for the states to be able to take action when there is desecration. It's a preventive measure," Dempsey explained.

In 1989, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of a Texas man who said having the right to burn an American flag is a form of free speech. Several states have passed resolutions urging Congress to propose an amendment that states be able to prohibit the action, Dempsey said.

Kahn and Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL-Rochester) were the only committee members to vote against the bill, which next moves to the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee. A Senate companion (SF505), sponsored by Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing), awaits action in the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

"I was sent here not to be symbolic, but to get something done for the people of Minnesota, and we've got a lot of big issues on our plates ... health care, jobs and education ... only things we can deal with," said Liebling.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

David Titus, president of the St. Paul Police Federation, testifies before the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb 16 in support of a bill that would prohibit public employers from forbidding employees from wearing American flag patches or pins on their uniforms.

By passing a resolution for something the Legislature has no control over is wasting valuable time, she added.

"To say that this is taking up the time of the people of this body I think is a little absurd, because this is what we are about," responded Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids).

Dempsey's was one of two flag-related bills heard by the committee.


HF241, sponsored by Rep. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake), would prohibit a public employer from preventing an employee from wearing a small flag patch or a pin. State aid would be suspended if an employer does not comply.

While less contentious issues were raised as

to what defines a public employer, Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) successfully offered an amendment that eliminated contractors and subcontractors that enter into contracts with the state from having to comply.

A number of years ago patches were removed from police uniforms in St. Paul "for reasons that aren't completely clear," said David Titus, president of the St. Paul Police Federation.

The flag is a very important symbol to police officers and it was demoralizing when it was removed, he said, adding the two things he saved from his career are his retired badge and the flag on his uniform.

The bill was approved and moves to the House Local Government Committee. A Senate companion (SF295), sponsored by Sen. Mady Reiter (R-Shoreview), awaits action in the Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee. 

Flag Etiquette

Whether folding, displaying, hoisting, or lowering the American flag, there is a proper way.

According to "Flag Etiquette," published by the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State:

- It is customary to display the flag from sunrise to sunset, although the flag may also be displayed around the clock if it is properly lit during darkness.
 - The flag should be hoisted briskly and lowered ceremoniously.
 - The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all weather flag is displayed.
 - The flag should be displayed daily on or near the main administration building of every public institution, and it should be displayed during school days in or near every school.
- Proper display includes:
- The flag should not be draped over the hood, top, sides, or back of a vehicle or of a railroad train or boat.
 - No other flag or pennant should be placed above or, if on the same level, to the right of the flag. Flags of other nations should not be flown below or behind the U.S. flag, but on separate poles.
 - When flown at half-staff, the flag should be first hoisted to the peak for an instant and then lowered to the half-staff position.

The publication is available online at <http://www.sos.state.mn.us/flag.pdf>.

An American or state flag that has been flown above the State Capitol can be purchased by contacting:

The Minnesota Bookstore
660 Olive Street
St. Paul, MN 55155
651-297-3000
1-800-657-3757

Web site: <http://www.comm.media.state.mn.us/bookstore/bookstore.asp>

Project dollars

House committee approves \$816.8 million bonding request

By Mike Cook

There were a few pats on the back, but no amendments offered when the House Capital Investment Committee approved its bonding bill Feb. 16.

The proposal is for \$816.8 million, \$759,000 more than Gov. Tim Pawlenty's recommendation, but far less than the nearly \$1.04 billion in SF1, approved by the Senate Jan. 24.

The House Ways and Means Committee was scheduled to take up the measure late on Feb. 17. Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea), the sponsor of HF3, expects the full House to take action next week.

"We have put forward a bill that has probably a little higher commitment than the

when they see the bill before us today, but we all know this is just phase one of a process and there is a good bit of negotiation still to go."

Bonding bills are typically done in even-numbered years. Last year, the House passed a \$677.6 million measure, but the Senate did not.

"The funding for these projects is way overdue," House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon) said in a prepared statement. "We have lost valuable time in launching a new genomics center, improving our roads and bridges, providing a stronger infrastructure for our higher education institutions, and creating jobs."

Among the greatest differences between the House and Senate bills and gubernatorial recommendations were dollars for the proposed Northstar commuter rail line from downtown Minneapolis to St. Cloud. The governor and the Senate each recommended \$37.5 million, while the House number is at \$10 million.

"I look at it in a couple of ways," Dorman said. "One, we can have more conversation about this before the end of the day, but if the House passes a bill with \$10 in it for Northstar

it'll be the first time ever, so I think this is a significant statement that we are committed to the project as we move forward."

Transportation Department funding in the House bill totals \$82.5 million, about \$14 million less than the governor and Senate. However, the House bill seeks \$50 million for local bridge replacement, the Senate \$40 million and the governor \$28 million. "While not glamorous, it is very important work for all our districts and the economic health of the state," Dorman said.

Educational funding also differs dramatically

between the three, mainly in that the House does not recommend the \$24.04 million for the Red Lake School District, unlike the Senate and governor.

All three entities agreed to fund nearly \$4.26 million for asset preservation at the state academies for the blind and deaf, and asset preservation and a building demolition at the Perpich Center for the Arts, together totaling \$1.08 million.

Included in environmental funding in all three proposals is \$27.36 million, according to the bill, "to acquire conservation easements from landowners on marginal lands to protect soil and water quality and to support fish and wildlife habitat."

Among the other recommendations are:

- \$244.1 million to higher education, of which \$154.76 million is directed to the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system and \$89.37 million to the University of Minnesota;
- \$115.4 million to the Department of Employment and Economic Development, including \$20 million each for bioscience development and a research facility in Rochester that would be a partnership between the University of Minnesota and the Mayo Clinic;
- \$106.4 million to the Department of Corrections, including \$84.8 million for an expansion at the Faribault facility;
- \$72.9 million to the Department of Natural Resources, with \$21 million designated for flood hazard mitigation grants and \$12 million to acquire land for wildlife management area purposes;
- \$37.3 million for grants to political subdivisions, including \$13.2 million for Roseau infrastructure repair related to the 2002 flood and money for a Blue Earth fire and police station and Buffalo Lake maintenance garage damaged in a tornado;
- \$12.6 million to the Department of Human Services for a 50-bed forensic nursing facility that would house aged or ill sex offenders receiving state care. Under the House plan, the facility must be located at the Ah-Gwah-Ching state-owned nursing home site near Walker;
- \$5.49 to the Department of Agriculture, with \$4.9 million for a joint pathology research facility at the University of Minnesota; and
- \$1.87 million for State Capitol repairs, about \$500,000 less than the governor and Senate.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Among the higher education allocations in the House bonding bill is \$4.5 million for a technology center renovation at Century College in White Bear Lake.

governor in the areas of higher education, particularly to (the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system), a little bit higher than the governor and the Senate in our commitment to infrastructure, roads and bridges," said Dorman, chair of the House Capital Investment Committee.

"I think you've reached out to everybody," said Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings).

Added Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul): "It's always a difficult balancing act, but I think it's a very fair effort given the constraints. Obviously there are a few members disappointed

Charting a course

Legislature approves quartet to sit on U Board of Regents

By Mike Cook

Twelve men and women play a key role in setting the state's future, yet they are names that most people would not recognize.

Clyde Allen, Jr., Anthony Baraga, Peter Bell, Frank Berman, Dallas Bohnsack, John Frobenius, Steve Hunter, David Larson, Richard McNamara, David Metzen, Lakeesha Ransom and Patricia Simmons will soon comprise the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

Baraga and Bohnsack were reappointed to the university's governing body during a joint House-Senate convention Feb. 16. Also selected were Hunter and Larson. They are to be officially sworn in at the next Board of Regents meeting on March 10.

The board is the only governmental body in the state whose members are elected by the Legislature. According to state statute, one-third of the board is elected each odd-numbered year at a joint convention. Regents serve six-year terms without pay.

"I think this is the number one board in the state of Minnesota because you're taking care of the number one asset in the state," said Baraga, a retired radiologist and president of Medical Imaging North.

By law, one regent is selected from each of the state's eight congressional districts and four serve at-large. Bohnsack is from the

second district, Larson the third and Baraga the eighth. Hunter is an at-large regent.

Provisions to select the regents were established as part of the university charter in 1851, and incorporated into the constitution when Minnesota became a state in 1858.

Prior to the Legislature creating the Regent Advisory Council in 1988, candidates nominated themselves and no screening process existed. Now those wanting to serve submit an application to the council, whose duties include recruiting and identifying candidates. Of the 58 applicants this year, the council interviewed 17 people and nine names were forwarded to the Legislature. Two to four names must be forwarded for each seat.

At a Feb. 14 joint meeting of the House and Senate education committees, the nine were reduced to four. Baraga, Bohnsack and Larson were easily recommended to the Legislature, but it took two ballots for Hunter to defeat former Rep. Peggy Leppik.

By rule, a candidate needs to get the majority of votes cast, but because of a third candidate, Scott Johnson, neither Hunter or Leppik received the majority on the first ballot. With Johnson's name removed, Hunter, the secretary-treasurer of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, defeated Leppik 35-32 on a nearly party-line vote.

The joint committee choices do not bind the Legislature, but the latter has yet to elect someone who was not recommended.

If the Legislature fails to act, as it did in 2001 due to anticipated political maneuvering, the governor is required to make appointments to fill the vacancies. The Legislature can take action on those appointed by the governor two years prior – it has done that four times since 1929.

Although their



David Larson looks down from the House gallery while he and three others are applauded after their election to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

reasons for seeking a seat differ slightly, all candidates spoke to the joint committees about the importance of advocacy and their passion for the university.

"This university is the single-most important institution in this state for the future of the society. People underestimate its value," said Larson, an executive vice president at Cargill. "We'd be in big trouble ... without that university." He also joked after the meeting about helping get the football team a few more wins.

Putting on a helmet and pads is not a regent requirement, but the hard-hitting decisions the board makes can affect what happens in the state many years into the future.

"I want to add my voice to the efforts to try to work things out to preserve excellence at the university," Hunter said. "You've got the state depending on the university for job creation through its research. It's intimidating to look at, but like anything else you take it one step at a time and try to do your best."

Skeptics might ask why, in a time of declining state monetary assistance and continued tuition increases for students, one would want to serve, much less for a second term.

"It's epidemic. You get it in your blood. There's always something that brings you back," said Bohnsack, a self-employed farmer. He also considers himself an optimist and believes that University President Robert Bruininks and other top officials "are putting together a strategic plan that will lead the university to bigger and better things."

"It's kind of fun to be in the mix when there's something to do," added Baraga, the board's vice-chair. "When everything is going smoothly it's easy, anybody can do it then."



PHOTOS BY ANDREW VONBANK

A joint House - Senate convention assembles Feb. 16 to elect four people to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

The story behind the name

Bills would rename road and bridges to honor people, groups

By MATT WETZEL

State highways and bridges are numbered by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. Some also have names, and the stories behind those names can be compelling.

Trunk Highway 55 in Minneapolis is named the Floyd B. Olson Memorial Highway, after the populist governor of the 1930s.

A group of connected highways in southern Minnesota is named the Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway, after the writer whose book series inspired a TV show about a 19th century southern Minnesota family.

Trunk highways 52 and 56 in southern Minnesota are named the Amish Buggy Byway in recognition of the Amish who live north of nearby Canton.

Under legislation introduced recently in the House Transportation Committee: Trunk Highway 371 from Little Falls to Cass Lake, also known as the Paul Bunyan Expressway, would become the Purple Heart Memorial Highway (HF187); the new Trunk Highway 10 bridge that crosses the Red River between Fargo and Moorhead would become the Veterans Memorial Bridge (HF255), and the bridge on Trunk Highway 23 over the St. Louis River would be called Biouswah Bridge in honor of

Native American veterans (HF59). All the bills have been held over for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus policy bill.

It takes legislation to name or rename a highway or bridge, said Betsy Parker, director of the Office of Government Affairs for the Transportation Department. Local governments in the area must agree to the change and private sources must be used to pay for any changes in signage. Usually, a local individual or group approaches a legislator with the idea.

That was the case with Trunk Highway 371.

Bill Woolie, a Vietnam veteran from Brainerd who received a Purple Heart after being wounded in the arm in 1969, approached Sen. Paul Koering (R-Fort Ripley) about honoring veterans who had been wounded in action. Koering introduced SF114, which has been referred to the Senate Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming Committee.

Woolie is the past national commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart, an organization that promotes goodwill among veterans wounded in combat.

"I think it would be a great honor," he said.

"It's an effort to bring awareness from the state of Minnesota for the troops who have continually put their lives on the line," said Rep. Greg Blaine

(R-Little Falls), sponsor of the House bill. "It's the right thing to do at the right time."

Koering said there are 12,000 Purple Heart recipients in Minnesota, and it's important to honor them and also the soldiers fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan. "How more appropriate could that be, naming (Trunk Highway) 371 in honor of our veterans," he said.

It's the same kind of deep feeling that moved

Roads continued on page 16

A road by any other name

- Trunk Highway 371 from Baxter to Barrows was renamed the C. Elmer Anderson Memorial Highway in 2000. Clyde Elmer Anderson (1912-1998) was a governor from Brainerd. He served from 1939-1943.
- Trunk Highway 13 from New Prague to Montgomery was renamed the Czech Heritage Highway in 1996. Many Czech immigrants settled in this area, and New Prague still has buildings with architecture patterned after buildings in Eastern Europe.
- Interstate 90 east of Trunk Highway 74 was renamed the State Trooper Theodore "Ted" Foss Memorial Highway in 2001. Foss was killed in 2000 by an errant semi while making a traffic stop near Lewiston. There is a large sign with his portrait at the Dresbach Rest Area.
- Various highways in the Willmar and Alexandria area are known as the Glacial Ridge Trail. It's a scenic byway to view evidence of glacial activity.



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

A statue of former Gov. Floyd B. Olson looks out over Trunk Highway 55 in Minneapolis, which is named the Floyd B. Olson Memorial Highway after the populist governor of the 1930s.

veterans groups in the Red River Valley to bring a proposal to cities in the area, and ultimately to Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead), to designate the new Trunk Highway 10 bridge as Veterans Memorial Bridge. "This bridge is a wonderful thing," said Leo Joe Baker, a member of the American Legion post in Moorhead. A similar bill has to pass the North Dakota Legislature, which meets only in odd-numbered years.

A companion bill (SF374) sponsored by Sen. Keith Langseth (R-Glyndon), has been referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

A third bill would honor a 17th century American Indian and modern day American Indian military veterans. Sponsored by Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson), HF59 would designate the bridge on Trunk Highway 23 that crosses the St. Louis River Biaiswah Bridge in honor of Native American veterans.

Biaiswah is considered heroic as both a warrior and peacemaker by American

Indians, according to Christine Carlson, a photographer and historian from the area.

Biaiswah died around 1710, after another tribe attacked his village. The enemy warriors were going to kill Biaiswah's son, but Biaiswah offered himself as a sacrifice instead. The son took his father's name, and became a hero in his own right, according to Carlson.

A companion, SF181, sponsored by Sen. Becky Lourey (DFL-Kerrick), has been referred to the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee. 

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What's on the Web

Session Weekly EXTRA Read all about it

The editors at *Session Weekly* have faced a conundrum in recent years: what to do when legislative activity heats up and produces interesting stories beyond the 24 printed pages to which the news-magazine is bound?

The Session Weekly EXTRA, that's what. The EXTRA (www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/swx.asp) is a place on the House Web site where readers can find expanded content and additional highlights.

Tips on using the EXTRA:

- A colorful graphic image accompanied by text in

the middle of the EXTRA page directs readers to the most current offering each week.

- Previous selections are archived in reverse chronological order.
- Highlights in the EXTRA are arranged by topics that mirror the print version of *Session Weekly*, such as Crime or Environment.
- "Jump to" links are provided on the EXTRA

page, making it easier to move between the sections.

Comments and suggestions welcome

Session Weekly editors are always looking for feedback. What works, what doesn't? What would *Session Weekly* readers like to see more of in the magazine or on the Web? Please feel free to share your comments by sending an email message to info@house.mn.



Wearing many hats

Liebling adds representative to her list of activities

By RUTH DUNN

Some people may have been surprised when Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL-Rochester) was elected to the House, but she wasn't.



Rep. Tina Liebling

In a three-way race in 2002, Liebling and an Independence Party candidate together gathered more votes than Republican Carla Nelson.

"I was optimistic I could win a two-way race," she said.

Rochester, once a Republican stronghold, tends to be a swing area now, says Liebling. "The area has changed with lots of political moderates moving in who are liberal on social issues."

Although her life was filled with a law practice, community involvement, three children

and a physician husband with a busy career of his own, when she was urged to run for office, she took the chance.

Gridlock at the Legislature — especially failure to pass a bonding bill — was a key factor in her victory in 2004, she believes. "Many unemployed people were counting on jobs from the bonding bill. When that didn't happen they were upset."

That bill included two key projects in the Rochester area — a laboratory for the genomics partnership between the Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota, and a nurses training facility at the community college.

Education is also a key issue in her district with many highly educated people who don't want public schools to be second rate, she explains. Health care, of course, is also an important issue for her constituents.

Liebling gave up her criminal defense practice

DISTRICT 30A

2002 population: 36,591
Largest city: Rochester
County: Olmsted
Top concerns: Economy, health care, education

"Many unemployed people were counting on jobs from the bonding bill. When that didn't happen they were upset."

— Rep. Tina Liebling

in 2002 when she first ran for office. She is now associated with another law practice. She spends a lot of time now in St. Paul and it's hard for her to be away from her two younger children Hannah, 16, and Samuel, 11. The oldest child, David, is a college freshman.

But still, she said, "It feels good to be here, like it's the right thing to do. I always want to learn new things and face challenges. I know that's going to happen here. It already has."

Bridging the divide

Poppe seeks results in bonding and education

By BRETT MARTIN

Rep. Jeanne Poppe (DFL-Austin) didn't exactly follow in her father's footsteps. Sure, they both have a background in politics and civic involvement, but she is a DFLer and her father was a Republican.



Rep. Jeanne Poppe

"I am involved in politics because I had my dad as a role model," Poppe said. "Perhaps the one thing he taught me is to stand up for what I believe."

After losing a close House race two years ago to Jeff Anderson, Poppe reversed the results in the last election. She said her district, like the country, is divided over issues and she intends to heal the division.

"I want to bridge that divide," she said. "We need more communication and more listening."

Poppe sees herself as a good listener and problem solver, which she attributes to her background as an educator. She is a career counselor on leave from Riverland Community College in Albert Lea.

"To be a good counselor, you have to be a good listener," she said. "You have to help people see what they might be missing by helping them see all sides."

One of Poppe's priorities is making sure the bonding bill passes to provide relief to her district hit hard by a September 2004 flood where two people lost their lives. Some constituents need help relocating and preventing future flood damage. Poppe is also focused on making sure all children receive a quality education from pre-school through college.

"Kids have got to be given every advantage they can be given in education," she said. A mother of three, Poppe considers how each legislative decision will affect her family.

DISTRICT 27B

2002 population: 36,857
Largest city: Austin
Counties: Fillmore and Mower
Top concern: Substantial rural economic growth

"Kids have got to be given every advantage they can be given in education."

— Rep. Jeanne Poppe

"I think about how is it going to impact my mother who's living on Social Security and has medical needs. I also think about how it's going to impact my teenagers and future grandchildren," she said. "We have to think more long-term. We need more than a temporary fix; we need to solve problems."

Poppe serves on three House committees: Environment and Natural Resources, Local Government, and Rules and Legislative Administration.

Monday, February 14

HF978—Mullery (DFL)

Health Policy & Finance

Collaborative parent-infant services requirement for hospital licensure established.

HF979—Abeler (R)

Health Policy & Finance

Medical assistance required to cover medication therapy management services.

HF980—Wilkin (R)

Health Policy & Finance

Programs and services for persons with disabilities modified.

HF981—Cox (R)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Cigarette cost mitigation fee imposed.

HF982—Tingelstad (R)

Local Government

Housing improvement area establishment sunset extended and reports required.

HF983—Ruth (R)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Vinland Center for rehabilitation services funding provided and money appropriated.

HF984—Gunther (R)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Youth job skills development statewide program administration grant provided and money appropriated.

HF985—Anderson, I. (DFL)

Transportation Finance

Rest area operation funding provided and money appropriated.

HF986—Nelson, M. (DFL)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Urban initiative program definition of low income area modified.

HF987—Sieben (DFL)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Cribs in violation of certain regulations sale and commercial use prohibited.

HF988—Lesch (DFL)

Public Safety Policy & Finance

Gang member crime against a child crime classification established.

HF989—Vandever (R)

Regulated Industries

City approval of state-operated or state-licensed gambling facility required.

HF990—Emmer (R)

Environment & Natural Resources

Wright County; Wild, Scenic and Recreational River District land deleted.

HF991—Heidgerken (R)

Taxes

E85 motor vehicle fuel retail dispensation equipment installation tax credit provided.

HF992—Vandever (R)

Taxes

Homestead property tax computation usage of household income provided.

HF993—Vandever (R)

Taxes

Estate tax abolished.

HF994—Lanning (R)

Local Government

Compensation limit for political subdivision employees modified.

HF995—Erhardt (R)

Local Government

Local government employee compensation limit repealed.

HF996—Ellison (DFL)

Transportation

Driver's license reinstatement provisions modified.

HF997—Howes (R)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Burns Township; detached banking facility authorized.

HF998—Rukavina (DFL)

Public Safety Policy & Finance

Traffic and vehicle inspection citation quotas prohibited.

HF999—Bradley (R)

Taxes

Rochester city sales and use tax revenue additional uses provided and bonding authorization increased.

HF1000—Clark (DFL)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Procurement Technical Assistance Center and minority business development program grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1001—Simpson (R)

Taxes

Resort property tax payment date delayed.

HF1002—Gazelka (R)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Tourism marketing funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1003—Wilkin (R)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Service contracts and contract providers regulated and exceptions provided.

HF1004—Thissen (DFL)

Regulated Industries

Closed-loop elemental recycling technology research grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1005—Ruth (R)

Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Women Venture grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1006—Anderson, I. (DFL)

Transportation Finance

Motor fuel tax rates increased, highways 53 and 169 projects funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1007—Hilty (DFL)

Civil Law & Elections

Post-election security and certification review application to federal constitutional and legislative offices provided.

HF1008—Vandever (R)

Civil Law & Elections

Adoption communication or contact agreement provisions modified.

HF1009—Kahn (DFL)

Regulated Industries

Casino operation by state lottery in Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport main terminal authorized and money appropriated.

HF1010—Abeler (R)

Education Policy & Reform

Competitive high school diving pool usage notice required.

HF1011—Kahn (DFL)

Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

Bicycle commuting promotion actions by state agencies required.

HF1012—Kahn (DFL)

Transportation

Motorized scooters regulated.

HF1013—Kahn (DFL)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Genetic information insurance company usage regulated and enforcement authority provided.

HF1014—Clark (DFL)

Public Safety Policy & Finance

Impaired driving and chemical dependency counteraction initiative provided, alcoholic beverage tax increased, obsolete language eliminated, technical corrections provided and money appropriated.

HF1015—Juhnke (DFL)

Commerce & Financial Institutions

Roofing contractors added to the building contractors recovery fund.

HF1016—Ozment (R)

Education Policy & Reform

Pupil Fair Dismissal Act provisions authorized to a child whose parent refuses to consent to an initial evaluation.

HF1017—Paymar (DFL)

Transportation

Advertising adjacent to highways regulated.

HF1018—Demmer (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

School districts authorized to terminate the enrollment of a nonresident enrollment options student during the school year.

HF1019—Hansen (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Grass bank buffer zone drainage requirement extended for ditches.

HF1020—Atkins (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Steroid sale and possession penalties increased.

HF1021—Wilkin (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Legislature required to pass bonding and budget bills before consideration of policy bills and even-year legislative sessions abolished.

HF1022—Kelliher (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Hospital emergency rooms required to provide emergency contraception, prophylactic antibiotics and information to sexual assault victims.

HF1023—Johnson, R. (DFL)**Education Finance**

Supportive community partnerships grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1024—Hoppe (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Artificial light use authorized while bow fishing for rough fish.

HF1025—McNamara (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Nonresident fishing licenses made invalid for 14 days of the fishing season for nonresidents from states that prohibit Minnesotans from taking game fish or small game during part of their season and nonresident boat access fee provided.

HF1026—Rukavina (DFL)**Regulated Industries**

Farm-grown closed-loop biomass definition expanded and conditions for Public Utilities Commission approval of a pending request for a biomass project modified.

HF1027—Vandevveer (R)**Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs**

A House resolution requesting the congressional delegation of the state give first priority to supporting and passing the defense appropriations bill first.

HF1028—Vandevveer (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

A House resolution memorializing the United States senators from Minnesota to support the president's nominees to the United States Supreme Court.

HF1029—Vandevveer (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

A House resolution memorializing Minnesota's congressional delegation to support the president's call for legal reform.

HF1030—Vandevveer (R)**Taxes**

A House resolution requesting Congress to support a repeal of the federal excise tax on telecommunications.

HF1031—Zellers (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Coercion definition modified relating to criminal sexual conduct law, stepparents authorized to assist a minor in seeking a restraining order, fees waived for sexual assault victims seeking restraining orders and harassment laws updated.

HF1032—Dorman (R)**Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Mower and Freeborn counties flood damage mitigation engineering study funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1033—Peterson, A. (DFL)**Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 2853, Lac qui Parle Valley, severance levy authorized.

HF1034—Garofalo (R)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Extended employment services funding provided, reimbursement rate increased and money appropriated.

HF1035—Abrams (R)**Taxes**

Commercial-industrial property general tax converted to a tax based on land value.

HF1036—Seifert (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Office of Administrative Hearings provided three copies of Minnesota Rules, hearings and cases regulated, rulemaking provided and costs assessed.

HF1037—Marquart (DFL)**Taxes**

Detroit Lakes redevelopment districts established subject to certain rules.

HF1038—Simpson (R)**Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Beaver damage control grant program reinstated and money appropriated.

HF1039—Ellison (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

First time drug offenders mandatory diversion required for specified offenses.

HF1040—Finstad (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

School and mental health provider collaboration task force established.

HF1041—Lanning (R)**Taxes**

Border city enterprise zone provisions modified and funds allocated.

HF1042—Rukavina (DFL)**Regulated Industries**

Video lottery terminals authorized, state lottery director duties and powers provided and revenue uses specified.

HF1043—Emmer (R)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Corporation law recodified.

HF1044—Garofalo (R)**Local Government**

Metropolitan Council required to carry out water supply planning activities, advisory committee established and housing bond credit enhancement program abolished.

HF1045—Mullery (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Absentee ballot treatment provided in case of vacancy in nomination because of death or catastrophic illness.

HF1046—Mullery (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Learn to earn summer youth employment program funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1047—Cox (R)**Higher Education Finance**

State adjunct to the federal educational Upward Bound or Talent Search Trio programs created and money appropriated.

HF1048—Soderstrom (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Challenge incarceration program land acquisition funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1049—Clark (DFL)**Transportation**

Minneapolis additional deputy registrar of motor vehicles authorized.

Wednesday, February 16

HF1050—Davids (R)**Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Second Harvest food banks grant provided for purchase of milk and money appropriated.

HF1051—Kelliher (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Reproductive Privacy Act established prohibiting the state from interfering with a woman's right to choose.

HF1052—Sieben (DFL)**Regulated Industries**

Long distance service charges prohibited after a customer has requested a telecommunications carrier to cancel the service.

HF1053—Severson (R)**Transportation**

Driver's license road test waiver authorized for licensed military personnel.

HF1054—Knoblach (R)**Taxes**

Education tax credit authorized for certain school attendance and family cap on the education tax credit eliminated.

HF1055—Lenczewski (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Lobbying activities prohibited for one year after leaving office for former legislators, constitutional officers, commissioners and deputies, agency heads and specified legislative employees.

HF1056—Nornes (R)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Child-care assistance provider reimbursement rate categories modified.

HF1057—Thao (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

St. Paul; Summit University Teen Center funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1058—Nornes (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

Otter Tail County nursing home moratorium exception extended.

HF1059—Pelowski (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Programs for the all-inclusive care for the elderly (PACE) covered under alternative integrated long-term care services.

HF1060—Davnie (DFL)**Education Policy & Reform**

Individual education plan development and tuition billing resident district participation conditions provided.

HF1061—Thissen (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Personal jurisdiction over foreign corporations and nonresident individuals modified.

HF1062—Thissen (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Airport areas development fund established.

HF1063—Thissen (DFL)**Transportation**

Airport zoning provisions scope expanded to include control of uses incompatible with present and future airport use.

HF1064—Thissen (DFL)**Local Government**

Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport impact mitigation planning and fund provided, airport impact zones established, contingent metropolitan area property tax levy authorized and money appropriated.

HF1065—Davnie (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Fair and Clean Elections Act adopted, campaign contribution disclosure increased, contributions and expenditures limited, public subsidies increased for candidates who agree to limits and money appropriated.

HF1066—Lenczewski (DFL)**Taxes**

Fiscal disparities proceeds expenditures required on projects that benefit the entire metropolitan area as a whole.

HF1067—Kohls (R)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Wage detail reports filing requirements modified relating to unemployment insurance.

HF1068—Howes (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

County review and approval of shoreland subdivisions required.

HF1069—Fritz (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Ellendale sewer and water infrastructure improvements grant provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1070—Holberg (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

State park permit provisions modified.

HF1071—Erickson (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

Sexually transmitted infections and diseases program for school districts required to include information on criminal sexual conduct.

HF1072—Mullery (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Grandparent visitation rights provided on behalf of the child, grandparent rights expanded, procedures specified and mediation required.

HF1073—DeLaForest (R)**Transportation**

Speed limits provided on city streets in rural residential districts.

HF1074—Cybart (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Family day care, child-care center or foster care license data classified as public in certain circumstances.

HF1075—Juhnke (DFL)**Agriculture & Rural Development**

Fertilizer Research Council established, comprehensive research and management program provided and refundable fee imposed on agricultural fertilizers.

HF1076—Kohls (R)**Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 110, Waconia, lease levy authorized.

HF1077—Kohls (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Peace officers and firefighters suffering disabling injuries health insurance payments continued even if the officer works at another position for the employer before separating from service.

HF1078—Kohls (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

Carver County nursing home moratorium exception provided.

HF1079—Greiling (DFL)**Education Policy & Reform**

Nonpublic schools subjected to the pupil fair dismissal law and other requirements if families of students attending claim a tax credit for education-related expenses.

HF1080—Eastlund (R)**Taxes**

Electric generation facility personal property tax exemption provided.

HF1081—Ozment (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Commercial fishing restrictions in infested waters modified, water recreation account provided, citizen oversight committee sunsets extended and approval of county timber receipts expenditures eliminated.

HF1082—Simpson (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

Wadena County nursing home moratorium exception provided and money appropriated.

HF1083—Buesgens (R)**Regulated Industries**

Elko Speedway on-sale liquor license authorized for all sales for all events on all days of the week.

HF1084—Hansen (DFL)**Local Government**

Counties authorized to delegate duties to board of adjustment.

HF1085—Nornes (R)**Higher Education Finance**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities student board member selection recommendation deadline modified.

HF1086—Powell (R)**Education Finance**

School districts authorized to replace state shortfalls in special education funding with local levy authority, and local discretionary levy authorized.

Thursday, February 17

HF1087—Powell (R)**Transportation**

Seatbelt violation primary offense provided regardless of age in all seating positions and fine increased.

HF1088—Slawik (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Prejudgment garnishments prohibited in certain circumstances.

HF1089—Ozment (R)**Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Minnesota Conservation Corps funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1090—Buesgens (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

Non-curricular athletic and fine arts activities for youth transferred from school districts to local governments.

HF1091—Howes (R)**Higher Education Finance**

State college and university self-governance option provided, administration specified, state aid for higher education provided and money appropriated.

HF1092—Hackbarth (R)**Regulated Industries**

Sports-themed tipboard games provided.

HF1093—Hausman (DFL)**Local Government**

St. Paul authorized to participate in the creation of, and contracting with a nonprofit organization to operate the RiverCentre complex.

HF1094—Smith (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Victim of crime definition clarified.

HF1095—Nelson, P. (R)**Transportation**

Special veterans license plates authorized for display on certain 1-ton trucks.

HF1096—Nelson, P. (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Additional campaign committee finance report required.

HF1097—Blaine (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

Teacher mentoring program school district assistance provided and money appropriated.

HF1098—Clark (DFL)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Human services, medical assistance leins and individual income tax and corporate franchise tax provisions modified.

HF1099—Newman (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Gambling fraud crime provision clarified.

HF1100—Newman (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Hutchinson Area Health Care employees added to the Public Employees Retirement Association privatization coverage.

HF1101—Newman (R)**Taxes**

Local government aid city aid base increased for certain cities.

HF1102—Hosch (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

Per diem increase for legislators prohibited during special sessions called within 60 days of adjournment because the Legislature failed to pass necessary legislation during the regular session.

HF1103—Hosch (DFL)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Steroid testing authorized for professional athletes.

HF1104—Seifert (R)**Agriculture & Rural Development**

State Fair recreational camping area regulations exception provided.

HF1105—Seifert (R)**State Government Finance**

State government general legislative and administrative expenses funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1106—Greiling (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Limited liability provided for certain conduct of persons released from confinement related to use or nonuse of prescribed medicines.

HF1107—Newman (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Predatory offender registration law requirements provided and community notification law information disclosure clarified.

HF1108—Greiling (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Early intervention services expanded relating to civil commitment of chemically dependent pregnant women.

HF1109—Smith (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Firefighting training and education board revived and reenacted.

HF1110—Hosch (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

State primary election eliminated in areas where no nominee must be selected for any office in that municipality or county.

HF1111—Sykora (R)**Education Finance**

Collaborative urban educator recruitment and training program grants authorized and money appropriated.

HF1112—Abeler (R)**Health Policy & Finance**

Alcohol and drug counselor voluntary licensure provisions reinstated.

HF1113—Goodwin (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Housing warranties remedies provisions modified.

HF1114—Goodwin (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Home improvement construction defects relief provided.

HF1115—Hortman (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Unsterilized ballast water use prohibited and discharge permit required.

HF1116—Bernardy (DFL)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

University of Minnesota former steam plant employees included in the state health insurance group.

HF1117—Greiling (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

Medical Assistance asset limit modified for persons who are aged, blind or disabled.

HF1118—Dempsey (R)**Transportation Finance**

Duluth Port Authority grant provided and money appropriated.

HF1119—Zellers (R)**Education Finance**

Brooklyn Center; Northwest Hennepin Family Center construction funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1120—Powell (R)**Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs**

State employee voluntary unpaid leave and early retirement options and incentives provided.

HF1121—Ruud (DFL)**Education Finance**

Operating referendum ballot language simplified relating to education finance.

HF1122—Moe (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Minnesota Fishing Protection Act established providing authority, direction, and funding to achieve and maintain water quality standards to protect the quantity, edibility and health of Minnesota fish.

HF1123—Fritz (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Methamphetamine precursor drug sales regulated, new civil and criminal penalties imposed, cleanup fund established and money appropriated.

HF1124—Emmer (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Juvenile data release in conjunction with a background check defined as not constituting a release of a juvenile adjudication history.

HF1125—Wilkin (R)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

No-Fault Automobile Insurance Act repealed, premium reduction provided and liability coverage required.

HF1126—Hamilton (R)**Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance**

Employment support services for persons with mental illness funding provided and money appropriated.

HF1127—Brod (R)**Taxes**

Biotechnology and health sciences industry zone tax credit amount increased.

HF1128—Samuelson (R)**Transportation Finance**

Interstate-35W reconstruction concepts funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1129—Emmer (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

State agency employment applicant data classification modified.

HF1130—Emmer (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Government data access maximum fee for copies provided.

HF1131—Emmer (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Asexualization of certain sex offenders authorized.

HF1132—Dill (DFL)**Education Finance**

Independent School District No. 381, Lake Superior, fund transfer authorized.

HF1133—Cornish (R)**Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Minerals management account created, disposition of certain mineral payments modified and money appropriated.

HF1134—Severson (R)**Transportation**

Motor vehicle registration plates regulation and fees provided.

HF1135—Hamilton (R)**State Government Finance**

Veterans service office grant program carryforward of unexpended appropriation provided.

HF1136—Dorman (R)**Transportation Finance**

Rural road safety account established, local road improvement funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1137—Thissen (DFL)**Commerce & Financial Institutions**

Health coverage; more affordable conversion health coverage provided as a bridge to Medicare for persons 60 to 65 years of age.

HF1138—Thissen (DFL)**Taxes**

Technology tax credit provided for small businesses.

HF1139—Thissen (DFL)**Taxes**

First tier of commercial-industrial property exempted from the state general tax.

HF1140—Thissen (DFL)**Taxes**

Property tax loss compensation provided when real property is acquired by a governmental entity and becomes tax-exempt.

HF1141—Ellison (DFL)**Transportation Finance**

Minneapolis; Broadway Avenue bridge improvements funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

HF1142—Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Inmates required to be housed in publicly owned and operated jails and prisons, private prison contracting prohibited and renewal of the Prairie Correctional Facility contract prohibited.

HF1143—Emmer (R)**Civil Law & Elections**

Investigative and licensing data classified.

HF1144—Demmer (R)**Education Policy & Reform**

Consecutive teaching experience provided for a teacher whose probationary employment is interrupted by military service.

HF1145—Slawik (DFL)**Civil Law & Elections**

Absentee ballot early voting authorized at specified locations without qualification.

HF1146—Nelson, P. (R)**Taxes**

Local government aid base increased for specified cities.

HF1147—Peppin (R)**State Government Finance**

State soldiers' assistance fund unexpended appropriation carryforward authorized.

HF1148—Greiling (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Discharge plans provided for offenders with serious and persistent mental illnesses that are released from county jails or county regional jails and money appropriated.

HF1149—Cornish (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Criminal justice agencies authorized as only agencies permitted to submit and obtain data from the distinctive physical mark identification program.

HF1150—Emmer (R)**Public Safety Policy & Finance**

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension authorized to add certain identifying information on an individual who is the subject of a background check to the criminal history under certain circumstances.

HF1151—Huntley (DFL)**Health Policy & Finance**

St. Louis County nursing facility rate increase determination provided.

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66 Anderson, Ellen (DFL)	120 Cap.	5537	54 Marty, John (DFL)	323 Cap.	5645
52 Bachmann, Michele (R)	141 SOB	4351	38 McGinn, Mike (R)	G-19 SOB	7-8073
6 Bakk, Thomas (DFL)	226 Cap.	8881	39 Metzen, James (DFL)	322 Cap.	4370
40 Belanger, William (R)	113 SOB	5975	41 Michel, Geoff (R)	133 SOB	6238
61 Berglin, Linda (DFL)	309 Cap.	4261	67 Moua, Mee (DFL)	235 Cap.	5285
51 Betzold, Don (DFL)	111 Cap.	2556	28 Murphy, Steve (DFL)	306 Cap.	4264
50 Chaudhary, Satveer (DFL)	317 Cap.	4334	25 Neuville, Thomas (R)	123 SOB	1279
64 Cohen, Richard (DFL)	121 Cap.	5931	17 Nienow, Sean (R)	105 SOB	5419
26 Day, Dick (R)	147 SOB	9457	33 Olson, Gen (R)	119 SOB	1282
60 Dibble, D. Scott (DFL)	111 Cap.	4191	34 Ortman, Julianne (R)	G-21 SOB	4837
18 Dille, Steve (R)	103 SOB	4131	19 Ourada, Mark (R)	145 SOB	5981
14 Fischbach, Michelle (R)	G-15 SOB	2084	65 Pappas, Sandra (DFL)	120 Cap.	1802
47 Foley, Leo (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	4154	36 Pariseau, Pat (R)	117 SOB	5252
21 Frederickson, Dennis (R)	139 SOB	8138	59 Pogemiller, Lawrence (DFL)	235 Cap.	7809
43 Gaither, David (R)	107 SOB	4314	63 Ranum, Jane (DFL)	120 Cap.	7-8061
37 Gerlach, Chris (R)	149 SOB	4120	53 Reiter, Mady (R)	132D SOB	1253
42 Hann, David (R)	G-27 SOB	1749	45 Rest, Ann (DFL)	205 Cap.	2889
58 Higgins, Linda (DFL)	328 Cap.	9246	35 Robling, Claire (R)	143 SOB	4123
23 Hottinger, John (DFL)	317 Cap.	6153	24 Rosen, Julie (R)	G-23 SOB	5713
13 Johnson, Dean (DFL)	208 Cap.	3826	4 Ruud, Carrie (R)	109 SOB	4913
49 Johnson, Debbie (R)	135 SOB	3219	11 Sams, Dallas (DFL)	328 Cap.	7-8063
48 Jungbauer, Michael (R)	115 SOB	3733	3 Saxhaug, Tom (DFL)	124 Cap.	4136
44 Kelley, Steve (DFL)	205 Cap.	7-8065	46 Scheid, Linda (DFL)	303 Cap.	8869
31 Kierlin, Bob (R)	127 SOB	5649	29 Senjem, David (R)	G-17 SOB	3903
30 Kiscaden, Sheila (IP)	325 Cap.	4848	2 Skoe, Rod (DFL)	124 Cap.	4196
15 Kleis, Dave (R)	G-25 SOB	6455	62 Skoglund, Wesley (DFL)	124 Cap.	4274
12 Koering, Paul (R)	131 SOB	4875	7 Solon, Yvonne Prettner (DFL)	303 Cap.	4188
20 Kubly, Gary (DFL)	306 Cap.	5094	27 Sparks, Dan (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	9248
9 Langseth, Keith (DFL)	122 Cap.	3205	1 Stumpf, LeRoy (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	8660
10 Larson, Cal (R)	153 SOB	5655	5 Tomassoni, David (DFL)	321 Cap.	8017
56 LeClair, Brian (R)	129 SOB	4166	22 Vickerman, Jim (DFL)	226 Cap.	5650
32 Limmer, Warren (R)	121 SOB	2159	16 Wergin, Betsy (R)	125 SOB	8075
8 Lourey, Becky (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	0293	55 Wiger, Charles (DFL)	301 Cap.	6820
57 Marko, Sharon (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	7-8060			

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SPEAKING OF THE HOUSE



Peter Meslow, the 19-year-old son of **Rep. Doug Meslow (R-White Bear Lake)** and his wife, **Jenny**, was remembered in prayer on the House floor Feb. 10, two days after he passed away following a two-year battle with cancer.

Memorials can be sent to the White Bear Lake Area Educational Foundation, c/o Madelyn Benson, P.O. Box 10786, White Bear Lake, MN 55110.



University of Minnesota President Robert Bruininks spoke Feb. 14 before the House Higher Education Finance Committee about the university's response to the governor's budget request.

"I've never had the opportunity or privilege to address a committee of the House or Senate on Valentine's Day so I'm hoping this will be a good omen," he said.

"Love is in the air," said **Rep. Jim Abeler (R-Anoka)**.

"I hope for the University of Minnesota," Bruininks said with a laugh.

After Committee Chair **Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls)** pointed out the lack of red apparel worn by committee members, Bruininks responded, "I hope this committee is not thinking red. I hope this committee is thinking green."



Rep. Laura Brod (R-New Prague) is fascinated with main streets of Minnesota cities. Historic photos of eight of the 12 cities in her district hang on the walls of her office in the State Office Building. Cities

like New Prague, Waterville and Arlington are pictured from 1895 to 1910 with muddy streets lined with brick buildings. "I like to stay connected to history as we move forward and build on our history," she said.

Brod, a small business owner who served on the city council, understands the importance of main streets and the impact that one to two person shops have on them. "Main streets are strong in my district. We don't want to see them go away." She also wrote a paper for her master's degree on the topic Main Street Minnesota.



When he appeared before the House Capital Investment Committee Feb. 8, **Rep. Bud Nornes (R-Fergus Falls)** was wearing a shirt and sweater.

"Before I begin I'm going to request that you don't hold it against me that I didn't wear a tie today," he said before sharing the House Higher Education Finance Committee's bonding recommendations.

"We'll note that down, but two demerits," said **Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea)**, the committee chair.

Later in the presentation, **Mike Miller**, the higher education committee administrator, needed to testify. He was wearing an open-collared shirt.

Asked Dorman, with a laugh: "What kind of committee are you running over there Nornes?"

When the higher education committee met the following day, both Nornes and Miller donned coats and ties.



House Transportation Finance Committee Chair **Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville)** was just finishing her presentation to the House Capital Investment Committee Feb. 8 when she mentioned that her daughter played in a Duluth hockey tournament a couple of weekends prior.

"Rep. Holberg and I had a child on the same day," **Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea)** said. Quickly realizing what that could have meant, a red-faced Dorman said, "Not the same one. I thought that would get folks attention."

Dorman's son is a swimmer. "Rep. Holberg's daughter deals with it when it's frozen and if it's not frozen Christopher is swimming in it, but they both share the same date of birth," Dorman said.



When testifying in support of his bill, HF9, before the House Health Policy and Finance Committee Feb. 2, **Rep. Tim Wilkin (R-Eagan)** urged members to refer the bill to the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee.

"I talked to the chair of the Commerce Committee, and he would like to see it come to his committee," Wilkin said, adding that the chair was "sympathetic" to the bill.

The members laughed, knowing full well that Wilkin is the chair of the said committee.

The committee did refer Wilkin's bill to his committee, where it was approved and referred to the House Taxes Committee.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: STEVE SVIGGUM
MAJORITY LEADER: ERIK PAULSEN
MINORITY LEADER: MATT ENTENZA

MINNESOTA INDEX

College costs

Number of public and private higher education institutions in Minnesota	178
Those that are for-profit	80
Total public institution enrollment in fall 2004	235,796
Percent increase from 2000	10.9
Percent attending a Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) school	72.3
Private school institution enrollment in fall 2004	84,468
Percent increase from 2000	12.5
Percent attending a private college or university	72.5
Approximate percent of low-income and students of color in public schools who receive a Bachelor of Arts degree from a Minnesota college within 10 years of their freshman year in high school	5
State appropriation for higher education in fiscal year 2004, in billions	\$1.3
Millions to MnSCU	\$560
Millions to the University of Minnesota	\$547
Millions for financial aid (and supportive administrative functions)	\$180
State appropriation reduction for higher education from 2002-03 biennium to 2004-05 biennium, in millions	\$196
Higher education, as percent of state's 2004-05 budget	9.1
In 1987	15.5
State tax-funded appropriations per \$1,000 of personal income that went to higher education in fiscal year 2004	\$7.56
State rank	21
Amount in 1978	\$15.08
Average tuition and fees for state students at one of the seven state universities for 2004-05	\$4,921
At one of 30 state colleges	\$3,804
Average for a state undergraduate at the University of Minnesota	\$7,881
Millions in grants that Minnesota undergraduates received in fiscal year 2003	\$687
Millions in student and parent higher education loans	\$844
Number of students receiving state grants in fiscal year 2003	72,396
Percent of those students coming from families earning less than \$40,000	70
Students receiving child-care grants	935

Sources: University of Minnesota; Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system; Minnesota Higher Education Services Office, including Fall 2004 Preliminary Headcount Enrollment Report; Trouble on the Horizon: Growing Demands and Competition, Limited Resources, & Changing Demographics in Higher Education, November 2004, Citizens League.

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