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INSIDE: MAJORITY RULES, YOU BET'CHA, MEMBERS STEPPING DOWN, MORE

This Week's Bill Introductions HF4149-HF4158

Session Weekly

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On the cover: A Capitol visitor is silhouetted against a shard of sunlight above the Rotunda.

—Photo by: Andrew Von Bank

Preserving majority rule

The balance of power is tilted in favor of the few, some say

By Nick Busse

Here's a riddle, courtesy of the Minnesota Legislature: Several thousand bills are introduced by House members in a given biennium. Only a few hundred of them are actually passed. Fewer than a dozen are voted down. What happens to the rest?

The answer, according to [Rep. Mark Olson](#) (R-Big Lake), is that nothing happens to them at all, because House members don't get to decide what bills they vote on. Instead, House leadership and committee chairs do it for them, and anything they're not interested in simply doesn't get put on the agenda. And to him, that isn't right.

"Currently, a minority, for the most part, is controlling what the majority can vote on," he says. "The only time the minority is not in control is when the majority will say 'no' to what the minority gives them permission to vote on."

Olson believes the power that a few individuals in the Legislature have to dictate who gets to vote on what — and when — is responsible for numerous special sessions as well as last year's partial government shutdown. Moreover, he says it's eroding the democratic foundations of the institution.

"I believe we are clearly violating the constitution of Minnesota," he told the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee March 24. "We are a majority rule institution, and we don't act as such. It is critical that we correct that."

Olson himself has been trying to correct it for the last 12 years — so far, without success. But that may be changing.

That evening, the committee approved a bill that would amend the state constitution to prohibit small groups of legislators from preventing a vote on any given bill by the full bodies of the House and/or Senate. In essence, [HF3640](#), sponsored by Olson, would ensure that final decisions on key pieces of legislation are available to all legislators and not just leadership or legislative subgroups.

"The effects of my proposal basically create the ability for the body to override members who are in control and are able to create gridlock by their control," he explains.

The committee's approval of the bill



PHOTO BY TOM OLSMSEID

Rep. Mark Olson believes that more members should have a say in which bills are voted on.

represented a personal milestone for Olson, who has been trying to get similar legislation passed since the end of his first term in office (1994). Unfortunately, the victory may turn out to be a minor one.

With a month until members must finish their work, it is highly unlikely that either body will take up such a hotly contentious and internally divisive issue. For all practical purposes, his constitutional amendment is dead in the water — at least for now.

But the issue itself isn't.

Making progress

On April 18, Olson successfully amended an omnibus state government finance bill with a provision that would give House and Senate members more pull over conference committees. It would force conference committees to adjourn at least five days before the end of session and allow House and Senate members to dissolve conference committees at any time with a simple majority vote.

It was a substantial victory for Olson, and it was just one of many legislative reform initiatives that have been debated on the House floor this year. Frustrations over last year's special session have created an impetus for legislative reform, and Olson is reaping the benefits.

During the special session, Olson made 14 separate motions to wrest control of the decision-making process away from the working groups and legislative leadership and put it back in the hands of the full House. Every one of them failed, but by the end of session he had a bipartisan majority of House members voting with him — just not the two-thirds majority necessary to suspend the House rules. His efforts seem to be paying off, however, in that his ideas seem to be finding a more receptive audience.

"I introduced this first in 1995 and I couldn't find anybody interested; 2002, the same thing. We're making progress. And if we can get from one committee to the next, that's a big step," he told committee members at the March 24 meeting.

Olson probably made that pronouncement with a sense of irony, however, because the bill is a long, long way from being signed into law. For him, that's still a fantasy at this point.

"That would be like a dream. It would be

First Reading continued on page 4

First Reading continued from page 3

like a vision fulfilled in my life,” he says.

“Duty is ours”

Olson comes off as somewhat of an idealist. His office is filled with quotes from the Founding Fathers. As chair of the House Local Government Committee, he is renowned for being fair. And his votes on the House floor have been known to stray across party lines when in conflict with his personal values.

He says that he learned much of his reverence for democracy from hearing stories about his grandfather, who helped found the DFL party in Sherburne County and was a friend of Charles Lindbergh. When he first took office, he was struck by the fact that the legislative process in use was not the one set forth by the state constitution, and he connected that with some of his grandfather’s observations about state government.

“I started digging into it and I started observing how little groups can control the process, and with that history from my childhood combined with what I experienced, it just kind of became a passion for me,” he said.

Olson also has a passion for history. At the aforementioned March 24 meeting, Olson explained his persistence in raising legislative reform issues by relating a parable from the life of John Quincy Adams, the U.S. president who stepped down to become a congressman and introduced hundreds of petitions against slavery. Olson said that if just one of those petitions had passed, slavery might have ended gradually and the Civil War could have been averted.

“During that time, he was asked, ‘Why do you keep trying?’” Olson told committee members. “He said, in response ... ‘Duty is ours, results are God’s.’”

Cultural problems

Olson says there are barriers to his reforms, primarily in the culture of the House. He finds himself in the difficult position of attempting to make serious criticisms about the House without impugning the integrity of any of its leaders or members. Loosely, however, he says that many members are reluctant to back him on the issue for fear of angering those who might have the power to influence legislation that is personally important to them, or who might have ready access to political action committee funds.

Olson is not the only member who feels that way. Among his key supporters, [Rep. Larry Hosch](#) (DFL-St. Joseph) says many of the same things about the culture of the House. He feels, like Olson, that power is

too concentrated into the hands of a select group of people, and that those people are too focused on loyalty to their parties.

Hosch has sponsored several legislative reform bills, and unsuccessfully tried to amend one onto the omnibus state government finance bill. It would have allowed each member to designate two bills each year that would be guaranteed a hearing by the relevant committees.

For their part, leadership has pointed out what they see as logistical difficulties with some of Olson’s ideas. [House Speaker Steve Sviggum](#) (R-Kenyon), for example, points out that the amendment Olson made to the omnibus state government finance bill could

hamper negotiations between the House and Senate.

“The conferees cannot in earnest do their work until they are given targets,” Sviggum said, “and sometimes the targets are not given to them until really, really late in the session. And while they could be done earlier, to put time frames on negotiations is a tough thing to do.”

HF3640 awaits action by the House State Government Finance Committee.

A companion ([SF3560](#)), sponsored by [Sen. Betsy Wergin](#) (R-Princeton), awaits action by the Senate Rules and Administration Committee. 🐸

SLIPPERY SITUATION



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Sara Keasky, *left*, a Minnesota Zoo volunteer since 1996, shows a Western Hognose snake to sixth-grade students from Kasson-Mantorville Intermediate School during “Zoo Day at the State Capitol” April 18.

★

EDUCATION

Education bill in limbo

The House Taxes Committee chair abruptly adjourned the meeting April 19, leaving an uncertain future for a bill that would provide \$117 million in property tax relief.

[Rep. Phil Krinkie](#) (R-Lino Lakes) dropped the gavel on the meeting after an amendment to the omnibus education finance bill to fund a state buy-down of school levies by closing a loophole relating to foreign operating companies was approved by the committee.

The move to adjourn took [Rep. Barb Sykora](#) (R-Excelsior), the sponsor of [HF4040](#), by surprise and she questions whether the bill will survive the session. Several key Republican committee members were absent from the meeting and she mused that the votes may not have been there to keep the legislation from being significantly changed.

The committee had little chance to discuss the bill as presented by Sykora, but instead debated two amendments. The first, presented by [Rep. Dan Dorman](#) (R-Albert Lea), would have prevented high school students transferring to another school district under open enrollment from participating in any varsity athletic competition in the enrolling district. The measure failed on a tie vote.

While Sykora's bill provides some property tax relief by increasing state aid to school districts, and allowing for some levies to be reduced or eliminated, an amendment successfully offered by [Rep. Connie Bernardy](#) (DFL-Fridley) would have made an even greater levy reduction. She proposed that it would be funded by a change in how foreign operating companies are taxed. [Rep. Jim Knobloch](#) (R-St. Cloud) asked to have the amendment split into two parts with the committee voting on the tax provision language first, which then led to the immediate adjournment.

Provisions in the omnibus education finance bill, passed by the House Education Finance Committee April 11 include:

- a \$750,000 allocation to fund a 10-year grant program for interested schools to improve the quality and student access to science, technology, engineering and mathematics instruction;
- a one-time allocation to help make the language of Mandarin available in state schools;
- an appropriation in fiscal year 2007 to enable fourth- and eighth-grade students to participate in an international comparative math and science assessment;

- funding for a school-to-school mentoring program; and
- a youth-works program conducted by ServeMinnesota.

The omnibus Senate education finance bill ([SF3770](#)), sponsored by [Sen. LeRoy Stumpf](#) (DFL-Plummer), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

★

ENVIRONMENT

Dedicated funding plan

A bill that would dedicate part of the state's sales tax is headed to the House floor.

Approved by the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee April 20, [HF1909/SF2734](#)* proposes a constitutional amendment that would dedicate one-eighth of 1 percent of current sales and use tax receipts to provide hunter and angler access and to improve, enhance or protect game and fish habitat.

Although introduced in 2005 as a "game and fish" bill by [Rep. Tom Hackbarth](#) (R-Cedar), it has been amended repeatedly. On April 18, the bill, as approved by the same committee, would have dedicated three-eighths of 1 percent of current sales and use tax receipts to four areas: fish and wildlife; parks, trails and zoos; cleaning up the state's waters; and arts, humanities, museums and public broadcasting.

Hackbarth told the committee the three-eighths of 1 percent sales and use tax dedication is "quite a lot of weight to bear, and pretty hard for folks to be voting for something like that."

An amendment moved April 18 by Committee Chair [Rep. Erik Paulsen](#) (R-Eden Prairie) to return the bill to its original dedication of one-eighth of 1 percent of current sales and use tax for game and fish habitat preservation failed by one vote.

On April 20, the committee voted 22-1 to return it to its original intent, with opponents, including [Rep. Lyndon Carlson](#) (DFL-Crystal), indicating that they look forward to debating the bill on the floor in hopes of returning it to dedication in multi-areas.

"I'm not going to give up the ship in the middle of the stream here," Hackbarth said following the April 18 vote. "I'll keep moving forward with this bill until the very end, until it's something I can't support anymore."

The "very end" will likely occur during next week's House floor sessions.

As a constitutional amendment bill, if

passed by the Legislature, it is immune to a governor's veto. It will be placed on the ballot for November's general election. A majority of those voting in the election must vote in favor of the amendment in order for it to pass.

[Sen. Dallas Sams](#) (DFL-Staples) sponsors the bill in the Senate, where it passed April 3.

★

HEALTH

Possible tax reduction

MinnesotaCare provides health care access to those who cannot afford it. But at least one legislator believes these benefits should be wider-reaching if there is a surplus in the Health Care Access Fund, which funds a majority of MinnesotaCare.

[HF2935](#), sponsored by [Rep. Fran Bradley](#) (R-Rochester), would require the state finance commissioner to project the fund's balance every two years. If the commissioner projects a surplus, the rate of MinnesotaCare taxes would be reduced for hospitals, surgical centers, health care providers, wholesale drug distributors and prescriptions.

The House Taxes Committee approved the bill April 19 and referred it to the House Ways and Means Committee.

If passed into law, the commissioner would begin projecting the balance on Sept. 1, 2007.

"This is a bill that's received support from all sides," said Bradley. "If you want to please your dentist, if you want to please your physician, next time you visit, tell them that you helped move this proposal along."

[Rep. Joe Atkins](#) (DFL-Inver Grove Heights), who supported the bill, asked whether it would be necessary because Bradley also sponsors a bill that places greater reliance on a provider tax to fund the Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association, a non-profit Minnesota corporation that also helps provide health care access. Bradley said the bill is only effective if a surplus exists.

A companion bill ([SF2640](#)), sponsored by [Sen. Brian LeClair](#) (R-Woodbury), awaits action by the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.

★

HIGHER EDUCATION

Collegiate funding

The House Ways and Means Committee approved the omnibus higher education finance bill April 19. The bill now goes to the House floor.

Sponsored by [Rep. Bud Nornes](#) (R-Fergus Falls), [HF3924](#) was amended slightly to add an appropriation for \$100,000 to fund veterans assistance offices at Minnesota State Colleges and Universities campuses each year through 2009.

Several members addressed a portion of the bill that would give in-state tuition rates to refugees.

As a grandson of four immigrants, [Rep. Tom Rukavina](#) (DFL-Virginia) reminded members that many people in the country are descendants of immigrants.

However, [Gov. Tim Pawlenty](#) had sent a letter to committee members urging them to remove that language in the bill. "Providing in-state tuition for illegal immigrants would give them benefits not available to legal U.S. citizens who reside in most other states. In other words, an Iowa high school graduate would not be eligible for in-state Minnesota tuition, but a non-U.S. citizen, who is here illegally, would be."

Other components of the bill left unchanged by the committee include:

- postsecondary institutions would be allowed to inform parents or guardians of a student's alcohol or drug possession or use, information now considered private data;
- a requirement that postsecondary institutions participate in the state grant program in federal student aid programs by July 1, 2009;
- the definition of resident student would include those in the state on active duty military status and immediate family members; those located in a presidential declared disaster area; and refugees, defined under federal law, living in the state;
- an increase in the maximum loan amounts and annual limits for the Student Educational Loan Fund;
- the establishment of a Rochester branch of the University of Minnesota to "foster the economic goals of the region and state;" and
- the establishment of task forces to address faculty and teaching assistants' communication skills and ability to speak English clearly and with good pronunciation; to study the rising costs of textbooks; and to study the market impact on Minnesota producers of agricultural products from the University of Minnesota and negative impacts on state businesses that arise from university license agreements.

Several of the bill's provisions are included in the governor's recommendations, part of which includes the establishment of the new Rochester campus.

ANNIVERSARY SALUTE



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Maj. Gen. Larry Shellito, adjutant general of the Minnesota National Guard, center, salutes members of the Guard sitting in the House Gallery April 18 after receiving a resolution from House Speaker Steve Sviggum, left, congratulating and honoring the Minnesota National Guard on the 150th anniversary of its founding. Maj. Gen. Rick Erlandson, right, is also pictured.

The Senate bill ([SF3058](#)), sponsored by [Sen. Sandy Pappas](#) (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

HUMAN SERVICES



Interstate compact

[Rep. Matt Dean](#) (R-Dellwood) believes people seeking chemical health services should not be restricted by geography.

[HF3111](#), sponsored by Dean, would allow people in neighboring states to receive chemical health treatment in Minnesota and vice versa. Dean said this reform to chemical health services is similar to legislation enacted for mental health services in the past.

"People shouldn't have to travel far distances to receive care," said Dean.

Passed 133-0 by the House April 20, it now goes to the Senate, where [Sen. Julie Rosen](#) (R-Fairmont) is the sponsor.

INSURANCE



Defining homeowner's coverage

A bill relating to homeowner's insurance defines coverage for homes providing adult foster care services.

[HF2722](#), sponsored by [Rep. Loren Solberg](#)

(DFL-Grand Rapids), would allow an insurance company not to cover losses for homes that provide foster care for adults unless the policy already covers it or there is another policy that covers those losses. Furthermore, the bill would prohibit an insurer from refusing to issue or renew homeowner's insurance because the property covered is used to provide adult foster for five or fewer residents.

The House passed the bill 133-0 April 20, and it now goes to the Senate, where [Sen. Tom Saxhaug](#) (DFL-Grand Rapids) is the sponsor.

Adult foster care is considered a business pursuit, which is normally excluded for homeowner's insurance. Solberg said the bill was similar to how insurance companies handle homeowner's insurance for those providing day care in their homes.

RECREATION



Ballpark financing

Memories of baseball played outdoors on real grass framed the proponents' testimony. Large colorful posters of the proposed new Twins stadium took center field. You could almost smell the popcorn April 19 as elected officials of Hennepin County and Twins



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Minnesota Twins Sports, Inc. President Jerry Bell sits behind a drawing of the proposed new outdoor stadium for the Twins as he listens to proponents testify before the House Taxes Committee April 19. Team and Hennepin County officials would like the Legislature to authorize a 0.15 percent sales tax increase without voter approval to fund the county's share of the ballpark.

officials led by Jerry Bell, president of Twins Sports, Inc., explained the content of [HF2480](#), sponsored by [Rep. Brad Finstad](#) (R-New Ulm).

The bill sets forth the means by which a Minnesota Ballpark Authority would be created to build a \$390 million, open-air ballpark on the edge of downtown Minneapolis. The plan includes access infrastructure at an additional cost of \$90 million.

Financing provisions in the bill include raising the sales and use tax collected in Hennepin County by 0.15 of 1 percent, or approximately 3 cents on \$20. Imposed by ordinance rather than referendum, the tax would continue until the county's share of the construction expenses financed through the sale of bonds would be repaid.

"There is no agreement if a referendum is required," said Mike Opat, Hennepin County commissioner.

Opat said the bill "does not seek to circumvent state law" regarding imposing the tax increase by ordinance rather than referendum, but not everyone agreed.

"I think I understand the county's interpretation (of the law), but I don't necessarily agree with it," said [Rep. Paul Kohls](#) (R-Victoria).

The issue of whether the citizens of

Hennepin County support the tax increase was brought forth by [Rep. Phil Krinkie](#) (R-Lino Lakes), who chairs the committee. His inquiry about whether any public surveys had been conducted to find out was answered in the negative, but county officials said numerous public hearings had been held.

The same issue was approached from a different perspective by [Rep. Dan Dorman](#) (R-Albert Lea), who asked if anyone supporting the ballpark had won a recent election.

Hennepin County Commissioner Randy Johnson said voters had preferred him to two anti-ballpark opponents in the most recent election.

Other questions to the Hennepin-Twins team included whether there has been an economic impact study to establish whether there is actually an economic benefit to businesses in the vicinity of a ballpark.

Bell's response was that one had been done many years before, but not recently. "Whether or not there is an economic impact that benefits the state of Minnesota is largely an academic debate that goes on forever," he said.

The Twins' contribution to the plan includes \$130 million upfront. The team would also be responsible for any cost overruns on the ballpark itself; \$1 million per year for capital improvements; operations; a 30-year use

agreement; a \$250,000 contribution each year for youth activities; and up to 18 percent of the gross sales proceeds if the team should be sold.

The committee was to take a road trip April 20 to the team's former home city, Bloomington, to hear more testimony and possibly take action on the bill. If necessary, the three-meeting series would be completed back home in St. Paul April 21.

A companion bill ([SF2297](#)), sponsored by [Sen. Steve Kelley](#) (DFL-Hopkins), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

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Getting started

Bills look to help new dairy farmers achieve their dream

By IRENE VOTH

Jon Kaiser owns 40 of the 180 cows on the Dodge County organic dairy farm where he works. They give him a small portion of the milk checks the dairy farmer receives. But more than additional income, the cows are equity — a step toward his 8-year-old dream of owning a dairy farm.

"I may be kind of late getting started," he said.

Kaiser, 37, grew up in Albert Lea. A town-kid who has little memory of his grandfather's farm, he was likely unaware of the 1980s farm crisis. And as a young adult, he probably didn't notice the disappearance of 5,700 dairy farms and 80,000 dairy cows from Minnesota's landscape from 1992 to 1998.

Rather, he was inspired to become a dairy farmer by an article he read in a 1998 issue of *The New Farm* about "a younger person who started from scratch on a grass-based dairy."

Kaiser was working on a hog farm at the time, but through the [Land Stewardship Project](#), a private, nonprofit organization promoting farmland stewardship, he was connected with Dan French, who is now his employer/mentor in organic dairying and rotational grazing.

While he has been learning and building up his cow-equity, dairy numbers in Minnesota have continued to decline. From 2003 to 2006, the state lost 1,000 dairy farms and 34,000 dairy cows. At the same time, the market value of agricultural land rose as fast, or faster, than the rest of Minnesota's real estate, estimated at 10 percent or more per year.

Although Kaiser's cows were paid for last year, the real estate situation continues to make his dream a lofty one.

"Rochester is one of the highest-priced land areas in the state," he said, explaining that the salary and benefits of his wife's clerical job at the Mayo Clinic also makes it difficult to consider relocating to areas where farm land may be cheaper or there may be land available for rent.

"Farmers tend to rent their land to bigger farmers," Kaiser said of the Rochester-area landowners, adding that they may be more comfortable renting to a "proven" farmer than to a beginner.

With the price of agricultural land what it



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Rep. Dean Urdahl, sitting behind his cow statue and with a Grip 'n Go milk container, presents his proposal to provide an income and corporation franchise tax credit for qualifying investments in dairy operations during a hearing of the House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee March 15.

is, Kaiser said purchasing is impossible, since he cannot establish "cash flow" — the ability to make the land produce enough money to make the required land payments.

Several bills being considered by the

Legislature this year may be of some help to Kaiser and others like him who want to become dairy farmers.

[HF3843](#), sponsored by [Rep. Lyle Koenen](#) (DFL-Clara City), would expand the [Rural Finance Authority's](#) beginning farmer program by authorizing credits against state income and/or franchise tax for a person selling or renting to qualified beginning farmers. The bill awaits action by the House Taxes Committee. Its companion ([SF3437](#)), sponsored by [Sen. Gary Kubby](#) (DFL-Granite Falls), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

"A landowner willing to cash rent his land to a beginning farmer would receive a tax credit equal to 10 percent of the gross rental income. If the rental agreement calls for a shared rent, that would move up to 15 percent. If the landowner is willing to sell his land to a beginning farmer, that credit would be set at 5 percent of the sale price," Koenen said.

The bill would also offer a tax credit of up to \$500 to beginning farmers who take an approved financial management course.

Another bill, [HF3366](#), sponsored by [Rep. Andy Welti](#) (DFL-Plainview), requires a study and report on the feasibility of a public-private partnership to fund a milk volume production loan program. The revolving loan program would make low-interest loans of at least \$500 per cow for as many cows as the commissioner would recommend per dairy producer, as part of the producer's dairy capital improvement project. Its companion is [SF3017](#), sponsored by [Sen. Paul Koering](#) (R-Fort Ripley). Both bills await action on the floor of their respective bodies.

Finally, [HF2879](#), sponsored by [Rep. Dean Urdahl](#) (R-Grove City), provides a one-time credit of 10 percent or up to \$50,000 for expenditures made to modernize dairy operations. While the bill may not be directly helpful to beginning farmers, it would assist people like French, who may want to employ and mentor additional future farmers. It awaits action by the House Taxes Committee. Its companion ([SF2862](#)), sponsored by [Sen. Dallas Sams](#) (DFL-Staples), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

Kaiser said for legislation to reverse the dairy decline in Minnesota, it would have to "make it attractive to people exiting the dairy business to sell to beginning farmers rather than the highest bidder." 🐄

Solving border disputes

Annexation bill seeks to balance interests of cities, townships

By Nick Busse

Fourteen years ago, two major changes to Minnesota's annexation laws were tucked — some would say “snuck” — into a bill during a conference committee. One took away citizens' right to vote on annexations; the other put a 60-acre cap on the amount of property that can be annexed by the owner's petition.

Although neither provision had been approved by either the House or the Senate, both were signed into law, and they have been fought over ever since.

Keeping this in mind, [Rep. Mark Olson](#) (R-Big Lake) and the House Local Government Committee, which he chairs, took a much different approach to annexation reform this year.

From January to March, the committee held a series of public forums on annexation in cities and townships around the state. After hearing some sharply divided testimony from citizens and local officials, they brought representatives of cities and townships to the table and set out to draft a consensus bill aimed at balancing the needs of both. The result seems to have satisfied the two sides — more or less.

“It was a very interesting process,” said [Rep. Debra Hilstrom](#) (DFL-Brooklyn Center), the DFL lead on the committee. “It was almost a public negotiation between the two sides.”

[HF3925](#), sponsored by Olson, makes some fairly modest alterations to the state's annexation laws and lays the groundwork for more extensive changes by setting up a municipal boundary adjustment task force to look deeper into the issue. A report would be due to the Legislature by Jan. 1, 2007.

The bill has also been incorporated into the omnibus state government finance bill ([HF2833/SF2489](#)). Sponsored by [Rep. Marty Seifert](#) (R-Marshall) and [Sen. Sheila Kiscaden](#) (DFL-Rochester), it is currently in limbo on the House floor after being tabled April 18. The Senate Finance Committee was scheduled to take up its version April 20.

In addition to establishing the task force,

Olson's bill makes a number of changes to current annexation laws, including:

- requiring 30 days' notice by a city before annexing a township;
- requiring towns that intend to incorporate (become a city) to give 30 days' notice to all adjacent municipalities;
- requiring cities and townships involved in orderly annexation agreements to hold a joint informational hearing and publicize the meeting at least 10 days before it is held;
- expanding the acreage limit for annexation by ordinance by property owner's petition from 60 acres to 120 acres;
- prohibiting property owners from petitioning more than once a year to annex parcels of land that are contiguous to previously annexed parcels;
- requiring cities to reimburse townships for special assessments and debt assigned to annexed property;
- requiring a property owner who wishes to detach his land from one city and annex it to another get the consent of both cities; and
- allowing cities to enter into orderly annexation agreements with counties for areas that have no organized township government.

Cities and townships have both expressed relative satisfaction with these provisions — although, naturally, each side thinks the other got a better deal.

“For the most part, we are very satisfied with the bill. ... Having said that, there is a lot more in the bill for townships than for cities,” said Kari Thurlow, a lobbyist for the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities.

Similarly, Kent Sulem, an attorney for the Minnesota Association of Townships, said that although the bill makes “some important steps forward,” it does not quite reach the full extent of reform the townships were hoping for.


One issue Sulem said isn't covered in the bill is the practice of “string-and-balloon” annexations, by which he said a city will annex

a right of way to create an artificial point of abutment and then subsequently annex contiguous land several miles away because that's what they were really targeting. Another is the issue of “super-sized” annexations, in which a city will try to annex large tracts of land without any real plans to develop the area.

Olson laments that the bill does not address some of the more controversial issues, but he said the task force will allow continued negotiations that will hopefully lead to more legislation in the future. Moreover, he said the modest provisions of the bill increase the likelihood that it will be passed.

“Every year I've been here when an annexation proposal came up on the House floor, there was a lot of tension in the air, a lot of amendments and a lot of debate. This is the first time I've ever seen an annexation bill come up without any substantive concern,” he said.

Thurlow, who praised the “open-negotiation” process by which Olson and the committee drafted the bill, said it sets forward a “good process” for dealing with annexation issues in the future.

A companion bill ([SF3719](#)), sponsored by [Sen. Linda Higgins](#) (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee. 

Web Sites To Note

House of Representatives:

www.house.mn

Senate: www.senate.mn

Governor's office:

www.governor.state.mn.us

State Government home page:

www.state.mn.us

Legislative home page: www.leg.mn

Find out who represents you:

www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/District-finder.asp

Legislative meeting schedule:

www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hinfo/hinfosched.asp

Fixing broken promises

Government postemployment benefits are often unfunded

By Nick Busse

Postemployment benefits provide employees with a good incentive to stay with their employers, but those employees might not stick around if they knew they weren't actually being funded.

According to [Rep. Mark Buesgens](#) (R-Jordan), that's exactly what's been happening in cities and school districts across the state. For years, local units of government have been offering postemployment benefits to their employees without actually funding them, Buesgens said.

Now, the problem has reached near-crisis proportions, with local governments being responsible for approximately \$5 billion in unfunded liabilities, according to the State Auditor's Office. Buesgens said Duluth alone is sitting on more than \$300 million in unfunded liabilities, and the Metropolitan Council has more than \$200 million.

[HF3380](#), sponsored by Buesgens, aims to stop the problem before it gets any worse. It would establish two funds under the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) that political subdivisions — schools, cities, counties, et cetera — could use to hold money to pay for its employees' postretirement benefits.

The bill awaits action on the House floor and has also been incorporated into the omnibus state government finance bill

([HF2833/SF2489](#)), sponsored by [Rep. Marty Seifert](#) (R-Marshall) and [Sen. Sheila Kiscaden](#) (DFL-Rochester), which is currently tabled in the House. The Senate version was scheduled to be heard April 20 by the Senate Finance Committee.

"Up until now," Buesgens said, "this has been a pay-as-you-go system. There has been no mechanism for local units of government to set money aside to pay for these expenses when they come up."

The bill would establish two separate accounts through PERA: one for revocable accounts and one for irrevocable accounts. Political subdivisions would then be authorized to have their own individual accounts in one or both of the funds. Political subdivisions already fund their employees' pensions through the state. Buesgens said the postretirement accounts would follow the same model.

"This is just one of the tools in what's going to have to be a pretty big toolkit," Buesgens said. "But it's a start in the right direction. This is probably about 20 percent of what it's going to take to have a total solution."

At a March 27 meeting of the House Local Government Committee, representatives from the private sector questioned why such accounts would only be allowed to be set up through PERA and not through banks and insurance companies.

Joe Witt, president and CEO of the Minnesota Bankers Association, said that banks should be an alternative place for local units of government to set up trust funds for their employees' postemployment accounts.


Grace Schwab, a lobbyist for the Minnesota School Boards Association, concurred, noting that no other state bans the private sector from holding postemployment trust funds for public employees.

State Auditor Patricia Anderson countered that privately owned trusts routinely underperform state-owned trusts by approximately 2 percent.

"The costs are going to be significantly higher, and they're going to have a lower rate of return," Anderson said. "This is a lot of money, and so I understand why the private sector would want in. And it is unusual that I, as a conservative, would be opposed to the private sector. But the more responsible position is to have this money invested through the State Board of Investment."

At the meeting, Buesgens said he was conflicted on the issue, being normally a proponent of private industry.

"Anytime we can give competition to government, normally I think that's a good thing; however, I would ask you to proceed very thoughtfully. ... The reason I ask you to think long and deep about it, I can sum up in three words: Minneapolis teachers' pensions."

Buesgens was referring to the Minneapolis Teachers' Retirement Fund Association, which has incurred a large amount of debt and would like to be merged into the Minnesota Teachers Retirement Association. 

Throwing the hat in the ring

This year, both the House and the Senate will be up for election. Those wanting to file as a legislative candidate must have resided in the state for at least a year, and in the district at least six months prior to the general election. They also must be 21 years of age at the time the term to be served begins.

Those seeking to file a multi-county legislative district must file at the Secretary of State's Office, and those within single-county legislative districts may file at the respective county auditor's office.

For more information, contact the Secretary of State Elections Division at (651) 215-1440 or (877) 600-VOTE.

Filing deadlines for candidates:
July 4 — July 18

Primary election:
Sept. 12, 2006

General election:
Nov. 7, 2006

Legislature to convene:
Jan. 3, 2007

Each biennium, the Legislature convenes in regular session each odd-numbered year on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January. When the first Monday is Jan. 1, the Legislature shall convene on the first Wednesday.

Fighting off the invaders

Working to delay gypsy moth and aquatic pests' arrival

By IRENE VOTH

A silk worm experiment in Massachusetts went bad a hundred years ago. And because of that, much of North America may lose its oak trees and perhaps its aspen and birch as well.

As bad as that may be, with its implications for untold losses in real estate values and timber, the gypsy moth is just one of many "invasive species" the state is fighting through [Department of Agriculture](#) and [Department of Natural Resources](#) programs.

Currently, Enemy No. 1 to Geir Friisoe, director of the [Plant Protection Division](#) of the Department of Agriculture, the moth has prompted the agency to seek supplemental funding for a mapping specialist and a public information officer. [HF3810](#), the omnibus agriculture finance bill, sponsored by [Rep. Dennis Ozment](#) (R-Rosemount), contains a \$105,000 staffing appropriation. But even with ample funding, it's a losing battle.

"The gypsy moth is coming to Minnesota. We're just trying to delay its arrival," Friisoe said, adding that if the state did not have an invasive species program in place, the major and perhaps irrevocable infestation that is coming could have already occurred a decade ago.

According to the agency, the moth has infested all of the northeastern states, as well as Michigan and portions of eastern Canada. It is already more than halfway across Wisconsin and moving west.

In its caterpillar stage, the gypsy moth is a voracious eater, devouring the leaves of deciduous trees. Oaks are its favorite, but it will also eat aspen, birch and elm. Friisoe said it is also known to eat the needles of conifers if deciduous tree leaves are no longer available.

The end result is what Friisoe describes as a

"slow shift in the species of the forest," as the trees stressed from repeated defoliation die over time and other trees less favored by the moth replace them.

In Minnesota, several relatively small infestations of the moth have already been thwarted, and more action is planned. In Brooklyn Park, where approximately 60 acres are believed to be infested with the moth, an aerial spraying of a bacteria fatal to the caterpillar is planned for late-May.

Friisoe said the bacteria are naturally occurring—"something we all come into contact with all the time." Thus it poses no threat to humans or animals, although other caterpillars are susceptible to its effects.

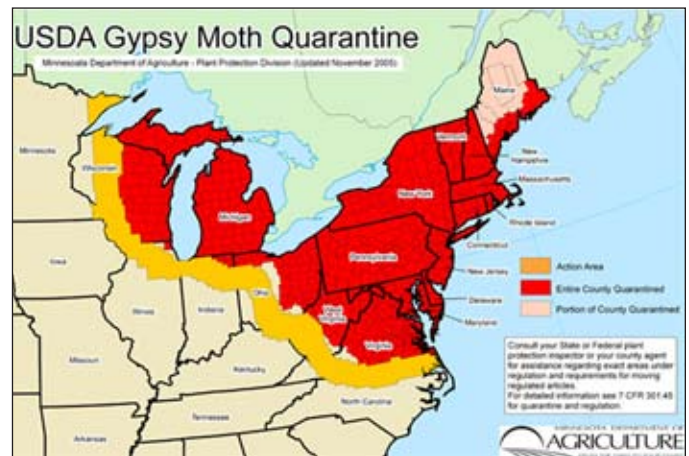
The bacteria are mixed with a slightly sticky liquid so that when disbursed as a mist, the mixture adheres to the trees. It will also adhere to everything else, so people within the treated area may notice a "light spotting" on their cars, but the spots are easily washed off, Friisoe said.

The Gypsy Moth

The treatment differs for larger areas, and treatment of a 133,000-acre area along Lake Superior's North Shore is planned for late summer. At a cost of \$1.2 million, confetti-sized particles coated with a unique pheromone will be released over the area. As the particles settle into their surroundings, the pheromone will confuse the male moths so that they will not be able to locate the

females. Thus, their reproductive process will be disrupted.

The agency has been testing for the presence of the gypsy moth in Minnesota for more than 30 years. Friisoe said the relatively small infestations that have occurred so far are the result of people inadvertently carrying the moth's eggs into the state. Because the female moth does not fly, it lays its eggs on anything handy — boats and boat trailers, tents, campers and even cooking utensils. When campers return to Minnesota from infested regions, the moth gains access.



Map courtesy of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture

A map showing the extent of the gypsy moth infestation (darkened area) as of November 2005..

The DNR has also requested supplemental funding to fight invasive species through the omnibus environment and natural resources finance bill. [HF3012](#), also sponsored by Ozment, contains a \$261,000 appropriation.

Jay Rendall, coordinator of the department's [invasive species program](#), said invasive aquatic plants and animals are its main focus, although the funding will also go toward developing best management practices of invasive terrestrial plants on DNR lands during field operations.

Zebra mussels and a fish called the round goby are on the DNR's list of invasive aquatic animals; Eurasian water milfoil and purple loosestrife are among its invasive aquatic plants. Terrestrial invaders include the Siberian elm, Russian olive, buckthorn, Queen Anne's Lace, creeping Charlie, silver banner grass, crown vetch and garlic mustard.



Capitol Visitors

Committee deadlines have come and gone and the House has passed the bonding bill, but that doesn't mean it's starting to get quiet around the Capitol. Between floor sessions and conference committees, many of the legislators make time to greet school groups and constituents visiting the Capitol. In both April and May, the number of people participating in the Minnesota Historical Society's Capitol Historic Site Program averages more than 25,000. From July 1, 2005, through the end of March, 512 school groups, with an average size of 60, visited the Capitol for a total visitation of 67,300.

(S. STACKE)



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Rep. Michael Beard kids around in the Capitol Rotunda April 11 by taking a photo of the Sun Path Elementary School sixth graders. The Shakopee students were at the end of a building tour.





PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Head Coach Mike Leaf, *top center*, and the Winona State University mens basketball team meet in the House Chamber April 12 with Rep. Gene Pelowski, Jr., *right corner of the Speaker's desk*, and Rep. Greg Davids. The team won the NCAA Division II Mens Basketball National Championship trophy March 25, defeating defending champion Virginia Union 73-61.



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

John Morgan, from O.H. Anderson Elementary School in Mahtomedi, peeks over the Chief Clerk's desk during a visit to the House Chamber. His class met with Rep. Bev Scalze.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Rep. Larry Hosch, *center*, shows Cold Spring residents, *left to right*, Olivia, Brigetta, Kyle and Jenna Klemek the workings of the House Chamber.

PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

"Champ," the University of Minnesota-Duluth mascot, put House Capital Investment Committee Chair Dan Dorman in a headlock when students and members of the UMD Student Senate met with him to "encourage" that he support issues important to them and their university.

Plugged in

BlackBerrys, blogs and podcasts keep legislators connected

By BAO ONG

Long gone are the days when constituents would prefer sending hand-written letters to legislators with their concerns. Instead, with a click of the mouse, hit of the enter key or cell phone ring, people around the world can be in contact with Minnesota legislators at any moment.

Armed with technological advances and gadgets, House members have myriad ways to keep in touch with their staff, lobbyists and each other. But more importantly, legislators and their constituents have more ways to communicate than ever before.

It is no surprise to see members rolling through their BlackBerrys in committee meetings (or sometimes even playing games on those addictive devices, sometimes referred to as the "CrackBerry"), stepping aside to answer their phone calls or e-mailing their constituents while on the House floor. The technological and cultural revolution occurring in today's 24/7 global economy is happening in Minnesota.

Here is a sampling of how technology has played out:

Web sites and e-mail

The Legislature went on the World Wide Web (<http://www.house.mn>) in 1995 and its presence has been growing ever since. There were slightly more than 2 million hits in 1996; the latest figures for 2006 stand at more than 36 million, so far.

The Web site offers a wealth of information for bills, directories, archives, press releases, publications and even audio links. Dozens of House employees help post information on the Web site but only a handful of people coordinate that effort between various departments. But when committee meeting minutes or vote totals are not updated, it is often because the information has not been received, said Mike Speiker, the Web manager in the Chief Clerk's office. He adds that according to law, committees have a certain number of days to approve minutes and once that is completed, they then go to his office for updating.

"I think we're making an investment with technology," said Speiker. "Any legislative information available to legislators is there for the public, too".

Speiker said although a majority of the users are internal, the Web site has not had problems handling the volume of traffic. Instead, continual tweaks in designs and features to the site are regularly done.

Speiker said House members receive an average of 47 e-mails per day from the public. While members can receive e-mail, most also send out their fair share. Many send out regular e-mail updates to people who subscribe to their mailing list. Oftentimes a member can be seen on the House floor sending out an update.

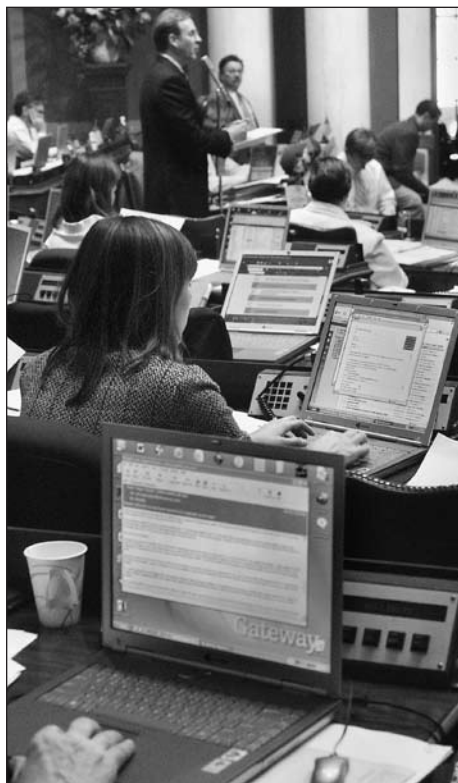


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

House members use their laptop computers to respond to constituent e-mails during debate on the House floor. E-mail is one of the most effective ways for constituents to communicate with their legislators.

Blogs

[Rep. Ray Cox](#) (R-Northfield) never cared for technology. He found the Internet and the majority of Web sites cold, impersonal and outdated. Cox hoped to change that in December 2002 when he started his blog — short for "Web log," — after winning an election by 20 votes in a district with a strong DFL presence.

"There is a level of transparency to democracy with technology. I think it's a really good tool to reach people," said Cox. "My constituents can get a personal look at what's going on and I have another way to stay in touch."

Cox regularly updates his blog during session. He adds photos and gives his insights on a variety of issues. The public also sends him feedback on bills.

However, there are disadvantages to blogging. Cox found this out when he ran for re-election in 2004 and his opponent used materials from his blog against him.

[Rep. Paul Thissen](#) (DFL-Mpls) said maintaining a blog can be a risk but that it is all fair game. Thissen, who set up a blog in June 2005, decided it was a good way not only to inform people in his district about the legislative process but also to receive feedback.

When [Rep. John Lesch](#) (DFL-St. Paul) took a two-week trip to Iraq earlier this year, he also kept a blog about his observations in the war-torn country.

"We can all use technology to our advantage," said Thissen.

Podcasts

Podcasts are audio or video files that can be downloaded over the Internet onto mobile devices and personal computers. Fans of podcasts say it allows them to not only pick and choose what they want to listen to but also where and when they can listen to music, watch a video or listen to a committee hearing.

Currently, committee hearings are available as podcasts at: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/rss/committees.asp>

Jodi Boyne, director of public affairs for the House GOP caucus, said [House Majority Leader Erik Paulsen](#) (R-Eden Prairie) is considering doing his own podcasts that would be available to the public.

Cox and Thissen do not have podcasts available but they agree that technology has been an advantage.

"The more communication, the better," said Cox. "It helps everyone out in one way or another."

The problem-solver

Stepping down, and off to propose more solutions

Editor's Note: As the 2006 session winds down, several members have announced their intentions to leave the Minnesota House of Representatives for new adventures. They leave a legacy of service that will remain part of legislative history.

BY PATTY JANOVEC

Serving as a legislator should never be someone's job; it should be a service you provide, said [Rep. Jerry Dempsey](#) (R-Red Wing). That's precisely why he is leaving his seat after seven terms, just as he promised his constituents when they elected him.

Although the initial agreement was 10 to 12 years in 1992, he had to stay 14 years because, "I think I had an obligation to help see to it that we were not overspending," he said. In his previous terms, taxes were raised to meet the state's spending, and this term appears to be resulting in no taxes being raised, he said.

A self-proclaimed problem-solver, he is leaving the House to solve issues facing local schools instead.

"I have a yearning and good background to work with people to solve problems," said Dempsey, and thinks a good place to start is in the public schools by helping teachers and students work through positive solutions.

By occupation, he is a school administrator and doesn't shy away from explaining his previous successes. At one time, in his school district, there was a proposal to raise school lunch fees because students didn't like to eat a more cost-effective choice, what Dempsey called "goulash."

So, a goulash pizza, in a circular shape, was served up — a little more palatable for students, he said. "It sounds simple, but my point is that you have to solve the problem."

Another suggestion involves recognizing all students with a saying that "Everybody is somebody." Dempsey believes that there should be programs in schools that recognize all students.

Entering the House with a problem-solving background helped Dempsey get comfortable quickly.

One major problem he helped create a solution for in the Legislature was "learning to live within the boundaries of our budgets."

The Legislature itself is not a real good problem-solver because solutions usually involve funding those things around the problem, he said. "We don't know how things are going to react when we implement them. ... We need to solve the problem so it doesn't come back."



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Rep. Jerry Dempsey, seen here chairing the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee during the 2001-2002 session, is retiring after seven terms.

Had Dempsey been chair of a committee for more than two years (House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee in 2001-2002), he feels he could have been more influential. He said he's been passionate about K-12 education, yet didn't get the opportunity to serve on an accompanying committee.

He is most proud of helping to bridge the communication and political divide regarding the Prairie Island Nuclear Power Plant near Red Wing when he was first elected in 1992. The issue revolved around keeping jobs in the community, and storing nuclear waste. "Today it is a vitally important aspect in society and the state of Minnesota," he said.

His advice for his incoming seat holder is twofold: "You represent the best interests of the citizen, not the special interest," said Dempsey. "We have a lot of special-interest people that are here, but a piece of advice is not to take special-interest money to fund their campaign and do a lot of door knocking," he said. While he admits this may be a very difficult suggestion to implement, he said, "If you believe you represent the people of Minnesota ... then you have to pursue the common good." Dempsey funded the majority of his own campaigns without political action committee money.

Asked if he had any hobbies he will pursue when he is not staying busy solving problems, Dempsey said he is an avid collector of mustache cups, and enjoys the antique hunts that take him across the country. His collection contains more than 300 of the cups that can be identified by a bar inside the rim to keep a person's mustache out of a drink. His collection includes mugs for those left-handed, right-handed and matching husband (for the mustache) and a wife cup (without the bar), said Dempsey. 🍵

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Jerry Dempsey
Republican
District 28A – Red Wing
Terms: 7
Advice to person to fill his seat: "Solve problems. And, raising taxes is not solving a problem."

Standing her ground

Goodwin says that the time has come to move on

Editor's Note: As the 2006 session winds down, several members have announced their intentions to leave the Minnesota House of Representatives for new adventures. They leave a legacy of service that will remain part of legislative history.

By **BAO ONG**

More than 20 years ago, [Rep. Barb Goodwin](#) (DFL-Columbia Heights) sent a handwritten letter to a representative about her opposition to school vouchers. She never received a response. The mother of two children, Goodwin's fury to the lack of response motivated her to step into the legislative arena.

"People deserve to have a response from their representatives," said Goodwin, who worked on [Sen. Ann Rest's](#) (DFL-New Hope) first successful campaign for a House seat in 1984. "Dance with the ones who brought you here."

In her third and last term, Goodwin said she has always used her constituents' concerns to guide her every decision since 2000, when she was first elected to office. Some of her most important issues included health care, and consumer and labor rights.

Goodwin worked for the House DFL Caucus as a research analyst on business and labor issues from 1985 to 1987 and then as director of central staff until 1994. Then from 1994 to 1998, she was legislative affairs director for the Minnesota Association of Professional Employees.

Now, after six years in office, Goodwin said it is time for her to move on. The life of a legislator is consuming, both physically and mentally, she said. "There are so many things I want to do outside of the Legislature," said Goodwin, whose future plans include traveling, possibly writing a book and teaching college courses.

Being in the minority party doesn't help. Goodwin said she is afraid that her cynicism toward the legislative

process could hinder her effectiveness as a representative. She is concerned about where the state is headed and frustrated when legislation she supports does not receive hearings. "We managed to get some work done," Goodwin said. "That already took a lot of work, and there's more that needs to be done."

However, that cynicism is what set Goodwin apart from others, even in her own party. She is known to be fearless in her questioning and has butted heads with other members on more than one occasion.

During this session, she verbally sparred with members on issues ranging from holding homebuilders liable for faulty construction work to the right of pharmacists to deny patients a prescription drug based on their moral, ethical or religious values.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Rep. Barb Goodwin, seen here speaking during a House floor debate, is retiring after three terms.

"It's not easy, but it's from being in this process for many years," said Goodwin, who added that she has never had intentions to run for higher office. "I believe, in the very deepest part of me, that challenges have to be made during the legislative process."

The role of special interest groups also contributed to Goodwin's decision to step down. She said the amount of money flowing in from these groups and lobbyists determines which bills receive hearings, creates less access for members of the public to testify and less pro-consumer legislation.


Goodwin also said that lobbyists are writing some of the legislation for members, and caucuses have to raise millions of dollars to be effective. Debate on the issues is not where I think it should be, Goodwin said.

One highlight in Goodwin's career is her anti-bullying bill. She became aware of the problem when she worked for Hennepin County in the children's mental health services programs. The bill requires schools to develop a policy against bullying.

Goodwin said her job in the House has allowed her to impact the lives of her constituents, who have contacted her on everything from finding affordable health insurance to securing social security checks to fraud.

[Rep. Kent Eken](#) (DFL-Twin Valley) said, "She's one who speaks from the heart, and is a great advocate for those who need a voice. She really cares about people — regular folks, working folks."

Although Goodwin does not have plans to run for office again, she said other first- and second-term members have shown they can make a difference.

"I still believe there's hope," Goodwin said. "If they just remember the people and stand up for them, we'll be in good hands." 

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Barb Goodwin

DFL

District 50A – Columbia Heights

Terms: 3 (elected 2000)

Advice to successor: "You don't work for the lobbyists or party, but the people who put you here. Remember why you're here."

All on the World Wide Web

A how-to guide for following bills online

Throughout the legislative session, thousands of bills are introduced and discussed and whether you're closely following a number of bills or casually following a few, you don't have to be at the Capitol to track legislation. Through the Legislature's Web site (www.leg.mn), following a bill from your computer is easy.

Where to begin — the basics

The best place to begin is the Legislature's main page. Click the words "Bill Search, Status and MyBills," which will take you to a page where you can enter a House or Senate file number, which is used to identify a bill in the House or Senate. If you don't know the number, you can find it if you know the name of the chief author in either body, a committee of origin topic, a keyword description or selected search topic.

The MyBills service provides personalized bill tracking for current legislation. Bills can also be tracked on the Web site as far back as the 1993-94 biennium.

Once you enter search criteria, the "bill status summary" page gives a short version of what the bill is about, and provides links to the status, full text or the House Research Department summary of a bill. The status area shows the process of a bill from its introduction, through the committee and floor process, to gubernatorial action.

Finding the tools to search

You don't have to know a bill's number or even the chief author to find information on legislation you are interested in.

There are several features on the Legislature's Web site to help you determine what a bill's number is and who has sponsored a specific piece of legislation in both the House and the Senate.

On the main bill tracking search page, there is a section at the top for House bills and Senate bills. Choose either link and you will be directed to an Internet form with a number of options.

If you are unsure about the best way to

proceed, scroll down to the "Guides" section and click on "How to follow a bill". The page features an explanation of how to find a bill and its status.

Here you will find several options for tracking legislation.

You can also access summaries of bills that have been compiled by either the House Research Department, which offers nonpartisan research and legal services for the House, or its counterpart, the Senate Counsel and Research office.

Links to House and Senate committees can be accessed from this page.

Gubernatorial action

When a bill is sent to the governor for approval, it is recorded on the legislative log, which can be found at http://www.governor.state.mn.us/LegCoord/Leg-Coor_list.asp. The log contains a brief description of each bill, its House and Senate file numbers and the date of gubernatorial action.

There are several guidelines regarding when the governor must act on a bill. Generally, he or she has three days to sign or veto a bill during the course of the legislative session.

A history of vetoed bills since 1939 is available through the Legislative Reference Library at <http://www.leg.mn/leg/vetoed/vetoed.asp>.

Information by phone

For those who do not have access to a computer, bill information is just a phone call away. Contact the House Index Department at (651) 296-6646 or the Senate Information Office at (651) 296-2887 or 1-888-234-1112.

Also, if you're looking for information on the Internet site, and you're not sure where to find it, you can contact the House Public Information Services Office at (651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550.



The Legislature's Web site includes an easy-to-use bill tracking function.

You can search for bills by bill number, author, topic, committee or action in the bill's description. This function will not bring you to the full text of individual bills, but will give you a short description.

Here you can also follow the legislation through the process. For instance, from the "How to Follow a Bill" page, you can find out:

- what items will be discussed on the floor that day in either the House or Senate,
- the weekly schedule of committee meetings and what items are scheduled to be discussed, and
- a summary of what happened on the House or Senate floor on a particular day or week.

What happened to the bills?

Nearly 1,600 bills have been introduced this year and more than 4,100 this biennium. Most did not receive a hearing, but many did. Here is an update on some of the bills that received a hearing this session, but have not become law. Included is their status as of April 19, 2006, unless otherwise noted. Please note this is not a complete list of bills heard. It merely reflects some that have received hearings, votes or other attention this year.

University of Minnesota football stadium

HF263*/SF237 (Abrams/Michel)

House: Passed 103-30 April 6.

Senate: Awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

Uniform election dates

HF587/SF827 (Buesgens/Pariseau)

House: Awaits action on the floor.

Senate: Tabled March 22 by the Senate Elections Committee.

Clean Water Legacy Act created

HF826/SF762* (Ozment/Frederickson)

House: Amended by the House Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee. Awaits action by the House Ways and Means Committee.

Senate: Passed 65-0 May 23, 2005.

Community ownership of Minnesota Twins

HF1368/SF900 (Kahn/Anderson)

House: Awaits action on the floor.

Senate: Tabled May 23, 2005.

Construction defects in residential housing causes of action regulation.

HF1375/SF1287 (Severson/Scheid)

House: Awaits action on the floor.

Senate: Passed 65-0 April 20.

Polling place buffer zones

HF1596/SF1317 (Emmer/Pariseau)

House: Awaits action on the floor.

Senate: Failed March 22 in the Senate Elections Committee.

Low-speed neighborhood electric vehicles to be operated on residential roadways

HF1838/SF1811 (Blaine/Koering)

House: Passed 134-0 April 6.

Senate: Awaits action on the floor.

Dedicated funding for game and fish

HF1909/SF2734* (Hackbarth/Sams)

House: Amended by three committees and now awaits action on the floor.

Senate: Passed 42-22 April 3.

Minnesota Vikings stadium

HF2294/SF2061 (Westerberg/Betzold)

House: Tabled March 17 by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Senate: Awaits action by the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

Agricultural land valued at production value for property tax purposes

HF2436/SFnone (Brod)

House: Awaits action by the House Taxes Committee.

Senate: None.

Private building inspector certification provided

HF2485/SFnone (Cox)

House: Awaits action by the House Commerce and Financial Institutions Committee.

Senate: None.

Minnesota Twins ballpark

HF2480/SF2297 (Finstad/Kelley)

House: Awaits action by the House Taxes Committee.

Senate: Awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

School lockdown plans

HF2492/SF2292 (Urdahl/Marty)

House: In omnibus education bill.

Senate: Not in the Senate omnibus education bill.

Metropolitan Airports Commission oversight responsibilities

HF2553/SFnone (Thissen)

House: Awaits action by the House Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Senate: None.

Immigration law enforcement non-cooperation ordinances prohibited

HF2576*/SF2771 (Knobloch/Wergin)

House: Passed 94-37 March 20. Also in omnibus public safety bill.

Senate: Awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations Committee.

State health coverage offered to individuals and small employers at their own expense, and MinnesotaCare coverage offered at full cost.

HF2691/SF3046 (Sieben/Marko)

House: Failed in the House Health Policy and Finance Committee.

Senate: Awaits action by the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.

Duluth Entertainment and Convention Center funding

HF2764/SF2547 (Jaros/Solon)

House: In bonding bill for \$3 million.

Senate: Not in bonding bill.

Governor: Funds full \$33.7 million in his bonding plan.

Radiation therapy facility construction limitation expiration date modified

HF2810/SF2532 (Powell/Berglin)

House: Awaits action on the floor.

Senate: Passed 59-7 April 20.

Eminent domain reform

HF2846/SF2750* (J. Johnson/Bakk)

House: Amended and passed 115-17 April 6.**Senate:** Passed 64-2 March 27.

A conference committee has been requested.

School districts required to spend 70 percent of operating funds on direct classroom expenditures

HF2874/SF2858 (Klinzing/Wergin)

House: Awaits action on the floor.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Education Committee.**Agricultural land eligible for the homestead classification maximum market value increased**

HF2883/SF2802 (Dorman/Skoe)

House: Awaits action by the House Taxes Committee.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.**Bonding bill**

HF2959/SF3475 (Dorman/Langseth)

House: Passed its bill 114-16 April 12.**Senate:** Passed its bill 56-9 March 23 and then laid it on the table.

A conference committee has been requested to work out the differences.

Prohibiting funeral disruptions

HF2985*/SF2614 (Smith/Betzold)

House: Passed 133-0 March 9.**Senate:** Passed an amended version 58-1 March 16.

A conference committee has been requested.

Pharmacist's medicine dispensing refusal authority prohibition

HF3032/SF2647 (Emmer/Kiscaden)

House: Awaits action on the floor.**Senate:** Awaits action on the floor.**Provisional license holder driving restrictions**

HF3050/SF3033 (P. Nelson/Nienow)

House: Awaits action on the floor.**Senate:** Awaits action on the floor.**Constitutional amendment for gambling at licensed racetracks**

HF3101/SF3004 (Buesgens/Day)

House: Awaits action by the House Regulated Industries Committee.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Agriculture, Veterans and Gaming Committee.**Film production tax credit**

HF3226/SF2208 (Charron/Cohen)

House: Awaits action by the House Taxes Committee.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.**Minnesota Starvation and Dehydration of Persons with Disabilities Prevention Act**

HF3255/SF2861 (Wilkin/Fischbach)

House: Awaits action by the House Ways and Means Committee.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.**Abortion notice reporting requirements**

HF3258/SF2877 (Brod/Neuville)

House: Awaits action on the floor.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Health and Family Security Committee.**Organ and tissue donation information included in driver's education curriculum**

HF3401/SF2646* (Paymar/Wiger)

House: Awaits action on the floor.**Senate:** Passed 60-2 April 12.**Bicycle helmet requirement**

HF3503/SF2940 (Erhardt/Murphy)

House: Awaits action on the floor.**Senate:** Awaits action on the floor.**Hmong veterans statue**

HF3508/SF3640 (Thao/Murphy)

House: \$150,000 included in the bonding bill.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.**Longer school year**

HF3528/SF3203 (Demmer/Michel)

House: Tabled March 23 by the House Education Finance Committee.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Education Committee. Not included in the bonding bill.**Biotechnology and health sciences industry zone designation required**

HF3561/SF3260 (Severson/Clark)

House: In the omnibus jobs and economic opportunity finance bill that awaits action on the floor.**Senate:** Awaits action on the floor.**Bomb squad reimbursement**

HF3572/SF3341 (Entenza/Cohen)

House: Included in the omnibus public safety bill.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.**Greater Minnesota Business Development Investments program**

HF3638/SF3229 (Sertich/Bakk)

House: In the omnibus jobs and economic opportunity finance bill.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.**Olympics bid task force created**

HF3643/SF3562 (Hortman/Tomassoni)

House: Awaits action by the House Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance Committee.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.**Hmong marriage solemnization**

HF3674/SF2403 (Paymar/Skoglund)

House: Awaits action by the House Rules and Administration Committee.**Senate:** Incorporated into SF2633 and awaits action on the floor.**Mercury emission reductions**

HF3712/SF3398 (Hackbarth/Dibble)

House: Awaits action on the floor.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.**Plug-in hybrid electric vehicle task force**

HF3719/SF3513 (Hornstein/Dibble)

House: Awaits action by the House Jobs and Economic Opportunity Policy and Finance Committee.**Senate:** Awaits action on the floor.**Tribal identification cards**

HF3886/SF3549 (Sailer/Skoe)

House: Awaits action by the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee.**Senate:** Incorporated into SF3132, which awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee.**Chinese language in classrooms**

HF3910/SFnone (Paulsen)

House: In the omnibus education bill.**Senate:** None.**Building moratorium for school districts serving fewer than 500 pupils.**

HF3952/SF3611 (Newman/Skoe)

House: Not in the omnibus education bill.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.**Property tax rebate**

HF4142/SF3779 (Krinkie/LeClair)

House: Awaits action by the House Taxes Committee.**Senate:** Awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

Tracking new laws, vetoes

Once a bill passes the House and Senate in identical form, it is sent to the governor for consideration. The governor has several options when considering a bill:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill; or
- do nothing, which can have two different effects. The timing of these actions is as important as the actions themselves.

In the second year of the biennium, (even-numbered years) a bill passed by the Legislature and presented to the governor before the final three days of the session will become law unless the governor vetoes it by returning it to the Legislature within three days. (Sundays are not counted in the three-day time limit, but holidays are.)

The governor normally signs the bills and files them with the secretary of state,

but his signature is not required. But if a bill is passed during the last three days of session, the governor has a longer time to act. He or she must sign and deposit it with the secretary or state within 14 days after the Legislature adjourns "sine die" If the governor does not sign a bill within this time frame, it will not become law, an action known as a "pocket veto." The governor is not required to provide a reason for the veto.

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he or she objects. With the exception of pocket vetoes, the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is three days after the governor receives the bill.

Policy items contained in appropriation bills may not be line-item vetoed. In order to veto such an item, the governor is required to veto the entire bill.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history — at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the [Minnesota Constitution](#) (Article IV, Section 23).

More information is available on the governor's Web site (www.governor.state.mn.us). Select the "Legislation" link.

Key:

CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
170	3015	2653*	Pharmacy and related costs money appropriated.	3/8/2006	
171	2623*	2466	Previous redevelopment account appropriation modified relating to the city of Mounds View, and Ramsey and Anoka counties.	3/14/2006	
172	1915*	1840	Maple Grove hospital construction moratorium exemption provided.	3/22/2006	
173	3263	1878*	Carver and Renville county recorder, auditor and treasurer appointment provided, and referendum option established.	3/31/2006	
174	2709*	2523	Shamrock Township detached banking facility authorized.	4/5/2006	
175	3039*	2632	Timber permit extension in event of adverse surface conditions provided.	4/5/2006	
176	3876	2749*	County expenditure limit removed for soldiers' rest cemeteries.	4/7/2006	
177	2731	2621*	EMT training programs required to meet an average yearly pass rate.		
178	3780	3465*	Workers' compensation appeal procedures and coverage provisions modified.		
179	2788	2832*	Emergency personnel recruitment and retention task force formed and study required.		
180	2994*	2736	Watercraft storage structure repair authorized on public waters.		
181	3310*	2969	Advance deposits and payments authorized for boat slip rental.		

*The legislative bill marked with an asterisk denotes the file submitted to the governor.

Minnesota State Agencies

(Area code 651)

Administration..... 201-2555	Health201-5000	Fire Marshal.....215-0500
Agriculture 201-6000, (800) 967-2474	Housing Finance 296-7608, (800) 657-3769	Alcohol and Gambling
Commerce..... 296-4026	Human Rights 296-5663, (800) 657-3704	Enforcement Division.....296-6979
Corrections 642-0200	Human Services297-3933	Divisions of Homeland Security and
Education 582-8200	Labor and Industry .. 284-5000, (800) 342-5354	Emergency Management..... 296-0466
Employment and	Military Affairs.....268-8925	State Patrol..... 282-6870
Economic Development..... 296-3711,	Minnesota Trade Office 297-4222,	Revenue
(888) 657-3858	(800) 657-3858	General Information..... 296-3403
Enterprise Technology 556-8007	Natural Resources .. 296-6157, (888) 646-6367	Taxpayer Assistance 296-4444/296-3781
Explore Minnesota Tourism 296-5029,	Pollution Control Agency 296-6300,	Sales and Use Tax Line 296-6181
(800) 657-3700	(800) 657-3864	Transportation..... 296-3000, (800) 657-3774
Finance.....296-5900	Public Safety.....282-6565	Veterans Affairs 296-2562
	Driver and Vehicle Services296-6911	

2006 Minnesota House of Representatives Members

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-
48B Abeler, Jim (R)	509	1729	53A Krinkie, Philip (R)	365	2907
43B Abrams, Ron (R)	585	9934	9A Lanning, Morrie (R)	593	5515
19A Anderson, Bruce (R)	437	5063	63B Larson, Dan (DFL)	287	7158
3A Anderson, Irv (DFL)	321	4936	44B Latz, Ron (DFL)	225	7026
39B Atkins, Joe (DFL)	217	4192	40B Lenczewski, Ann (DFL)	237	4218
35A Beard, Michael (R)	577	8872	66A Lesch, John (DFL)	223	4224
51B Bernardy, Connie (DFL)	233	5510	30A Liebling, Tina (DFL)	393	0573
12B Blaine, Greg (R)	545	4247	1B Lieder, Bernie (DFL)	323	5091
29B Bradley, Fran (R)	563	9249	55A Lillie, Leon (DFL)	353	1188
25A Brod, Laura (R)	581	4229	59A Loeffler, Diane (DFL)	307	4219
35B Buesgens, Mark (R)	445	5185	22A Magnus, Doug (R)	515	5505
45B Carlson, Lyndon (DFL)	283	4255	67A Mahoney, Tim (DFL)	289	4277
56A Charron, Mike (R)	571	4244	65B Mariani, Carlos (DFL)	203	9714
61A Clark, Karen (DFL)	303	0294	9B Marquart, Paul (DFL)	345	6829
24B Cornish, Tony (R)	487	4240	57B McNamara, Denny (R)	431	3135
25B Cox, Ray (R)	413	7065	53B Meslow, Doug (R)	531	5363
37A Cybart, Lloyd (R)	539	5506	4A Moe, Frank (DFL)	369	5516
31B Davids, Gregory M. (R)	477	9278	58A Mullery, Joe (DFL)	367	4262
62A Davnies, Jim (DFL)	309	0173	6B Murphy, Mary (DFL)	343	2676
52B Dean, Matt (R)	417	3018	46A Nelson, Michael (DFL)	317	3751
49A DeLaForest, Chris (R)	503	4231	17B Nelson, Peter (R)	433	5377
29A Demmer, Randy (R)	597	9236	18A Newman, Scott (R)	569	1534
28A Dempsey, Jerry (R)	575	8635	10A Nornes, Bud (R)	471	4946
6A Dill, David (DFL)	315	2190	16B Olson, Mark (R)	501	4237
47A Dittrich, Denise (DFL)	371	5513	11B Otremba, Mary Ellen (DFL)	247	3201
27A Dorman, Dan (R)	517	8216	37B Ozment, Dennis (R)	479	4306
23B Dorn, John (DFL)	201	3248	42B Paulsen, Erik (R)	459	7449
17A Eastlund, Rob (R)	449	5364	64B Paymar, Michael (DFL)	253	4199
2A Eken, Kent (DFL)	329	9918	31A Pelowski, Jr., Gene (DFL)	295	8637
58B Ellison, Keith (DFL)	229	8659	1A Penas, Maxine (R)	579	9635
19B Emmer, Tom (R)	523	4336	32A Peppin, Joyce (R)	411	7806
64A Entenza, Matt (DFL)	267	8799	20A Peterson, Aaron (DFL)	351	4228
41A Erhardt, Ron (R)	591	4363	41B Peterson, Neil W. (R)	527	7803
16A Erickson, Sondra (R)	473	6746	45A Peterson, Sandra (DFL)	213	4176
21B Finstad, Brad (R)	379	9303	27B Poppe, Jeanne (DFL)	231	4193
26B Fritz, Patti (DFL)	239	8237	40A Powell, Duke (R)	407	4212
36B Garofalo, Pat (R)	429	1069	5A Rukavina, Tom (DFL)	279	0170
12A Gazelka, Paul (R)	529	4333	26A Ruth, Connie (R)	565	5368
50A Goodwin, Barbara (DFL)	331	4331	42A Ruud, Maria (DFL)	311	3964
54A Greiling, Mindy (DFL)	259	5387	2B Sailer, Brita (DFL)	327	4265
24A Gunther, Bob (R)	559	3240	50B Samuelson, Char (R)	415	0141
48A Hackbarth, Tom (R)	409	2439	54B Scalze, Bev (DFL)	241	7153
22B Hamilton, Rod (R)	423	5373	21A Seifert, Marty (R)	381	5374
39A Hansen, Rick (DFL)	221	6828	5B Sertich, Anthony "Tony" (DFL)	273	0172
66B Hausman, Alice (DFL)	245	3824	14A Severson, Dan (R)	553	7808
15B Haws, Larry (DFL)	277	6612	57A Sieben, Katie (DFL)	215	4342
13A Heidgerken, Bud (R)	507	4317	44A Simon, Steve (DFL)	313	9889
46B Hilstrom, Debra (DFL)	375	3709	10B Simpson, Dean (R)	525	4293
8A Hilty, Bill (DFL)	207	4308	55B Slawik, Nora (DFL)	357	7807
36A Holberg, Mary Liz (R)	443	6926	33A Smith, Steve (R)	543	9188
34B Hoppe, Joe (R)	537	5066	8B Soderstrom, Judy (R)	439	0518
60B Hornstein, Frank (DFL)	227	9281	3B Solberg, Loren (DFL)	349	2365
47B Hortman, Melissa (DFL)	377	4280	28B Sviggum, Steve (R)	463	2273
14B Hosch, Larry (DFL)	211	4373	33B Sykora, Barb (R)	485	4315
4B Howes, Larry (R)	451	2451	65A Thao, Cy (DFL)	359	5158
7A Huntley, Thomas (DFL)	335	2228	63A Thissen, Paul (DFL)	301	5375
7B Jaros, Mike (DFL)	291	4246	49B Tingelstad, Kathy (R)	403	5369
43A Johnson, Jeff (R)	401	5511	18B Urdahl, Dean (R)	521	4344
23A Johnson, Ruth (DFL)	389	8634	52A Vandever, Ray (R)	583	4124
67B Johnson, Sheldon (DFL)	243	4201	62B Wagenius, Jean (DFL)	251	4200
13B Juhnke, Al (DFL)	281	6206	61B Walker, Neva (DFL)	209	7152
59B Kahn, Phyllis (DFL)	255	4257	38B Wardlow, Lynn (R)	491	4128
60A Kelliher, Margaret Anderson (DFL)	261	0171	30B Welti, Andy (DFL)	387	4378
56B Klinzing, Karen (R)	567	1147	51A Westerberg, Andrew "Andy" (R)	549	4226
15A Knoblauch, Jim (R)	453	6316	11A Westrom, Torrey (R)	533	4929
20B Koenen, Lyle (DFL)	337	4346	38A Wilkin, Tim (R)	551	3533
34A Kohls, Paul (R)	421	4282	32B Zellers, Kurt (R)	557	5502

2006 Minnesota Senate Members

District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-	District/Member/Party	Room*	Phone (651) 296-
66 Anderson, Ellen (DFL)	120 Cap.	5537	57 Marko, Sharon (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	7-8060
52 Bachmann, Michele (R)	141 SOB	4351	54 Marty, John (DFL)	323 Cap.	5645
6 Bakk, Thomas (DFL)	226 Cap.	8881	38 McGinn, Mike (R)	G-19 SOB	7-8073
40 Belanger, William (R)	113 SOB	5975	39 Metzen, James (DFL)	322 Cap.	4370
61 Berglin, Linda (DFL)	309 Cap.	4261	41 Michel, Geoff (R)	133 SOB	6238
51 Betzold, Don (DFL)	111 Cap.	2556	67 Moua, Mee (DFL)	235 Cap.	5285
43 Bonoff, Terri (DFL)	325 Cap.	4314	28 Murphy, Steve (DFL)	306 Cap.	4264
50 Chaudhary, Satveer (DFL)	317 Cap.	4334	25 Neuville, Thomas (R)	123 SOB	1279
15 Clark, Tarryl (DFL)	303 Cap.	6455	17 Nienow, Sean (R)	105 SOB	5419
64 Cohen, Richard (DFL)	121 Cap.	5931	33 Olson, Gen (R)	119 SOB	1282
26 Day, Dick (R)	147 SOB	9457	34 Ortman, Julianne (R)	G-21 SOB	4837
60 Dibble, D. Scott (DFL)	111 Cap.	4191	65 Pappas, Sandra (DFL)	120 Cap.	1802
18 Dille, Steve (R)	103 SOB	4131	36 Pariseau, Pat (R)	117 SOB	5252
14 Fischbach, Michelle (R)	G-15 SOB	2084	59 Pogemiller, Lawrence (DFL)	235 Cap.	7809
47 Foley, Leo (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	4154	63 Ranum, Jane (DFL)	120 Cap.	7-8061
21 Frederickson, Dennis (R)	139 SOB	8138	53 Reiter, Mady (R)	132D SOB	1253
37 Gerlach, Chris (R)	107 SOB	4120	45 Rest, Ann (DFL)	205 Cap.	2889
42 Hann, David (R)	G-27 SOB	1749	35 Robling, Claire (R)	143 SOB	4123
58 Higgins, Linda (DFL)	328 Cap.	9246	24 Rosen, Julie (R)	G-23 SOB	5713
23 Hottinger, John (DFL)	317 Cap.	6153	4 Ruud, Carrie (R)	109 SOB	4913
13 Johnson, Dean (DFL)	208 Cap.	3826	11 Sams, Dallas (DFL)	328 Cap.	7-8063
49 Johnson, Debbie (R)	135 SOB	3219	3 Saxhaug, Tom (DFL)	124 Cap.	4136
48 Jungbauer, Michael (R)	G-25 SOB	3733	46 Scheid, Linda (DFL)	303 Cap.	8869
44 Kelley, Steve (DFL)	205 Cap.	7-8065	29 Senjem, David (R)	145 SOB	3903
31 Kierlin, Bob (R)	127 SOB	5649	2 Skoe, Rod (DFL)	124 Cap.	4196
30 Kiscaden, Sheila (DFL)	325 Cap.	4848	62 Skoglund, Wesley (DFL)	124 Cap.	4274
19 Koch, Amy T. (R)	115 SOB	5981	7 Solon, Yvonne Prettner (DFL)	303 Cap.	4188
12 Koering, Paul (R)	131 SOB	4875	27 Sparks, Dan (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	9248
20 Kubly, Gary (DFL)	306 Cap.	5094	1 Stumpf, LeRoy (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	8660
9 Langseth, Keith (DFL)	122 Cap.	3205	5 Tomassoni, David (DFL)	321 Cap.	8017
10 Larson, Cal (R)	153 SOB	5655	22 Vickerman, Jim (DFL)	226 Cap.	5650
56 LeClair, Brian (R)	129 SOB	4166	16 Wergin, Betsy (R)	125 SOB	8075
32 Limmer, Warren (R)	121 SOB	2159	55 Wiger, Charles (DFL)	301 Cap.	6820
8 Lourey, Becky (DFL)	G-24 Cap.	0293			

*Capitol or State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155

Minnesota House and Senate Membership

1 A Rep. Maxine Penas-(R) B Rep. Bernie Lieder-(DFL) Sen. LeRoy A. Stumpf-(DFL)	15 A Rep. Jim Knobloch-(R) B Rep. Larry Haws-(DFL) Sen. Tarryl Clark-(DFL)	29 A Rep. Randy Demmer-(R) B Rep. Fran Bradley-(R) Sen. David H. Senjem-(R)	43 A Rep. Jeff Johnson-(R) B Rep. Ron Abrams-(R) Sen. Terri Bonoff-(DFL)	57 A Rep. Katie Sieben-(DFL) B Rep. Denny McNamara-(R) Sen. Sharon Marko-(DFL)
2 A Rep. Kent Eken-(DFL) B Rep. Brita Sailer-(DFL) Sen. Rod Skoe-(DFL)	16 A Rep. Sondra Erickson-(R) B Rep. Mark Olson-(R) Sen. Betsy L. Wergin-(R)	30 A Rep. Tina Liebling-(DFL) B Rep. Andy Welti-(DFL) Sen. Sheila M. Kiscaden-(IP)	44 A Rep. Steve Simon-(DFL) B Rep. Ron Latz-(DFL) Sen. Steve Kelley-(DFL)	58 A Rep. Joe Mullery-(DFL) B Rep. Keith Ellison-(DFL) Sen. Linda Higgins-(DFL)
3 A Rep. Irv Anderson-(DFL) B Rep. Loren A. Solberg-(DFL) Sen. Tom Saxhaug-(DFL)	17 A Rep. Rob Eastlund-(R) B Rep. Peter Nelson-(R) Sen. Sean R. Nienow-(R)	31 A Rep. Gene Pelowski Jr.-(DFL) B Rep. Gregory M. Davids-(R) Sen. Bob Kierlin-(R)	45 A Rep. Sandra Peterson-(DFL) B Rep. Lyndon R. Carlson-(DFL) Sen. Ann H. Rest-(DFL)	59 A Rep. Diane Loeffler-(DFL) B Rep. Phyllis Kahn-(DFL) Sen. Lawrence J. Pogemiller-(DFL)
4 A Rep. Frank Moe-(DFL) B Rep. Larry Howes-(R) Sen. Carrie L. Ruud-(R)	18 A Rep. Scott Newman-(R) B Rep. Dean Urdahl-(R) Sen. Steve Dille-(R)	32 A Rep. Joyce Peppin-(R) B Rep. Kurt Zellers-(R) Sen. Warren Limmer-(R)	46 A Rep. Michael Nelson-(DFL) B Rep. Debra Hilstrom-(DFL) Sen. Linda Scheid-(DFL)	60 A Rep. Margaret Anderson Kelliher-(DFL) B Rep. Frank Hornstein-(DFL) Sen. D. Scott Dibble-(DFL)
5 A Rep. Tom Rukavina-(DFL) B Rep. Anthony "Tony" Sertich-(DFL) Sen. David J. Tomassoni-(DFL)	19 A Rep. Bruce Anderson-(R) B Rep. Tom Emmer-(R) Sen. Amy T. Koch-(R)	33 A Rep. Steve Smith-(R) B Rep. Barb Sykora-(R) Sen. Gen Olson-(R)	47 A Rep. Denise Dittrich-(DFL) B Rep. Melissa Hortman-(DFL) Sen. Leo Foley-(DFL)	61 A Rep. Karen Clark-(DFL) B Rep. Neva Walker-(DFL) Sen. Linda Berglin-(DFL)
6 A Rep. David Dill-(DFL) B Rep. Mary Murphy-(DFL) Sen. Thomas M. Bakk-(DFL)	20 A Rep. Aaron Peterson-(DFL) B Rep. Lyle Koenen-(DFL) Sen. Gary Kubly-(DFL)	34 A Rep. Paul Kohls-(R) B Rep. Joe Hoppe-(R) Sen. Julianne E. Ortman-(R)	48 A Rep. Tom Hackbarth-(R) B Rep. Jim Abeler-(R) Sen. Michael J. Jungbauer-(R)	62 A Rep. Jim Davnie-(DFL) B Rep. Jean Wagenius-(DFL) Sen. Wesley J. Skoglund-(DFL)
7 A Rep. Thomas Huntley-(DFL) B Rep. Mike Jaros-(DFL) Sen. Yvonne Prettner Solon-(DFL)	21 A Rep. Marty Seifert-(R) B Rep. Brad Finstad-(R) Sen. Dennis R. Frederickson-(R)	35 A Rep. Michael Beard-(R) B Rep. Mark Buegens-(R) Sen. Claire A. Robling-(R)	49 A Rep. Chris DeLaForest-(R) B Rep. Kathy Tingelstad-(R) Sen. Debbie J. Johnson-(R)	63 A Rep. Paul Thissen-(DFL) B Rep. Dan Larson-(DFL) Sen. Jane B. Ranum-(DFL)
8 A Rep. Bill Hilty-(DFL) B Rep. Judy Soderstrom-(R) Sen. Becky Lourey-(DFL)	22 A Rep. Doug Magnus-(R) B Rep. Rod Hamilton-(R) Sen. Jim Vickerman-(DFL)	36 A Rep. Mary Liz Holberg-(R) B Rep. Pat Garofalo-(R) Sen. Pat Pariseau-(R)	50 A Rep. Barbara Goodwin-(DFL) B Rep. Char Samuelson-(R) Sen. Satveer Chaudhary-(DFL)	64 A Rep. Matt Entenza-(DFL) B Rep. Michael Paymar-(DFL) Sen. Richard J. Cohen-(DFL)
9 A Rep. Morrie Lanning-(R) B Rep. Paul Marquart-(DFL) Sen. Keith Langseth-(DFL)	23 A Rep. Ruth Johnson-(DFL) B Rep. John Dorn-(DFL) Sen. John C. Hottinger-(DFL)	37 A Rep. Lloyd Cybart-(R) B Rep. Dennis Ozment-(R) Sen. Chris Gerlach-(R)	51 A Rep. Andrew "Andy" Westerberg-(R) B Rep. Connie Bernardy-(DFL) Sen. Don Betzold-(DFL)	65 A Rep. Cy Thao-(DFL) B Rep. Carlos Mariani-(DFL) Sen. Sandra L. Pappas-(DFL)
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Tuesday, April 18

HF4149-Heidgerken (R) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs

New legislators state orientation tour provided.

HF4150-Bernardy (DFL) Education Finance

School district property taxes and equity levy reduced and operating capital levy eliminated.

HF4151-Simon (DFL) Regulated Industries

Income tax rate recovery regulated.

HF4152-Abeler (R) Jobs & Economic Opportunity Policy & Finance

Legislative Commission to End Poverty by 2020 created and money appropriated.

HF4153-Brod (R) Health Policy & Finance

Abortion notification data reporting required relating to abortions performed on a minor or certain other women and civil penalties imposed.

Wednesday, April 19

HF4154-Atkins (DFL) Taxes

Foreign operating corporation taxation under the corporate franchise tax modified, local government aid increased and property tax rebate provided.

HF4155-Vandever (R) Taxes

Property tax notice format modified.

HF4156-Bernardy (DFL) Taxes

Local government aid program modified, foreign operating corporations taxation modified and property tax relief provided.

HF4157-Meslow (R) Commerce & Financial Institutions

Motor vehicle purchaser consumer definition technical correction provided.

Thursday, April 20

HF4158-Simon (DFL) Agriculture, Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Environmental review requirements modified and civil actions costs awarded.

What is a conference committee?

A conference committee is called to reconcile differences between versions of a bill passed by the House and the Senate. Each body of the Legislature appoints three or five members to the committee.

So far this year, four conference committees have been called to hammer out differences on the respective bills, but only one of these committees has met.

1. New Maple Grove hospital HF1915*/SF1840		
Motion for conference	Adoption of conference committee report	Repassage of bill
House: 5/20/2005	3/16/2006	3/16/2006
Senate: 5/23/2005	3/20/2006	3/20/2006
SIGNED INTO LAW: CH172 3/20/2006		
2. Funeral, memorial and burial service disruption prohibited. HF2985*/SF2614		
Motion for conference	Adoption of conference committee report	Repassage of bill
House: 3/20/2006	COMMITTEE HAS NOT MET	
Senate: 3/23/2006		
3. Eminent domain changes provided. HF2846/SF2750*		
Motion to conference	Adoption of conference committee report	Repassage of bill
House: 4/12/2006	COMMITTEE SCHEDULED TO MEET 4/21/2006	
Senate: 4/12/2006		
4. Omnibus bonding bill providing for capital improvements. HF2959/SF2718		
Motion to conference	Adoption of conference committee report	Repassage of bill
House: 4/18/2006	COMMITTEE HAS NOT MET	
Senate: 4/18/2006		

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MINNESOTA INDEX

You bet'cha

Estimated percent of Minnesotans who gamble in a year	80
Year the legalization of nonprofit bingo began charitable gaming in Minnesota.....	1945
Gross lawful gambling receipts in 2005, in billions.....	\$1.33
Amount that was from pull tabs, in billions.....	\$1.23
Maximum cost for a pull tab	\$2
State rank in charitable gambling gross receipts in 2004.....	1
Billions in gross receipts in 2004.....	\$1.40
Millions in receipts by second-highest state (Washington).....	\$870.28
Billions in Minnesota gross receipts in 2000.....	\$1.47
Billions in total prizes paid in 2005	\$1.09
Percent of gross receipts paid out in prizes.....	81.7
Gross profit on charitable gambling in 2005, in millions.....	\$242.9
Millions in 2004.....	\$256.11
Millions in charitable contributions in 2005.....	\$67.38
As percent of gross receipts	5
Millions paid in state gambling taxes in 2005.....	\$52.32
As percent of gross receipts	4
Millions in taxes collected in 2004.....	\$56.15
Millions in gambling taxes and proceeds from the State Lottery received by the state in fiscal year 2004.....	\$157
Amount to General Fund, in millions.....	\$112.7
Minnesota Indian tribes operating casinos.....	11
Number of casinos in operation	18
Live racing handle at Canterbury Park in 2005, in millions.....	\$17.59
Average daily attendance.....	5,240
Decrease in pari-mutuel revenues from 2004, as percent.....	7.3
Average handle per race in 2005.....	\$25,907
In 2003	\$27,844
In 2000	\$26,430
Simulcast racing handle at Canterbury Park in 2005, in millions.....	\$58.63
Average handle per day.....	\$160,627
Percent increase in card club revenue in 2005	4.2

Sources: Calendar year 2005 report and *Gaming News*, March/April 2006, both from the [Minnesota Gambling Control Board](#); *Gambling in Minnesota: An Overview*, Minnesota State Lottery, Sept. 24, 2004; [2005, 2003 and 2000](#) annual reports, Minnesota Racing Commission; [2004 Annual Report](#), National Association of Fundraising Ticket Manufacturers; [Gambling in Minnesota: A Short History](#), March 2005; House Research Department; [Minnesota Indian Gaming Association](#); [Canterbury Park Holding Corporation](#).

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