


SESSION WEEKLY

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HOMES FOR THE HOMELESS
BIOFUELS, BIOMASS
COLD BELGIAN BREWS

HF569- HF801

SESSION WEEKLY

Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services. During the 2007-2008 Legislative Session, each issue reports House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and provides other information. No fee.

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On the cover: An ice halo appears to arc over the State Capitol Jan. 26. Also known as an icebow, this optical phenomenon is similar to a rainbow, except that it is formed by the prism effects of millions of tiny ice crystals, instead of raindrops, associated with thin, high-level clouds.

—Photo by: Andrew VonBank

Without a home

Number of reasons for increased homelessness

By MIA SIMPSON

It's 7 p.m. on a Monday — lottery night — at Simpson Housing Services' emergency shelter. More than 70 men sit in rows of second hand couches and folding chairs, waiting for the weekly raffle to commence. The prize is a bed, reserved for 28 days, at one of three downtown Minneapolis shelters — Simpson's, Our Saviour's Housing and St. Stephen's Shelter.

The odds of a night's sleep indoors for these men are fair to low; between the three shelters, 22 beds are available, and among the entries are people who'd phoned in because they couldn't attend. Staff members instruct the 50 or so remaining to leave immediately after the drawing. There isn't enough food for everyone.

This scene was the first leg of a tour made by several members of the House Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division on a sub-zero Jan. 29 night.

Escorted by advocates to four locales across the Twin Cities metropolitan area — Simpson's, which serves single men; YouthLink, a drop-in center for teens; The Jeremiah Program, a transitional housing program for single mothers; and the Dorothy Day Center, a shelter for adults — the legislators went to learn about resources for the homeless and to witness their experience.

Beyond statistics

"The statistics don't do anything for what you'll see tonight," said Michael Dahl, executive director of Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless.

The numbers, in fact, aren't easy to quantify.

One report, called "Homeless in Minnesota 2003," produced by the Wilder Foundation, is referenced most often by homeless advocates and policymakers. The picture, drawn every three years with the help of hundreds of volunteers on a single night, provides just an estimate: 20,347 homeless or "precariously housed" people statewide in 2003, 10,600 of which were children. The report concludes the population is multiracial — 43 percent white, 40 percent black, 9 percent American Indian, 7 percent Hispanic and 1 percent Asian

— with a 70 percent unemployment rate. About half of homeless individuals suffer from a mental illness.

But the report also attests to the population's diversity.

Of the approximately 1,500 families counted in the survey, 82 percent are single mothers with children, homeless possibly because they fled domestic abuse or are deep in debt and underemployed.

Teen numbers on the rise

Teens are a growing demographic in the foundation's count; the figure is three times the amount from 1991, the first year of the survey.

"Paul," 19, was one of two youths legislators met. He walked into YouthLink, which provides an array of services for 1,300 young people annually, after a fight with his mother's abusive boyfriend left him homeless.

"I hadn't seen her in 12 years, and she kicked me out," he said.

Paul says he's "couch-hopping" — staying at a friend's home until he wears out his welcome.

Families and young people like Paul have differing needs, advocates say, and when added with other dominant groups of the homeless — veterans, addicts and the mentally ill — a one-size-fits-all approach can dismantle genuine attempts at support.

"We must offer a variety of options, so that homeless people can get the services that are right for them," said Wendy Wiegmann, family housing director at Simpson Housing Services.

She and other advocates describe a continuum of care that begins with outreach and ends at affordable housing. What's sandwiched in between — shelters, which often serve as



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

During a presentation by the Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, Jessica Lefler of Minneapolis tells her story of becoming homeless and the struggles that followed to "rebuild" a home for herself and her family. Pictured with Lefler, at left, is Wendy Wiegmann from family housing director at Simpson Housing Services. Lefler is pictured at right with her 5-year-old son, Billy Joel Campbell.

**First Reading
continued on page 4**

gateways to other services; transitional housing, which typically lasts two years and often includes other assistance; and supportive housing, which can be permanent and may include supervision — provide the malleability that case workers and agency staff need to successfully move people into stable homes.

“There are a diversity of types of programs that exist across the state,” Dahl said. “We try to get people into supportive atmospheres, and not using as costly services that you might find in corrections, detox and emergency rooms, which are most often used by those suffering mental illness and/or addiction.”

Prevention is also key.

“Eighty to 90 percent will not end up homeless if they receive support,” Dahl said.

Unfortunately, public funding across all sectors has faded, especially at the federal level.

According to the Minnesota Housing Partnership, funding from the [Department of Housing and Urban Development](#), which funded all operational costs in the 1980s,

now covers just 75 percent. [Community Development Block Grants](#), federal grants aimed at enhancing economic opportunities and housing in cities and counties, are supposed to decrease by \$2 billion from 2004 to 2008.

The issue of homelessness is also a market one. According to the partnership, 12 percent of families spent more than half their income on housing in 2005. A report by Dakota County calculated that wage earners must make \$17.30 an hour to afford a two-bedroom apartment at \$900 a month. The median wage for job vacancies in the Twin Cities in 2006 was \$12 an hour.

“It’s a perfect storm of things that lead to this situation,” said [Rep. Carolyn Laine](#) (DFL-Columbia Heights). “We, in fact, created the system that we have now, where we remove the low-income housing and build other things, (have) people pushed off various resources that were available, and then there’s the increasing gap between ability to pay and how much things cost in housing these days.”

Policymakers are responding to the problem of homelessness. In 2004, Gov. Tim Pawlenty unveiled “[Minnesota’s Business Plan to End](#)

[Long-Term Homeless](#).” The plan, which sunsets in 2010, pulls in government, private, faith and nonprofit stakeholders to implement strategies, such as doubling the number of permanent supportive housing units to 4,000, establishing a system to track the number of homeless and providing grants aimed at improving stable housing to communities. Total investment from state, local and federal levels is \$540 million.

Additional monies, both to supplement the governor’s plan and fund other initiatives, have been proposed this year. [Rep. Karen Clark](#) (DFL-Mpls), division chairwoman, has introduced [HF537](#), which seeks to appropriate \$8 million to aspects of the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, federal legislation passed in 1974 that supports outreach, emergency shelters and transitional housing for young people. It has no Senate companion.

“It’s obvious people are very moved by the desperate situation these people are in and the difficulty of it,” she said. “I’ve seen what a difference an investment can make.”

KEEPING WATCH



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Alice Lesch, center, watches as St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and Police Chief John Harrington testify before a joint hearing of House Public Safety Finance Division and Senate Public Safety Budget Division Feb. 6. Alice joined her father, Rep. John Lesch, seated left, at the joint committee, which also heard from Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak and Police Chief Tim Dolan.

Editor's note: The following Highlights are coverage of select bills heard in House committees held Feb. 1-8 and other House activity. To track the progress of a bill, go to www.leg.state.mn and click on Bill Search, Status and MyBills.

AGRICULTURE

Tax credit for dairy farmers

Andrew Goldberg grew up on a dairy farm, now owns 73 dairy cows and hopes to expand his operation near Deer Creek.

The May 2006 graduate from the University of Minnesota with a degree in animal sciences told the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Finance Division Feb. 6 that the proposed dairy investment credit would help the state's struggling dairy industry.

"We like seeing a U of M graduate, and we like seeing the next generation of dairy farmers," said [Rep. Al Juhnke](#) (DFL-Willmar), the division chairman. He also sponsors [HF9](#), which would provide a onetime tax credit to help modernize dairy animal operations in the state.

But it was the sponsor of a competing bill ([HF52](#)), [Rep. Dean Urdahl](#) (R-Grove City), who presented the tax-credit concept to the committee. No action was taken.

Each bill would allow for a dairy investment credit against individual income and corporate franchise taxes to a maximum of \$50,000 for qualifying expenditures used to improve dairy operations.

A similar bill had support in the House last year, but ran into trouble during conference committee negotiations with the Senate. This session, the measure is included in Gov. Tim Pawlenty's proposed budget.

The cost of the program during fiscal year 2008 is approximately \$5 million, according to the [Department of Revenue](#).

The companion bills, [SF76](#) and [SF90](#), sponsored by [Sen. Jim Vickerman](#) (DFL-Tracy) and [Sen. Betsy Wergin](#) (R-Princeton), await action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

BIOSCIENCE

Helping bioscience companies

A shared laboratory space created to lend a helping hand to fledgling bioscience

companies would get a financial boost from the state, if a bill approved by a House committee becomes law.

[HF290](#), sponsored by [Rep. Tim Mahoney](#) (DFL-St. Paul), would grant a one-time appropriation of \$5 million to University Enterprise Laboratories Inc. — a collaboration between the University of Minnesota, the city of St. Paul, corporate partners and private investors. It was approved by the House Biosciences and Emerging Technology Committee Feb. 7 and now goes to the House Finance Committee.

"The University Enterprise Labs is a place where these small businesses can get a start, can grow into larger businesses," Mahoney said. UEL functions as a "subsidized lab space" where bioscience start-ups can have access to state-of-the-art equipment and exchange knowledge with other companies and organizations, he said.

Robert Elde, dean of the university's College of Biological Sciences and a UEL board member, said UEL was created partially out of a need to retain talented bioscience faculty and students at the university.

Elde said UEL provided bioscience researchers with "adequate research space outside of the academic environment, but close enough to the academic environment to piggyback on the work that they were doing in their research laboratory."

A companion bill, [SF582](#), sponsored by [Sen. Ellen Anderson](#) (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

Embryonic stem cell research

A bill that would pave the way for state-funded research using embryonic stem cells cleared its first legislative hurdle Feb. 7 when it was approved by the House Biosciences and Emerging Technology Committee.

[HF34](#), sponsored by [Rep. Phyllis Kahn](#) (DFL-Mpls), would allow state funds to be used for research involving both embryonic and adult human stem cells. In addition, the bill includes an informed consent provision that would require health care providers to give patients undergoing treatment for infertility the option of donating their embryos for research purposes; however, selling those embryos or other fetal tissue would be prohibited.

"This is needed because the federal government has really failed us on this issue," Kahn said, referring to President Bush's refusal to provide federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.

Correction

The phone number for the House Property Tax Relief and Local Sales Tax Division property tax hotline for metro area residents was incorrect in last week's Session Weekly. The correct phone number is (651) 297-8391.

We apologize for any inconvenience.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Meri Firpo, assistant professor and diabetes research at the University of Minnesota, testifies before the House Biosciences and Emerging Technology Committee Feb. 7 in support of a bill that would establish a state stem cell research policy.

The bill came under fire from opponents who said that human life begins at conception, and that using human embryos for research was both unethical and unnecessary.

Christopher Leifeld, executive director of the Minnesota Catholic Conference, called the bill "gravely and intrinsically wrong."

"Every human life, from the first moment

of existence until natural death, deserves our respect and protection,” Leifeld said.

[Rep. Mike Beard](#) (R-Shakopee) questioned whether it was appropriate to use embryonic stem cells when adult stem cells could be used instead.

“I do not oppose stem cell research in any way, shape or form — except for whenever we’re touching the very foundations of life,” Beard said.

Supporters of the bill, however, say that adult stem cells are not good enough.

“Adult stem cells are actually not useful for many diseases,” said Meri Firpo, assistant professor and diabetes researcher at the University of Minnesota.

Jackie Hunt Christensen, vice president of the Parkinson Association of Minnesota and a Parkinson’s disease patient herself, gave a single sentence of testimony in support of the bill: “We patients are running out of patience.”

[Rep. Tim Mahoney](#) (DFL-St. Paul), committee chairman, successfully amended the bill by striking a “legislative findings” section as well as removing language that would have provided for a fiscal appropriation.

As amended, the bill now goes to the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division.

A companion bill, [SF100](#), sponsored by [Sen. Richard Cohen](#) (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

BONDING

Capitol renovation concerns

Some House members want more time to digest and discuss the State Capitol renovation plan.

The House Capital Investment Finance Division was introduced to the \$260 million project for the first time Feb. 6, but took no action.

No funding plans have been introduced, but the pre-design plan suggests some funding be allocated during the 2007 session, so work could begin by 2008.

Nancy Stark, executive secretary of the [Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board](#), said an advisory committee was selected that included two members each from the House and Senate along with other building tenants.

“Representatives of your staff were there as a part of the pre-design,” she said. “It was difficult to get members to participate.”

[Rep. Mary Murphy](#) (DFL-Hermantown) has been in the capital finance division “since

SCIENCE PROJECT



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Members of the House Minnesota Heritage Finance Division and staff visit the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul Feb. 5.

it was created,” but said this project was new to her three weeks ago.

“If I’d been told we were in the midst of planning a \$260 million plan, my ears sure would have perked up,” she said.

[Rep. Al Juhnke](#) (DFL-Willmar) said it might be more beneficial in the long run to look at a plan that’s entirely different than the current pre-design. He said the division needs to look at what the Capitol really needs, and what to do with functions that aren’t required in the building.

“It’s not just, ‘Well, we need to retrofit (the Capitol) because the senators are over there and they need nice digs to make things work for them,’” he said.

The needs of the House and the Senate should be examined along with other agencies in the Capitol, he said, adding that the current State Office Building, where most House business occurs, has issues of its own.

“The whole interior of this building used to be an open courtyard,” Juhnke said. “We still have water problems that occur every year in here. All our hearing rooms aren’t equipped with working technology. We couldn’t have this meeting in our regular meeting room because there aren’t video cameras. We can’t even get the overhead projectors to work in there for heaven’s sake.”

Funding for Duluth arena

If funding is approved, Duluth could have the first arena in the world with an environmental design certification.

Sponsored by [Rep. Mary Murphy](#)

(DFL-Hermantown), [HF164](#) would appropriate \$37.9 million in bonds to help fund a new arena at the 41-year-old Duluth Entertainment Convention Center. It was discussed by the House Capital Investment Finance Division Feb. 1, but not acted upon.

To receive Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification, the arena would be designed to maximize energy efficiencies, recycling programs and other green aspects, including the use of local renewable resources throughout the building, said Dan Russell, DECC executive director. He added that the goal is to reduce energy use by approximately 50 percent over traditional arenas. LEED certification is given by the U.S. Green Building Council and promotes a whole building approach to sustainability. The DECC arena would be the first LEED certified arena in the world, Russell said.

The estimated \$76 million arena would be used by the mens and womens hockey programs at the [University of Minnesota-Duluth](#), for concerts and other events.

Murphy said the center serves all of northern Minnesota, parts of Wisconsin and Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. More than 70 percent of the arena’s guests come from outside of Duluth.

Duluth Mayor Herb Bergson said the arena is a “centerpiece” of the city’s downtown entertainment district. He said there is strong support for a 0.75 percent increase in the city’s food and drink sales tax to support part of the project cost. It has gotten unanimous support from the Duluth City Council. The university and DECC would also contribute funding.

Funding nearly happened in last year’s

bonding law, but Murphy said the DECC was the last project that didn't get in.

A companion bill, [SF57](#), sponsored by [Sen. Yvonne Prettner Solon](#) (DFL-Duluth), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

BUSINESS

Cold Belgian brews

"Bottoms up!" Belgian beer fans may have shouted as a bill allowing for the sale of 750-milliliter bottles by brewpubs and small brewers was heard by the House Commerce and Labor Committee Feb. 6.

Sponsored by [Rep. David Dill](#) (DFL-Crane Lake), [HF310](#) would add the larger bottles, which are traditional to Belgian beers, to the already approved 64-ounce containers sold by small brewers and brewpubs.

Ken Thiemann, an up-and-coming brewmaster in Larsmont, along the North Shore, said that under current law he would be unable to sell or serve his homemade beer in the traditional Belgian fashion. Additionally, the equipment needed to make Belgian beer is made to fit 750-milliliter bottles, he said.

There was no opposition to the bill, held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus liquor bill.

A companion bill, [SF201](#), sponsored by [Sen. Tom Bakke](#) (DFL-Cook), awaits action by the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

Break for veteran-owned businesses

Veteran-owned and operated businesses could be added to a list of small-business groups eligible for special consideration for state and local government purchasing contracts.

[Rep. Larry Haws](#) (DFL-St. Cloud), sponsor of [HF137](#), told the House Veterans Affairs Division Feb. 2 that there are 600 veteran-owned businesses registered with the state. Under the bill, veterans would be added to the list of targeted groups who receive a percent break when the state considers purchasing contracts. The list now includes women, specific minorities and people with substantial physical disabilities.

"This is the first stroke in completing the picture created by the 22 initiatives the governor has put forward dealing with veterans issues," Haws said. "When we're done, Minnesota will be painted as a veterans-friendly state." Gov. Tim Pawlenty has recommended a \$74.8 million military and veterans support package.

[Rep. Dan Severson](#) (R-Sauk Rapids), who worked with a task force to develop the bill, said

some small-business owners who are members of the National Guard and end up deployed have come back to find "their business in shambles."

The division approved the bill. It now moves to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.

A companion bill, [SF255](#), sponsored by [Sen. Betsy Wergin](#) (R-Princeton), was passed 66-0 by the Senate Feb. 8.

CONSUMERS

Call center transparency

Customers placing or receiving phone calls from service call centers could have more information about where a call center is located, under a bill approved Feb. 2 by the House Telecommunications Regulation and Infrastructure Division.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Rep. Terry Morrow reads an e-mail which television and Internet viewers of the House Telecommunications Regulation and Infrastructure Division were able to submit during the division's Feb. 2 hearing on a proposed bill that would impose requirements on customer sales and service centers.

Sponsored by [Rep. Joe Atkins](#) (DFL-Inver Grove Heights), [HF116](#) would give a customer the right to know the state or country where the call center employee is located. Additionally, a customer dealing with an internationally located service center that requests a person's financial, credit or identifying information would have the right to request an alternative option of contacting a United States center, if one is available.

"Basically all I'm doing here is asking the call center operator to tell the truth," Atkins said. If a consumer call center doesn't have a stateside location, the consumer will have to decide whether to take the risk of disclosing information, he said.

[Rep. Paul Thissen](#) (DFL-Mpls) asked about language that would allow a person to be charged with fraud for failing to comply.

Atkins said the bottom line is that charges could apply to businesses operating in Minnesota, but it would be difficult to prosecute someone outside the state or internationally.

Requirements in the bill could result in poor customer service by having to reroute calls to another center and could reflect poorly on a business, said Tom Hesse, vice president of government affairs for the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

The committee held an interactive discussion with television and Internet viewers to allow for e-mail comments. One response indicated that the issue is more federal and international than state-related. Another stated the bill doesn't go far enough in protecting consumers.

The bill's next stop is the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

A Senate companion, [SF162](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dan Sparks](#) (DFL-Austin), awaits action by the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

CRIME

Increased booking fees

There is no getting out of jail free in Minnesota.

Anyone currently booked into a county or regional jail is charged a \$10 fee. Sponsored by [Rep. Larry Haws](#) (DFL-St. Cloud), [HF161](#) proposes the fee increase to \$25.

When the fee was set in 1997 it was inadequate, and with continually rising costs it's even more so, Haws told the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee Feb. 1. Approved by the committee, the bill awaits action by the House Public Safety Finance Division.

Currently counties and cities pay the county

and regional jails anywhere from \$35 to \$75 per booking. This has forced many local governments to raise taxes to cover costs.

Haws also said that a booking fee increase could free up tax money that could be used to support law enforcement and put more police on the street.

Dakota County Chief Deputy David Bellows reported that last year the county booked more than 13,000 people and collected \$30,000 in fees, while the total cost of incarcerating these people was about \$100,000. The difference fell on taxpayers in the form of higher property taxes, said Bellows.

Bellows also requested an amendment to state if someone is acquitted or has charges dropped — making them eligible for a refund — the jails would only have to return the booking fee to people “upon their request.” Current statute holds the jails responsible for notifying those who are eligible for refunds, causing a drain on county resources, said Bellows. The amendment did not pass.

[Sen. Rick Olseen](#) (DFL-Harris) sponsors a companion bill, [SF323](#), which has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Slowing down scrap metal theft

The epidemic of copper and wiring theft around the state is taking its toll.

In response, the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee approved [HF457](#), which would help law enforcement agencies apprehend and prosecute scrap metal thieves, and sent it to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

The bill, sponsored by [Rep. Paul Gardner](#) (DFL-Shoreview), calls for scrap metal dealers to keep records of purchases and report the information to local authorities upon request; install and maintain video surveillance cameras; and pay for all scrap metal by check.

This rash of robberies, which has resulted in major gas leaks and explosions, also poses serious public safety issues that must be addressed. “In my 29 years of experience in the fire department I have not seen a more dangerous phenomenon as the one we are facing right now,” said St. Paul Fire Chief Douglas Holton.

Under the bill, it would be a felony, punishable by up to five years in prison, to intentionally and without consent damage, take, remove, sever or break any line or attached apparatus that transmits or distributes electricity or gas.

Tom Deegan, manager of the problem property unit for the city of Minneapolis, showed pictures of houses damaged by fire or water damage as a result of materials being



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Rep. Paul Gardner gets a firsthand look at a burnt-out home in North Minneapolis Jan. 6, where the copper pipes had been removed by suspected thieves. Gardner is sponsoring a bill designed to curb the theft of copper from vacant homes, utilities and construction sites. It would also regulate scrap metal recyclers.

ripped out of homes. In one residence, thieves stole piping and a water meter, flooding the basement and causing thousands of dollars of damage.

[Rep. Tom Emmer](#) (R-Delano) raised concerns about how this legislation could cause some scrap metal and salvage yards to go out of business, and the need for a more a thorough examination of the fiscal impact.

A companion bill, [SF443](#), sponsored by [Sen. Linda Higgins](#) (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

A second bill dealing with the problem is expected to be heard by the committee at a later date. Sponsored by [Rep. Joe Mullery](#) (DFL-Mpls), [HF584](#) calls for increased penalties for wiring and piping theft that result in injury or death. It has no Senate companion.

Violence hits close to home

Protecting victims of domestic violence is not simply a matter of getting them away from a bad situation. It's about providing technical and emotional support after they've gone.

This was the message witnesses gave to the House Public Safety Finance Division Feb. 8. No action was taken.

Dorian Eder, representing the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, said that when a woman places a 911 call about an incident of domestic violence, there are at least 13 steps of bureaucracy to go through. If the case involves children and housing issues, there could be

as many as 50. This is why, Eder said, it's important to provide the resources to navigate the system.

Eder acknowledged that even with current resources, they can not help everyone. In 2006, 20 women lost their lives due to domestic violence, and more than 58,500 women were served by battered women programs.

“My sister was the 15th woman murdered in the state,” said Vicki Seliger-Swenson as she testified about her sister, Terri Lee.

Lee was attacked by her former boyfriend last July, after she ended their relationship. Lee notified the police and obtained a restraining order, which he violated. Lee then asked police to arrest him, but they did not.

On Sept. 22, the boyfriend broke into Lee's home and shot her and a friend, while her two daughters ran to a neighbor's house and her two sons hid in a closet.

Seliger-Swenson asked the committee to closely examine the system in place to protect women and children. “My sister, my family, we are proof that [domestic violence] can happen to anyone,” she said.

According to a coalition report, presented by Carla Ferrucci, director of public policy and system change, “An abusive relationship that ends in the murder of the victim illustrates the failure of our systems and society to respond to the needs of battered women and abused children.”

If you have Internet access, visit the
Legislature's Web page at:
<http://www.leg.mn>

Housing short-term offenders

The cost of housing short-term offenders is straining the relationship between the state and county governments.

A 2003 law shifted the responsibility of housing short-term offenders from the state to the counties. If an offender is given a prison sentence of less than six months, or if an offender violates their probation and has less than six months to serve, he or she will serve out their time in a county jail.

Since the law's enactment, this arrangement has saved the [Department of Corrections](#) approximately \$19 million.

When this law took effect, the state provided support to the counties at a rate of \$12 per day. That amount has since decreased to \$9. However, housing an inmate averages \$55 a day.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty's latest budget proposal would raise the state's contribution to \$30 per day.

County officials say that's not good enough.

"We all hear a lot about tax relief and tax reform, but it gets down to tax responsibility and who will take care of the issues that have been identified," Olmsted County Commissioner Paul Wilson told the House Public Safety Finance Division Feb. 1. Over the last four years, he said Olmsted County has absorbed more than \$900,000 in additional inmate costs. The impact to its budget led the county to lay off five probation agents and delay more than 5 miles of highway improvements.

The committee took no action.

Deputy Corrections Commissioner Dennis Benson also sees a logistical problem. With inmates in 87 different county facilities, the department cannot effectively manage prisoners, nor can it provide adequate re-entry services, said Benson.

Rice County Attorney Paul Beaumaster said this legislation provides a way for some offenders to manipulate the system. Some will plead guilty to lesser crimes so they can serve their time in a county jail rather than a state prison, while others have tried to prolong their court proceedings knowing that they will get credit for time served, and do the remainder of their sentence in county jail.

There is something wrong when offenders can determine where they do their sentence, Beaumaster said.

EDUCATION

School levy modifications

[Rep. Paul Marquart](#) (DFL-Dilworth), the sponsor of [HF3](#), gave an informational

overview of the legislation that would modify school district levies Feb. 6 to the House K-12 Finance Division, which took no action.

"Skyrocketing property taxes are a huge, huge concern, and are a top priority in the House. Property taxes have gone from \$4.6 billion in 2002 to \$6.8 billion in 2007," he said.

The bill would modify market value property tax credit computations and increase property tax refunds for homeowners and renters. In addition, senior deferral eligibility and city and county aid would be increased.

According to an analyst with the House Fiscal Analysis Department, Greg Crowe, if a school district passes an operating levy in a property-rich district it would see little if any relief; however, property-poor schools would see a significant relief.

"I want to caution the members that we need to keep in mind that the state is paying for more of the levies, we're just shifting taxes again," said [Rep. Randy Demmer](#) (R-Hayfield). With more money coming from the state to pay for school levies, there is a shift from property taxes to other taxes.

"We have to keep in mind it's taxpayer dollars. The temptation is that when we are using the company checkbook maybe it is easier to go out and spend then when we have to use our own checkbook," Demmer said.

A companion bill, [SF349](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dan Larson](#) (DFL-Bloomington), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

Pre-kindergarten assessments

Half of the children entering kindergarten are assessed as not ready for school by their teachers.

On Feb. 1 Deb Swenson-Klatt, child development services manager with the Department of Human Services gave the House Early Childhood Learning Finance Division an overview of early childhood assessment testing. No action was taken.

"Child assessment, from our perspective, is an ongoing process of collecting and interpreting information about children's development," she said.

According to Swenson-Klatt, not being ready for kindergarten means skill, knowledge, behavior and accomplishment are not yet demonstrated or are demonstrated on an intermittent basis.

However, 82 percent of children attending accredited child care facilities are assessed as being ready for kindergarten, according to Swenson-Klatt. Children from lower income and minority families perform at the same level as white children when they attend early childhood schools.

Rep. Rob Eastlund (R-Isanti) questioned

if the assessments differentiate between boys and girls. "Are we recognizing the difference between how boys and girls learn? Or are we starting these boys on a path of failure right out the chute?"

Eastlund said boys are four times more likely to be labeled as having a learning disability or having emotional problems, and are more likely to be placed on the drug Ritalin. "We are seeing young men achieve less and less, here at the earliest entry point we're labeling them not ready," he said.

Dr. Karen Effrem, a pediatrician who serves on the board of EdWatch, also had problems with the gender assessments and the system overall.

"If you look at the term on the assessment test that says 'empathy and caring for others,' that's good to know. But little children don't do that very well. Speaking as a pediatrician, boys do that a lot less well than girls."

Does more money equal results?

Gov. Tim Pawlenty's [budget proposal](#) calls for an additional \$37.9 million in early childhood assistance, but not everyone is convinced that extra money will equate to greater success.

Education Commissioner Alice Seagren told the House E-12 Education Committee Feb. 1 that the proposal calls for \$28.9 million to provide families of at-risk children resources and support to ensure the child is ready for kindergarten, and another \$9 million to improve the quality of early childhood programming. The committee took no action.

Dr. Karen Effrem, a pediatrician and EdWatch board member, testified that money spent on early childhood programs in other states has had little to no effect on results.

"Georgia has spent \$1 billion over the last 10 years and there has been no improvement in test scores. Oklahoma has universal preschool and their test scores have gone down," she said.

"Europe has universal preschool programs, but American students until fourth grade test higher in math, science and reading. It's not until eighth and 12th grade where they test worst and are on the bottom of the academic heap. That suggests there are more problems in K-12 than preschool," she said.

Others disagree.

"Currently Minnesota spends \$147 million for early care education programs, or less than 1 percent of the state's \$32 billion biennial budget," said Zoe Nichol, public policy director of Ready 4K. "Five-year-old children will have completed at least 75 percent of their brain development, but will have experienced

less than 5 percent of the public investments in education that will be made between birth and age 23.”

Her organization’s vision is to bring school readiness for kindergartners up to 100 percent from the current 50 percent.

Using its defined terms, [Education Department](#) statistics show that 40 percent of children entering kindergarten are “in process” of readiness, and 10 percent are not yet ready.

“If your child is in the 10 percent not ready or 40 percent not ready, is that acceptable? It’s not acceptable. I hope we don’t talk about percents, because every child needs to be ready,” said [Rep. John Ward](#) (DFL-Brainerd), a former teacher.

All-day kindergarten

Voluntary full-day kindergarten would be funded, under several bills heard by a House division.

Sponsored by [Rep. Marsha Swails](#) (DFL-Woodbury), [HF2](#) is one of five bills brought before the committee that would approve funding. Half-day kindergarten funding is currently provided by the state, but if a parent wants their child to attend full-day kindergarten they can do it at their own cost.

The bills were all held over for possible inclusion in the House K-12 Finance Division’s omnibus bill.

“As a teacher I believe that this is the best way we can invest in our future,” said Swails, who teaches AP English at Woodbury High School. She said the total cost if each child in the state was to attend full-day, every-day kindergarten would be \$143 million each year.

The difference between the five bills was funding mechanisms, including implementation length and using a sliding scale. Other members sponsoring bills are: [Rep. Robin Brown](#) (DFL-Austin), [Rep. Denise Dittrich](#) (DFL-Champlin), [Rep. Shelley Madore](#) (DFL-Apple Valley) and [Rep. Terry Morrow](#) (DFL-St. Peter).

“Research shows that all-day every day kindergarten leads to higher academic achievement and reduced achievement gaps between students of different economic and racial groups,” said Karen Kelly-Ariwoola, interim president and CEO of the Minneapolis Foundation.

She said that 30 states already provide all-day kindergarten, including Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee. According to the United Health Foundation, those states rank in the bottom 10 for high school graduation rates, yet each has all-day kindergarten.

Seven of the 18 states that offer just half-day

kindergarten, including Minnesota, are in the top 10 in terms of graduating students on time from high school.

A companion bill, [SF174](#), sponsored by [Sen. Kathy Saltzman](#) (DFL-Woodbury), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

Benchmark burdens

Education standards are an essential guideline for teachers to know what the state wants students to learn. Benchmarks, the second half of standards, are a burden that turns thinking and evaluation into memorizing and trivia.

Or at least that is what Micheal J. Thompson and Adam Copeland believe.

Copeland, an Eagan High School social studies teacher, shared an example of a benchmark he thinks is a little off the mark Feb. 6 with the House E-12 Education Committee, which took no action.

One of the world history standards is on Eastern Hemisphere empires and their interactions and trade patterns. The second benchmark on the standard is about African kingdoms including Songhai. Examples of terms that should be learned in the benchmark are Kush, Ibn Battuta, King Ezana and Bantu migrations. “Do we need to know about Songhai? I would say only about 10 people in Minnesota are from that region in Africa. That is what benchmarks do. They take trivialities and make them essential,” he said.

Copeland recommends that the focus be taken off benchmarks, and that standards should apply to all public schools including magnet, charter and alternative schools.

Thompson, the director of secondary curriculum for the St. Paul Public Schools, has a problem with the benchmarks that are built into the standards. “To meet all the benchmarks you would need a K-22 school system.”

Thompson brought his daughter’s 4 pound, 6 ounce history textbook and compared it with a 1 pound, 3 ounce European equivalent.

“Even though our book is quite a bit bigger, the European students score higher — they are able to go deeper into subjects,” he said. “Students in America cover double the amount of math than the Japanese and Germans, yet they know it better than we do.”

International Baccalaureate success

The term “success” sometimes gets lost in the education debate. When the topic of education comes up the conversation often leads to the need for more funding, higher standards and closing the achievement gap.

Successful educational programs were the

subject on Feb. 5 in the House Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness Finance Division, which heard testimony from members of the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program at Sandburg Middle School in Robbinsdale. The division took no action.

Lauren Hildebrand, program coordinator, said there are 170 schools in the United States offering the program, but just one in Minnesota, although 15 more are in process of certification.

According to the International Baccalaureate Organization Web site, “It is a programme of international education designed to help students develop the knowledge, understanding, attitudes and skills necessary to participate actively and responsibly in a changing world.”

It is a choice school that emphasizes how to learn and how to critically evaluate information, not just teaching facts. Students study subjects from each of the eight subject groups through the “five areas of interaction.”

Approaches to learning, community and service, homo faber (processes and products of human creativity), environment, and health and social education are all incorporated into each subject. Foreign language must be taken each year.

“A student must complete a community service project of a minimum of 10 hours in sixth grade and a project in seventh and eighth grade must be completed for graduation,” Hildebrand said. “Most students do more than the minimum.”

Linda Kerandi, a seventh-grade student, chose the program because of the rigorous course work. “I wanted to be challenged; I get satisfaction out of solving hard things,” she said.

Kerandi’s community service project was helping her native Liberia recover from its civil war. “We raised money and acquired school supplies for an orphanage there; many of the children’s parents had died.”

Harvard University recently chose the program as one of four worldwide for a groundbreaking study of exemplary education programs.

ELECTIONS

Faster reporting deadlines

Reporting deadlines and campaign contribution limits would change under a bill approved by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee Feb. 1.

[HF237](#) would require certain contributions to be reported within 24 hours to the [Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board](#); current law requires 48 hours. Approved by the committee, it awaits action by the full House.

[Rep. Will Morgan](#) (DFL-Burnsville), the bill's sponsor, said it would cast light on the reporting process that is now easy to circumvent by political committees. Faster reporting creates greater transparency in elections on how candidates spend and receive money, he said.

The bill would require the treasurer of a political committee, political fund, principal campaign committee or party unit to register with the board within 14 days of making or receiving more than \$100. In addition, the board would need to be notified within 24 hours of a political committee receiving a loan or contribution to a candidate from any one source totaling \$800 or more, or to a candidate in any judicial district or legislative election for more than \$400, if the loan or contribution is made between the last day included in the final financial report before an election and Election Day.

Reporting would have to be done in person or by electronic means, and the board would be required to post the report on its Web site within 24 hours. Currently, the reporting limit is \$2,000 for contributions to candidates in statewide elections, and it can be reported by telegram or certified mail.

Morgan said new political committees currently have 14 days to register.

"More disclosure is a good thing," testified Mike Franklin, director of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce's Energy & Elections Policy and Political Action Committee.

Other proposed changes include increased contribution limits for secretary of state and state auditor candidates, and candidates using the public subsidy program would have to submit an affidavit showing contributions before a primary.

A companion bill, [SF123](#), sponsored by [Sen. Ann Rest](#) (DFL-New Hope), passed the Senate 61-0 Feb. 7.

EMPLOYMENT

Overtime with free food

An offer of a free meal to employees working overtime at the five [Minnesota Veterans Homes](#) turned into a discussion about the policy of mandatory overtime, and questions about staffing.

Nurses at the homes are frequently asked to work overtime, and [HF291](#), sponsored

by [Rep. A. Willie Dominguez](#) (DFL-Mpls), would allow for a free meal at the home's cafeteria for those working a second shift consecutive with a regularly scheduled shift. The companion, SF683, is sponsored by Sen. Sharon Erickson Ropes (DFL-Winona). It has been referred to the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Committee.

Mary Jo George, government affairs staff specialist for the Minnesota Nursing Association, told the House Veterans Affairs Division Feb. 2 that when people are asked to work overtime, it is usually unexpected and they have not prepared food. "We think this is a simple gesture."

Charles Cox, Minnesota Veterans Homes Board interim executive director, calculated the annual cost of the benefit to be approximately \$5,000. It would also be available to other staff members working overtime "as a way of saying thank you."

[Rep. Dan Severson](#) (R-Sauk Rapids) said the free-meal-for-overtime policy could open up a floodgate of similar requests from state employees. But he has an issue with the mandatory overtime policy as well.

"If we are asking nurses who are crucial to the welfare of our veterans over at the home board to work overtime, how effective can their service be after 16 hours?" he said.

George said there is a perception among the nurses at the homes that there is an overuse of overtime.

"We have a state law that allows private sector nurses to say no to overtime if they feel unsafe," and the nurses would like to see that policy extended to those working at the veterans homes, she said. "We think it is a different issue for a different bill. But we would like to see some limits on it."

The bill was approved by the division with the understanding that the language would be specific to the veterans homes. It now moves to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.

ENVIRONMENT

Cellulosic biofuels

Cellulosic fuels made from biomass will likely replace corn-based ethanol as the preferred alternative to petroleum-based fuels, an expert told a House division.

Robert Elde, dean of the University of Minnesota's College of Biological Sciences, was one of several researchers to testify Feb. 1 at an informational hearing on cellulosic biofuels for the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division. No action was taken.

Elde said the biofuel industry has to look beyond corn and soybeans as renewable fuel sources, citing a 2006 report that found that devoting the entire U.S. corn and soybean crops to biofuel would satisfy only 12 percent of the country's gasoline demand and 6 percent of its diesel demand.

"We're staring down what is emerging as a food vs. fuel conflict," he said.

Instead of using food crops, Elde said future biofuels would utilize the energy latent in biomass — organic material that can come from a wide variety of plants and/or animal waste.

Citing intense competition both from other states and internationally, Elde said that Minnesota would have to fund cellulosic biofuel research initiatives if it wants to reap the full economic benefits of the burgeoning industry.

John Sheehan, senior strategic analyst for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, said it might take 20 to 50 years for cellulosic fuels to reach their full potential.

"There are a lot of near-term opportunities, but we've got to keep our eye on the prize in terms of how long it's really going to take to build this industry," Sheehan said.

Noise standards for racetracks

A bill that would protect motor vehicle racetracks from civil lawsuits relating to noise standards was approved by a House committee.

[HF415](#), sponsored by [Rep. Jeanne Poppe](#) (DFL-Austin), was crafted in response to a situation involving the Deer Creek Speedway in Spring Valley. A group of private citizens filed a civil lawsuit against the speedway, alleging that it violated a statute on noise standards. The bill would exempt the speedway from both the statute and any current or future lawsuits based on the statute.

The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the bill Feb. 6. It now goes to the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee.

Current state law exempts all racetracks built before 1983 from the noise standards statute. The bill would modify the exemption to include all tracks built before 1996, thereby exempting Deer Creek Speedway and two other tracks.

The second part of the bill would apply to all of the state's racetracks, and would protect them from lawsuits based on the noise standards statute.

Randy Queensland, owner of the Deer Creek Speedway, said that he and other racetrack owners were "fearful to function and operate with the constant threat" of a

civil lawsuit forcing their tracks to close. He added that he has recently reduced the amount of noise generated by the racecars and erected a large wall between the track and its nearest residence.

Debbie Goettelman, one of the 15 neighbors who brought the lawsuit against the speedway, testified that its presence and the noise it produces greatly reduced the quality of life for residents living nearby. She also said the track has a negative impact on the surrounding environment.

[Rep. Carlos Mariani](#) (DFL-St. Paul) tried unsuccessfully to amend the bill by taking out the provision that exempts racetracks from civil lawsuits.

"I'd hate to predetermine or pre-decide for every community whether or not they should have their day in court," Mariani said.

A companion bill, [SF311](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dan Sparks](#) (DFL-Austin), awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

GAME & FISH

Bow hunting fees

Fees that bow hunters from out of state pay to hunt deer in Minnesota can be significantly higher than those paid by state residents. A new bill would create a flat fee for everyone.

[HF128](#), sponsored by [Rep. Gene Pelowski Jr.](#) (DFL-Winona), would modify a provision in state law relating to nonresident hunting fees. The House Game, Fish and Forestry Division laid the bill over Feb. 5 for possible inclusion into its omnibus bill.

Currently, non-Minnesotans who wish to hunt deer inside the state must pay a fee of either \$135 or an amount equal to the license fees and surcharges that they would pay in their own state — whichever is greater.

Pelowski said that Minnesota enacted the rule in 2004 in response to Iowa raising its deer hunting fees for nonresident archers. He added that the issue was brought to him by a group of his constituents, one of whom said the current law forced one non-Minnesotan to shell out \$396 for a license.

Ed Boggess, deputy director of the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Fish and Wildlife, said the nonresident fee for bow hunters is the only "reciprocal" hunting license fee in state law. He also said the DNR supports the bill.

A companion bill, [SF262](#), sponsored by [Sen. Sharon Erickson Ropes](#) (DFL-Winona), awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

GOVERNMENT

More CAAPB members

House and Senate members representing the district in which the State Capitol is located would be added as members to the [Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board](#), under a bill approved by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee Feb. 1.

Sponsored by [Rep. Carlos Mariani](#) (DFL-St. Paul), [HF203](#) would increase to 12 the board membership that already includes the lieutenant governor, four gubernatorial appointees, three St. Paul mayoral appointees and two Legislative appointees.

Mariani said that adding the district members to the board would help coordinate planning efforts with neighborhood groups. It creates a, "real time, on-time ability to shape the decisions of the CAAPB."

The board is responsible for preservation issues within a 60-block area including the Capitol.

"We always welcome additional eyes and support," said Paul Mandell, principal planner on the board.

[Rep. Sarah Anderson](#) (R-Plymouth) questioned the need for the change when three St. Paul mayoral appointees are already board members. Mariani said adding the district legislators allows for legislative influence before decisions are made, rather than after the fact.

The bill now goes to the House floor.

A companion bill, [SF118](#), sponsored by [Sen. Sandy Pappas](#) (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action in the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

Credit card usage

When paying for services from the state, people may wonder why they can't often use a credit card.

A task force commissioned to find a solution didn't come up with a clear answer.

Keith Carlson, executive director of the Minnesota Inter-County Association, laid out the findings of the Credit Card Task Force to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee Feb. 7. The committee took no action.

Carlson said that nearly 45 percent of all transactions in the United States are made by methods other than cash.

Minnesota government has been slow to respond to this changing trend. "Roughly 1 percent of the state's \$26 billion of annual revenue comes from credit cards," said Carlson.

One of the main roadblocks is the credit card industry.

For "face-to-face transactions," the industry bans vendors from tacking on additional charges. This means that the processing cost for each transaction must be absorbed by the state and local governments.

Also, if a fee or charge is dictated by statute, the government can't adjust pricing to recover the cost of accepting credit or debit cards, said Carlson.

Although the task force did not reach a consensus, it did have several recommendations: forming partnerships between local and state governments to maximize negotiating power with credit card companies, assessing additional fees to offset the costs of "face-to-face" transactions, or amending state statute that would require state agencies to absorb the costs of transaction fees.

Nonprofit firefighter groups added

Nonprofit firefighter corporations would be added to the list of governmental units able to buy goods at set prices, under a bill approved by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee Feb. 7.

Sponsored by [Rep. Scott Kranz](#) (DFL-Blaine), [HF465](#) adds "independent nonprofit firefighter corporations" to the list of already designated groups that obtain equipment through a state bidding process that allows for the best possible price for purchasing goods. Designated state groups include: every city, county, town, school district, political subdivisions, University of Minnesota and nonprofit hospitals.

There are between 80 and 100 nonprofit fire corporations in the state with the majority in the Arrowhead Region, said Nyle Zikmund, chief of the Spring Lake Park-Blaine-Mounds View Fire Department. "We're simply seeking that same latitude enjoyment of buying off those state contracts," he said.

There was no opposition to the bill, and it now goes to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

A companion bill, [SF321](#), sponsored by [Sen. Don Betzold](#) (DFL-Fridley), awaits action by the full Senate.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

A health care option for farmers

It could become easier for self-employed farmers to receive [MinnesotaCare](#).

[HF276](#), sponsored by [Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba](#) (DFL-Long Prairie), would allow farmers to include depreciation rates of

equipment, buildings and other assets when determining MinnesotaCare eligibility. Approved Feb. 6 by the House Health and Human Services Committee, the bill next goes to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.

"For six years, people have gone without insurance because they couldn't add back the depreciation loss," Otremba said.

Currently, the federal government allows farmers to deduct depreciation from their gross income, allowing some eligibility to federal government assistance. MinnesotaCare removed that option, which limited farmers' access to state health care.

A companion bill, [SF75](#), sponsored by [Sen. Paul Koering](#) (R-Fort Ripley), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

A boost for family planning

A multifaceted bill aimed at increasing funding, reimbursement rates and negotiating power for family planning clinics and providers was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 6 and routed to the House Finance Committee.

[Rep. Thomas Huntley](#) (DFL-Duluth), the sponsor of [HF298](#), said the measure provides a much-needed boost for clinics serving "young women starting out in the workforce, often without health insurance. This is often the entire medical care that they get."

According to Peg LaBore, director of Family Tree Clinic in St. Paul, family planning services is to help prevent unintended pregnancies and/or help families pace their reproductive future. Clinics that provide family planning also play key roles in women's health by offering tests for sexually transmitted diseases, annual exams and counseling should an unplanned pregnancy occur.

State funding for family planning has decreased by approximately \$2.5 million since 2003, and clinics are bracing for a 48 percent cut scheduled for implementation on July 1, 2007.

The bill would eliminate proposed cuts and provide an additional \$8 million in funding per biennium. It would also increase reimbursement rates for clinics that accept family planning waivers, known as 1115 waivers, and raises reimbursements for community clinics by 25 percent. It would also give clinics power to negotiate drug costs, allow registered nurses to dispense contraceptives and seek to include STD testing and treatment under family planning waivers.

Heated discussion surrounded an unsuccessful amendment first offered by [Rep. Steve Gottwalt](#) (R-St. Cloud), which sought to prohibit the use of state funds for abortions. According to Huntley, the state attorney general declared a similar amendment unconstitutional last year.

"This is the very situation where this amendment belongs," argued [Rep. Tom](#)

[Emmer](#) (R-Delano), who introduced the amendment after it was withdrawn by Gottwalt.

A companion bill, [SF184](#), sponsored by [Sen. John Marty](#) (DFL-Roseville), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

MinnesotaCare access

A bill that would grant small-business employers access to [MinnesotaCare](#) was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 6 and referred to the House Finance Committee.

[HF463](#) would allow employers with two to 50 employees to buy into the state-sponsored health care program, MinnesotaCare, as long as they contribute half of the premium costs and don't already supply 75 percent of their staff with insurance. Employees covered by the policy would not be subject to eligibility limits, but would be bound to restrictions in the program's benefits, including a \$10,000 hospitalization cap.

"Since the passage of MinnesotaCare in 1992, the Legislature has wrestled with the question of coverage for small employers, and we have yet to find a satisfactory solution," said [Rep. Erin Murphy](#) (DFL-St. Paul), the bill's sponsor. "It's an issue I heard a lot about this summer."

Some committee members expressed concern that the hospitalization cap could force employees into bankruptcy following extended hospital stays. Several legislators were also worried about adding additional people to a program they say is already a financial burden for the state.

"The more we as a committee, and as a body, load up MinnesotaCare, the more we hasten the demise of the program that's been a stopgap for so many," said [Rep. Jim Abeler](#) (R-Anoka).

A companion bill, [SF66](#), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee. Its sponsor is [Sen. Tony Lourey](#) (DFL-Kerrick).



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Peg LaBore, from left, Judy Kloop and Denise Anderson from Family Tree Clinic in St. Paul testify before the House Health and Human Services Committee Feb. 6 in support of a bill designed to prevent unintended pregnancies by increasing access to family planning.

HIGHER EDUCATION

University budget request

In its [biennial budget request](#), University of Minnesota officials factored in a 4.5 percent tuition increase in each of the next two years. But if Gov. Tim Pawlenty's budget recommendation comes to fruition, that might be wishful thinking.

The university is seeking a \$182.3 million increase to its base budget in the next biennium. Pawlenty is recommending \$90.4

million, not including a \$25 million one-time performance bonus.

"You can do much better than his recommendation," University President Robert Bruininks told the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division Feb. 6. No action was taken.

Almost \$99 million of the request is to sustain quality and competitiveness. Of that, \$67 million is for faculty and staff compensation, including a 3.25 percent annual salary increase; \$24.9 million is to advance education; and \$6.9 million is for technological innovations to upgrade learning and research.

Looking ahead, the university seeks \$28.5 million to help address competitive market pressures.

Every year, 60-75 of the university's most talented staff members have a chance to join other schools or enter into private business, Bruininks said. "Our faculty compensation is now ranked about 27th nationally when it comes to the top 30 research universities."

Nearly \$28 million would go toward preparing the next generation of health care professionals; \$15.6 million toward areas of highest growth potential, such as nanotechnology; and \$11.5 million would be used to bring faculty together to implement innovative solutions to urgent environmental problems, such as the development of renewable energy.

"We're in a difficult spot when (the governor) shorts you \$90 million and we need to find it, if we think your request is reasonable," said [Rep. Melissa Hortman](#) (DFL-Brooklyn Park).

If the final number is closer to the governor, Bruininks said it would be hard to recommend to the Board of Regents that tuition, which has increased 42.7 percent in the past four fiscal years, go up just the projected 4.5 percent annually.

"Our students and families have been through too much, so we'd make other sacrifices," he said.

MnSCU budget request

The [Minnesota State Colleges and Universities](#) system produces nearly two-thirds of all Minnesota undergraduates, 80 percent of whom stay in the state.

Now, the system would like more state money.

The system is seeking an additional \$177 million for the upcoming biennium. Its current base appropriation is \$1.2 billion.

"This request is critical for meeting our strategic goals and enabling the system to make strong contributions toward meeting Minnesota's challenges," David Paskach, chair of the MnSCU Board of Trustees, told

the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division Feb. 7. No action was taken.

Included in the budget request is a 4 percent annual tuition increase – the system's lowest since 1999. That amounts to \$165 per year.

Chancellor James McCormick said it is the board's intention to cap tuition increases at 4 percent, even if the budget request is not fully funded.

"Students are paying 88 percent more than they did in 2000," McCormick said. "These increases were triggered largely by cuts in state funding during that period. Today, our system receives 23 percent less in state funding for full-time equivalent students than in 2000 in inflation-adjusted dollars."

The request addresses four strategic components, as set forth by the board: access, opportunity and success; academic innovations; technology infrastructure; and inflationary costs.

In terms of access, the system seeks \$24 million to help better prepare students, encourage their enrollment and provide services to continually help them on their route to graduation, such as academic tutors and financial aid assistance.

The request also includes \$70 million for technology improvements, \$57 million for inflation and \$10 million to help staff create innovations that advance excellence and efficiency; and \$3 million for health care education, which, in part, would permit an additional 950 nurses to graduate during the biennium, a 25 percent increase, to help meet the state's needs.

HOUSING

Standardize tenant screening

Opinions are split over the value of [HF166](#), which would standardize a screening form for landlords that charge potential tenants for background and other checks.

"Many of your constituents are paying fees that can approach a month's rent," [Rep. John Lesch](#) (DFL-St. Paul), the bill's sponsor, told members of the House Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division Feb. 7. "All my bill does is apply for a uniform application that landlords can use that's current and accurate."

Under the bill, the screening fee would be no more than \$50, and the tenant report would be valid for 60 days.

However, the bill failed to garner division approval. It has no Senate companion.

Jack Horner, who represents the Minnesota Multi Housing Association, described a

similar program attempted by one of his colleagues that, due to lack of interest and other barriers, ultimately failed.

"After a great deal of time and effort, he finally abandoned the project," he said. "Landlords have different standards. The only ones who would use it would be the ones with spotty records."

Others opposed to the legislation expressed concern that a form valid for 60 days may quickly become obsolete due to infractions, such as a criminal act or more credit spending, and that the form could be forged.

"There's an unbelievable problem with check forgery and forgery in general," said Coon Rapids Police Officer Terry Thomson. "And a person's criminal history can change in 24 hours."

Lesch argued that potentially bad tenants could likely be identified from information already on the form.

"In 90 percent of the cases, when you have a problem tenant, you'll see it on his history," he said.

INSURANCE

Insurance for steam plant employees

Steam plant workers once employed by the University of Minnesota would be added to the State Employee Group Insurance Plan, under a bill approved by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee Feb. 7.

Sponsored by [Rep. Tom Tillberry](#) (DFL-Fridley), [HF222](#) would allow approximately 25 Foster Wheeler Twin Cities Inc. employees to purchase individual or dependent benefits through the state plan upon retirement.

The employees were transferred in 1992 from the University of Minnesota to the private company. While certain retiree benefits were established through the state at the time, retiree health care benefits were not "thought of," said Thomas Koehler, business manager for Local Union 160, which represents the workers. Now as employees are eligible to retire, they are realizing they don't have these benefits.

The state employee plan allows a certain number of non-governmental employees to be included, but adding the 25 new members "could default us out of a governmental program," said Nathan Moracco, plan manager with the [Department of Employee Relations](#). Although currently some quasi-governmental groups such as the Minnesota Historical Society and the Minnesota State Fair board are included, these employees are from a private company, he said.

[Rep. Tom Emmer](#) (R-Delano) asked why the employees are not seeking the retiree health benefits from the university instead.

Koehler said the university plan isn't an option because they don't have a collective bargaining agreement with the institution.

[Rep. Phyllis Kahn](#) (DFL-Mpls) said if the state approves the benefit for this private group, it opens the door for others to do the same. She referenced the city of Duluth, currently facing problems funding health care benefits for retired city employees.

The bill now goes to the House Finance Committee.

A companion bill, [SF104](#), sponsored by [Sen. Don Betzold](#) (DFL-Fridley), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

LAW

Defamation and privacy laws

Current law prohibits Minnesota residents from filing charges against non-residents or foreign corporations for acts of defamation or invasion of privacy.

Speaking before the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee Feb. 1, [Rep. Paul Thissen](#) (DFL-Mpls) said the current statute is out of date and out of touch with today's technology.

Thissen, the sponsor of [HF117](#), said that the last time a case addressing this issue was brought before the [Court of Appeals](#), the court invited the Legislature to reevaluate current statute, in light of the growing power of the Internet.

There have been four published cases brought before the court, and additional cases may never have gotten to court because of the specific language in the law, said Thissen.

The committee laid the bill over for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus bill.

A companion bill, [SF181](#), sponsored by [Sen.](#)

[Dan Larson](#) (DFL-Bloomington), has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Ticket scalping goes legit?

A valid contract is an agreement between a willing seller and a willing buyer. If someone wants to sell a ticket to an event to a willing buyer and both agree on a price and the conditions, why is this illegal?

This is one of the points [Rep. Chris DeLaForest](#) (R-Andover) made to the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee Feb. 1 as he presented [HF189](#), which calls for the repeal of a law making ticket scalping illegal.

The current law makes reselling tickets illegal, but without explanation as to why or how reselling tickets is an affront to public policy, DeLaForest said.

DeLaForest further argued that there are brokers making millions of dollars by selling tickets underground and on the Internet. By making ticket scalping legal, this revenue could be brought into the economy. "We're missing tax revenue right now by not legalizing this activity," he said.

[Rep. Phyllis Kahn](#) (DFL-Mpls), co-sponsor of the bill, said one of her concerns is the waste of public resources. She spoke about police preparations for the 1987 World Series and the 2001 NCAA Final Four, and how in both instances, police prepared intensively to locate and arrest ticket scalpers when attention could have been focused on more serious crimes.

The point was also made that the current law is unnecessary government interference. "The buyer values a ticket more than the money given up to the seller, and the seller values the money more than the ticket," Kahn said. "What is the benefit of society interfering with this exchange?"

[Rep. Jeremy Kalin](#) (DFL-Lindstrom) proposed an amendment to keep current language pertaining to consumer protection. The amendment was not voted on, but DeLaForest suggested the issue be addressed at the bill's next stop, the House Commerce and Labor Committee, where it was referred without recommendation.

A companion bill, [SF372](#), sponsored by [Sen. Chris Gerlach](#) (R-Apple Valley), was scheduled to be heard Feb. 8 by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

administrator on staff, making planning for the future somewhat difficult.

Approved Feb. 7 by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, [HF281](#) proposes the creation of regional development commissions to assist local communities in planning and development. Its next stop is the House Finance Committee.

[Rep. Frank Moe](#) (DFL-Bemidji), the bill's sponsor, said the legislation would provide much needed support for mayors, city councils and school boards throughout the state and help them find ways to improve their communities and develop their resources.

Looking at the beneficial role these commissions can play, [Rep. Paul Marquart](#) (DFL-Dilworth) said that the very survival for many of the smaller cities in Minnesota depends on a plan for the future. "But, they need assistance to do that," he said.

This is also a way to help smaller communities become more effective and save needed tax dollars, Moe said.

The bill calls for \$900,000 in appropriations, with annual grants of \$75,000 to each regional development commission. Each granted dollar would require a non-state match.

A companion bill, [SF166](#), sponsored by [Sen. Gary Kubly](#) (DFL-Granite Falls) has been sent to the Senate Finance Committee.

METRO AFFAIRS

Crime challenge in the Twin Cities

"The challenge is clear: violent crime continues to plague our city," said Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak as he outlined public safety issues during a combined hearing of the House Public Safety Finance Division and the Senate Public Safety Budget Committee Feb. 6. No action was taken.

The causes of crime are complex, Rybak said. They include concentrated poverty; a breakdown of family structure; felons in prison since the 1990s on the street again; illegal guns; a culture of violence; and increasingly hopeless youth. He said the problems have been compounded by significant state and federal budget cuts.

Minneapolis Police Chief Tim Dolan said, "The most immediate and powerful tool in our crime fighting strategy is to increase the visibility of police officers on the street."

He said the city has made investments to help address the rising crime issue. These include: more prosecutors in precincts, leading to an increase in prosecutions; and the creation of a juvenile crime unit, which has resulted in a marked decrease in gang activity.



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Mitchell Davis Jr., director of the Office of Minority and Multicultural Health at the Department of Health, along with Assistant Health Commissioner Margaret Kelly, testifies Feb. 6 before the House Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Helping local communities plan

Eighty percent of the cities in Minnesota have a population of fewer than 2,500 people. Many of them don't have a full-time

Proud of the fact that St. Paul's crime rate dropped 11 percent last year, Mayor Chris Coleman said that violence and drugs are still serious problems. Although there is a need for more officers, he said it will also take other types of policing and community resources. "Prevention is more than parks and libraries, and enforcement is more than just police."

St. Paul Police Chief John Harrington said there was a 10 percent increase in gun possessions last year; gangs continued to be a major problem, and large amounts of drugs poured into the city. Plus, methamphetamine usage is more prevalent than ever, he said.

Legislators commended the officials for their work and commitment to public safety.

[Sen. Mee Moua](#) (DFL-St. Paul) noted that "everything keeps coming back to the kids," and that if the public safety committees work with the education committees, maybe a solution can be found for some of the issues the children are facing.

MILITARY

Military affairs overview

The [Department of Military Affairs](#) reviewed its legislative initiatives and budget recommendations with the House State Government Finance Division Feb. 6.

The \$41 million recommended by Gov. Tim Pawlenty for the department, would be used for maintenance of training facilities and armories; air base operations; utility maintenance and repair of buildings; a one-time appropriation for special assessments of armories; a reintegration program for returning soldiers; and an enlistment incentives program, said Terrence Palmer, department comptroller.

The government assumed returning Vietnam soldiers wanted to be left alone and, in doing so, failed to make sure soldiers were OK to return to their families and society, said Palmer. The \$1.5 million for the reintegration program would help Minnesota soldiers returning from current deployments with personal and marriage counseling, among other needs, he said.

Commissioning bonuses, the creation of \$1,000 scholarships for 25 outstanding high school seniors who are joining the National Guard, securing recreational funds for Camp Ripley and redistributing monies from the "Support Our Troops" license plates are also on the legislative agenda, said Col. Eric Ahlness, government relations officer of the Minnesota National Guard.

One problem found with the "Support Our

Troops" licensing legislation is that some returning injured soldiers that aren't active duty, but not fully disabled either, are unable to receive the support money intended from the plates' proceeds. A change in current statute would help these soldiers and families, Ahlness said.

The committee took no action.

Firearms safety exemption

Active military personnel and veterans seeking to purchase hunting licenses would be exempt from certain firearm safety requirements, under a bill approved by a House Division Feb. 5.

[HF260](#), sponsored by [Rep. Jeremy Kalin](#) (DFL-Lindstrom), was approved by the House Game, Fish and Forestry Division, and now goes to the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee. It has no Senate companion.

The bill would exempt anyone who has completed basic training in any branch of the U.S. armed forces from the shooting range exercise portion of the state's firearms safety certificate instruction requirements.

"We want to send a clear message to our veterans," Kalin said. "We don't want to tell them that they can be trusted with an M-16 and to lay their lives on the line in combat, but they can't be trusted with a deer rifle in the woods."

He added that he thinks the bill represents a "solid middle ground" between veterans' interests and safety concerns, noting that they would still have to complete the classroom portion of the firearms safety training, which can also be done online.

Chris Woodcock, who served in Iraq as a U.S. Army specialist, testified that he's had trouble obtaining a hunting license because of confusing requirements and instructions.

"I just think it'd be a good choice if we could find something a little bit better to do for our veterans," Woodcock said.

Not everyone fully supports the bill.

Terry Bernier, a military reservist and volunteer firearms safety instructor for the [Department of Natural Resources](#), said shooting range exercises are one of the most important elements of civilian firearms safety training.

"I thought, at one point, that my military training was perfectly adequate for hunting and what I had to do — until I became an instructor," Bernier said, adding that firearms safety training has been hugely successful in decreasing the frequency and severity of hunting accidents.

TAXES

Technical changes

Another tax bill could be considered by the full House.

Sponsored by [Rep. Ann Lenczewski](#) (DFL-Bloomington), [HF496](#) is a [Department of Revenue](#) bill that seeks to improve the tax system by cleaning up and clarifying the language of current statutes and recommends policy positions on either new items or things discovered during audits or when statutes were reviewed.

"We want to take out anything representatives find controversial to make it as easy as possible," she told the House Taxes Committee Feb. 7, which approved the bill and sent it to the House floor.

For example, committee members had concerns with a provision whereby tax preparers' names would be published on the department Web site if they "willfully" prepared two or more tax returns fraudulently, but are not criminally convicted.

John Hagen, manager of the department's Information and Education Section, said in the last three years, 12 preparers were assessed the department's \$500 penalty for fraud.

"This is just a civil penalty," Hagen said. "Criminally you'd have to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that they were a part of the fraudulent scheme. But with 'willful' the burden of proof is a lot less."

[Rep. Loren Solberg](#) (DFL-Grand Rapids) said he was concerned about the separation of powers between the courts, and administrative penalties.

"If the court determines that I'm guilty of something, I have my day in court," he said. "If you have administrative penalties, then you don't have a day in court."

Hagen said the department assesses the penalty, but the preparer has administrative appeal rights. If the preparer doesn't want to go through the administrative appeal he or she can appeal to tax court.

Members ultimately agreed to leave the provision in; however, any provisions with money implications were removed.

A companion bill, [SF610](#), sponsored by [Sen. Thomas Bakk](#) (DFL-Cook), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

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Leading to this moment

Masin brings varied experiences to State Capitol

By **MIKE COOK**

Rep. Sandy Masin (DFL-Eagan) has been around government for more than 20 years. Now it is in a different role.



Rep. Sandy Masin
southern suburbs.

Masin spent nine years with the Minnesota Historical Society in the 1980s, where she led Capitol tours; was a House staffer in 1990-91; was the volunteer coordinator at the Shakopee women's prison from 1991-95; and served on the Eagan City Council from 1993-2000.

The former city council member, community television political moderator, Capitol tour guide and House staff member edged Tim Wilkin, a four-term incumbent, by 57 votes to represent parts of two large

Beginning in 1988, Masin spent nine years talking to politicians on "Legislative Update," produced by Burnsville/Eagan Community Television. There she held regular discussions on issues of the day with legislators serving in St. Paul and Washington D.C.

Transportation might be the largest issue in her district, which includes both Interstate 35E and heavily traveled Cedar Avenue. Many of her constituents also regularly drive nearby Interstate 35W. One of her committee assignments is the House Transportation Finance Division.

"We just need to make headway on getting our transportation systems current," said Masin. She served as chair of the Minnesota Valley Transit Authority, and helped organize the Suburban Transit Association, a partnership of several suburban transit systems. "When you're in Eagan around rush hour and you look at (Cedar Avenue) and you

DISTRICT 38A
2002 population: 36,636 Largest city: Eagan County: Dakota Top concerns: Transportation and education funding

look at 35E or into Burnsville on 35W, they're just major parking lots. Public transit, to me, is really important because you can't do it all by cars."

Education funding is something she heard a lot about while door-knocking in a district that is home to three school districts.

She believes that approving some sort of property tax relief will positively impact education, as would providing health care to all youngsters.

"Some of these kids are coming to school with problems that make it difficult for them to learn," she said. "We want the kids to get the most out of their learning experience."

It's the district's office

Morrow continues his dedication to community service

By **SONJA HEGMAN**

Although he is roughly 90 miles from his residence, Rep. Terry Morrow (DFL-St. Peter) never feels far from home in his office. He is collecting items from his district to hang on his office walls.



Rep. Terry Morrow

Morrow decided to run for the House seat after learning that incumbent Rep. Ruth Johnson, who served three non-consecutive terms in office, would not run again. Johnson was a friend and supporter during his campaign, he said.

"It was the passing of the baton," he said. A resident of St. Peter for 12 years with his wife, Martha, Morrow dedicated himself to community service after a 1998 tornado

"This is the district's office," Morrow said. "I just happen to work here."

Morrow decided to run for the House seat after learning that

damaged the community. He served on the St. Peter Board of Education for several years, including three as board chairman. He also chaired the Minnesota Valley Education District, which provides special education services for seven school districts.

"Minnesota is a place to come together and help others," he said, as well as a good place to raise a family. Morrow has two daughters, Sally, 10, and Maggie, 13. "Each of us has a set of skills and abilities. I still can't believe I have this honor (of serving my district)."

A licensed attorney in California and Minnesota, Morrow teaches communication studies at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter during the fall semester. While in California, he practiced civil litigation, representing corporations and police departments.

The big issues affecting Morrow's district are property taxes, education and health care.

DISTRICT 23A
2002 population: 36,889 Largest city: North Mankato Counties: Nicollet and Sibley Top concerns: Property taxes, agriculture, education and health care

But his district is highly agricultural, he said. Property tax increases have hit farms, and limited farm families' income in his district.

With an "enthusiastic" outdoor community in his district, Morrow said there are concerns about a pesticide problem in lakes and rivers. He wants to address those issues during his time in office.

In addition to being vice chairman of the House K-12 Finance Division, Morrow serves on the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee; House Game, Fish and Forestry Division; House Telecommunications Regulation and Infrastructure Division; and the House Transportation Finance Division.

A community leader

Slocum reluctantly becomes state politician

By PATTY OSTBERG

A middle school teacher for nearly 20 years, [Rep. Linda Slocum](#) (DFL-Richfield) was ready for a sabbatical when the opportunity to run for her district seat presented itself.



Rep. Linda Slocum said.

After some encouragement by others, she reluctantly charted her course. She drove the district boundaries several times before she finally decided to run, she said.

Always active behind the scenes, whether managing campaigns, door-knocking or handing out literature, she never thought she'd actually run for state office. She was raised in a DFL family who believes you are to be involved in your community.

She earned years of experience working

on the Richfield Community Service Commission, served as vice-chairwoman of its Human Services Commission and served on the Minnesota Commission on Crime Prevention and Control.

During the campaign, she was a dedicated door-knocker hitting the streets as early as last April. She listened as constituents shared their concerns, one reason she believes they elected her. As a seventh- and eighth-grade geography and American history teacher she knows how to plan ahead and deal with pressure, and that, she thinks, added to her appeal as a candidate.

"They saw me at their door, I'm a nice teacher, and I talked about health care and taxes and fees ... and my goal is to do something about them," she said.

Funding special education, the school funding formula, and accountability through school testing are her top issues.

"Fair state funding for early childhood

DISTRICT 63B

2002 population: 36,821
Largest city: Bloomington
County: Hennepin
Top concern: Education

education, school readiness programs and K-12 public education is the cost-effective and right thing to do," she said.

Other major concerns facing her district include those related to the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, including the new runway, and representation on the Metropolitan Airports Commission. With large Latino and Somali populations settling in her area, immigrant assimilation in schools and the local community is another.

Her passion and background will serve her well on the House E-12 Education Committee and the House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division. Her other committee assignments include the House Energy Finance and Policy and the House Transportation Finance divisions.

Building for all

Winkler wants to give everyone the chance to succeed

By SONJA HEGMAN

[Rep. Ryan Winkler](#) (DFL-Golden Valley) might have a law degree, but he is probably also skilled enough to renovate just about any house on his own.



Rep. Ryan Winkler

The freshman representative has never hired a general contractor for renovations because he loves doing the work himself. That, and he learned carpentry from his father, who is a

contractor by trade.

Winkler's favorite house architecture is 1950s ranch-style. He and his wife, Jenny, have worked together on house projects, but won't get into the cycle of buying, renovating and selling. They are slowing down a bit with a newborn in the family. Isaac joined 2-year-

old Edward five days before Election Day.

With a bachelor's degree in history from Harvard, Winkler is a history buff and likes a movie "if it's good, not boring," also preferring movies with more of a historical spin. He also travels to Sweden at least once a year to visit his wife's family.

Coming from a long line of Norwegian farmers who homesteaded in Bemidji in 1908, Winkler said he "grew up with a strong sense of community" and felt that would be a benefit as a representative. He said his background in public policy issues gave him another reason to seek the seat vacated by two-term Rep. Ron Latz, who successfully ran for the Senate. Winkler managed Latz's 2004 House campaign.

A lawyer for the last six years, Winkler worked with the Metropolitan Council on transportation issues and has also represented watershed districts, inner-city projects

DISTRICT 44B

2002 population: 36,939
Largest city: St. Louis Park
County: Hennepin
Top concerns: Education, transportation and health care

in Minneapolis and works as a software company's lawyer. He plans to sponsor bills related to education and technology.

Education, transportation and health care are the areas Winkler wants to work on for his district. He said they all are equally important. With a lot of redevelopment in his district, Winkler sees the light rail system as an integral part of the "quality of life in Minnesota." The state's economic growth is also vital, he said, and education, transportation and health care are all a part of that.

"We need to make sure all Minnesotans have the opportunity to succeed," he said.

Monday, February 5

HF569-Mullery (DFL)

Taxes

Hennepin and Ramsey counties authorized to impose the existing mortgage registry taxes permanently.

HF570-Murphy, E. (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Long-term hospital payment rates adjusted.

HF571-Hilstrom (DFL)

Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Best value defined relating to construction contracts, and acquisition and competitive bidding provisions modified.

HF572-Hosch (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Inmate mental health provisions modified.

HF573-Otremba (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Foster parent mental health training requirement imposed.

HF574-Loeffler (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Children's mental health grants and work group established; mental health provisions modified; trauma-focused, evidence-based practices grants provided; and county reimbursement provided.

HF575-Walker (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Mental health professional education loan forgiveness program established and culturally competent mental health service grants provided.

HF576-Thissen (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Mental health examiners authorized for residents in bordering states.

HF577-Hansen (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Ditch buffer and drainage and inspection requirements modified.

HF578-Abeler (R)

Health & Human Services

MinnesotaCare Care for More Families program established, medical benefit accounts and high-deductible health plan coverage provided, and health insurance exchanges established.

HF579-Abeler (R)

Health & Human Services

MinnesotaCare covered health services modified and limited benefits for certain single adults and households without children repealed.

HF580-Dominguez (DFL)

E-12 Education

After-school enrichment program reinstated; grants provided to improve academic achievement, reduce crime, improve community involvement and increase character development.

HF581-Lenczewski (DFL)

Finance

I-494 corridor transitway feasibility study provided.

HF582-Solberg (DFL)

Finance

Workforce transition assistance pilot program funding provided.

HF583-Eken (DFL)

Finance

Indian Affairs Council funding provided to acquire burial site in Becker County.

HF584-Mullery (DFL)

Public Safety & Civil Justice

Metal theft penalties increased.

HF585-Bly (DFL)

E-12 Education

Early childhood developmental screening expanded and kindergarten entrance assessment established.

HF586-Bly (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Rice County nursing facilities designated as metro for determining reimbursement rates.

HF587-Bly (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Contested case hearing notice requirements modified relating to waters of the state.

HF588-Erickson (R)

E-12 Education

Special education teaching licensure program established for qualified paraprofessionals.

HF589-Peterson, A. (DFL)

Finance

Bioenergy producer payment program established for cellulosic biofuel production, and bioenergy production incentive program and working lands conservation program created.

HF590-Loeffler (DFL)

Taxes

Property tax statement required to contain additional information.

HF591-Thissen (DFL)

Health & Human Services

State managed care contracts with-hold and performance targets increased.

HF592-Loeffler (DFL)

Finance

Diseased shade trees removal and replacement funding provided.

HF593-Juhnke (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Public waters wetlands access restrictions modified.

HF594-Otremba (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Medical assistance non-emergency medical transportation competitive bidding modified, level of need criteria specified and reimbursement rate increased.

HF595-Laine (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Newborn home visiting program and family home visiting program established.

HF596-Slocum (DFL)

Finance

Office of Educational Accountability funding provided through the University of Minnesota.

HF597-Brown (DFL)

Finance

Voluntary full-day kindergarten funding authorized and full funding phased in.

HF598-Brown (DFL)

E-12 Education

School performance report cards required to indicate both the cut score and corresponding percent of items students must answer correctly at set performance levels.

HF599-Brod (R)

Health & Human Services

Grieving Parents Act established, and mothers required to be notified of burial and cremation options in the case of a miscarriage.

HF600-Eken (DFL)

Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

Legislators and certain officers required to be elected by a majority of votes cast at the general election for the office, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF601-Walker (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Crisis nursery grant program established.

HF602-Dill (DFL)

Finance

International Wolf Center renovations funding provided.

HF603-Ward (DFL)

Finance

Brainerd; Mississippi River crossing corridor matching funds provided.

HF604-Laine (DFL)

Finance

Fridley; Springbrook Nature Center redevelopment funding provided.

HF605-Walker (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Minnesota Family Investment Program and child care provisions modified.

HF606-Peppin (R)

Finance

Rogers tornado relief; I-94 noise barrier funding provided.

HF607-Anzelc (DFL)

Finance

Plasma torch gasification facility feasibility study funding provided.

HF608-DeLaForest (R)

Taxes

Income tax rates modified.

HF609-Loeffler (DFL)

Health & Human Services

Food stamp requirements modified.

HF610-Atkins (DFL)

Commerce & Labor

Workers' compensation rehabilitation services fees regulated.

HF611-Anzelc (DFL)

Commerce & Labor

Workplace communications between labor organizations and employees protected, and certain employer conduct prohibited.

HF612-Pelowski (DFL)

Finance

Port development assistance funding provided.

HF613-Murphy, M. (DFL)

Finance

Adult basic education appropriations updated and money appropriated.

HF614-Tingelstad (R)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Bipartisanlegislativeredistrictingcommission provided and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF615-Walker (DFL)
E-12 Education
Comprehensivefamilylifeandsexual-ity education programs provided.

HF616-Hilstrom (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Major political party nomination 10 percent requirement eliminated.

HF617-Dill (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Crane Lake certificates of indebtedness authorized.

HF618-Winkler (DFL)
Biosciences & Emerging Technology
Bioscience business development programs funding provided.

HF619-Koenen (DFL)
Finance
Transportation funding provided with transportation certificates of assignment.

HF620-Jaros (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Child protective devices required in shopping carts.

HF621-Johnson (DFL)
Finance
MississippiRiverParkwayCommission funding provided.

HF622-Zellers (R)
Taxes
Retired pensioners income tax subtraction provided.

HF623-Solberg (DFL)
E-12 Education
Languageimmersion summerschool required.

HF624-Norton (DFL)
Finance
Rochester; National Volleyball Center phase II expansion funding provided.

HF625-Nornes (R)
Health & Human Services
MinnesotaCare four-month uninsured requirement for children eliminated.

HF626-Nornes (R)
Finance
Academiccompetitivenesshighlighting individual excellence and valuing education scholarship program established.

HF627-Kranz (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Teachers retirement associations members benefits provided.

HF628-Kranz (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Consumer purchases by credit card regulated and identity verification required.

HF629-Severson (R)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Firearms safety and usage training certificates continuation provided while soldiers and essential employees are engaged in active military service.

HF630-Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Voting age lowered to age 16, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF631-Anzelc (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Natural Resources department sales authority modified, forest resource assessment products and services account established, decorative boughs provisions modified and sustainable resources provision expiration removed.

HF632-McNamara (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Vermillion Highlands Wildlife Management Area designated.

HF633-Sertich (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Health plan coverage for hearing aids regulated.

HF634-Norton (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Congress memorialized by resolution to support and reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program.

HF635-Masin (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Minnesota Wireless Telephone Consumer Protection Act adopted.

HF636-Dittrich (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Pediatric dentist participation in a state health care program definition modified.

HF637-Dittrich (DFL)
Finance
Full-day kindergarten authorized, state aid provided and sliding scale fee imposed.

HF638-Tingelstad (R)
Health & Human Services
Adoption assistance program eligibility requirements modified.

HF639-Hortman (DFL)
Finance
Greenhouse motor vehicle emissions reduction initiative enacted and statewide transportation plan modified to reflect environmental impacts.

HF640-Howes (R)
Finance
Walker Area Community Center funding provided.

HF641-Severson (R)
Finance
Sauk Rapids bridge project funding provided.

HF642-Severson (R)
Finance
Sauk Rapids bridge project funding provided.

HF643-Hansen (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Meatpacking industry workers bill of rights and ombudsman position established.

HF644-Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Health Care Access Fund Oversight Commission established.

HF645-Otremba (DFL)
Health & Human Services
X-ray equipment operator provisions modified.

HF646-Dittrich (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
School district election provisions modified, mail election approval requirement eliminated and school board primary elections authorized.

HF647-Dittrich (DFL)
Taxes
Residential homestead market value credit modified.

HF648-Mahoney (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Unemployment insurance policy, housekeeping and style modifications provided; administrative rules incorporated into statute; and fraud penalties modified.

HF649-Morgan (DFL)
Finance
Special education excess cost program funding increased.

HF650-Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Dairy stabilization loan program established.

HF651-Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Family agricultural revitalization zones authorized and value-added processing agricultural products promoted.

HF652-Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Agricultural fertilizer research and education council and program established, on-farm storage exempted from safeguarding and permitting, and check-off provided.

HF653-Anzelc (DFL)
Finance
Public Utilities Holding Company Act adopted.

HF654-Loeffler (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Diseased shade tree removal and replacement funding provided.

HF655-Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Medicinal use of marijuana authorized, civil and criminal penalties imposed and application and renewal fees established.

HF656-Cornish (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Local authorities prohibited from enforcing traffic regulations with administrative penalties.

HF657-Simon (DFL)
Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division
Employment and Economic Development Department technical and housekeeping changes provided, and contamination cleanup grant provisions modified.

HF658-Garofalo (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Careless driving resulting in death gross misdemeanor penalty provided.

HF659-Slawik (DFL)
Finance
Child care license fees reduced.

HF660-Bly (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Renewable energy objective and state economic benefit strategy required.

HF661-Tingelstad (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Speed limit on city streets in rural residential districts provided.

HF662-Ward (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Automatic external defibrillators required in police vehicles.

HF663-Urdahl (R)**Health & Human Services**

Nursing facility payment rates increased to the 60th percentile rate.

HF664-Bigham (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Identity theft statute of limitations provided.

HF665-Dittrich (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

School bus equipment standards modified, pupil transportation requirements clarified, “multifunctional school activity bus” defined and licensure exception created.

HF666-Welti (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Dairy animal revolving loan program established.

HF667-Simon (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

Major highway projects annual report filing required.

HF668-Garofalo (R)**Finance**

School aid payment percentage increased from 90 percent to 95 percent.

HF669-Beard (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Unclaimed lottery prize money allocated to Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund.

HF670-Liebling (DFL)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

School districts authorized to include energy efficiency improvement projects in alternative facilities plan.

HF671-Slocum (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Rochester; naming the Minnesota Veterans Outpatient Clinic in honor of Marine Cpl. Charles “Chuck” Lindberg urged by resolution to the president and Congress.

HF672-Otremba (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Marriage terms and procedures changed and clarified and certain fees required.

HF673-Hornstein (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Metropolitan Airports Commission agreements legislative authorization required.

HF674-Hornstein (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

United States troops in Iraq escalation opposed by resolution to the president and Congress.

HF675-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Office of Higher Education, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, University of Minnesota and the Mayo Clinic funding provided.

HF676-Ward (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

Restricted drivers’ licenses appearance modified.

HF677-Brod (R)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

JOBZ treatment for biodiesel fuel plants time period extended.

HF678-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Finance**

Heart disease and stroke prevention funding provided.

HF679-Morgan (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

“Concrete pump” as special mobile equipment defined.

HF680-Hilstrom (DFL)**E-12 Education**

School finance equalizing factors indexed at 150 percent of the state average tax base per pupil.

HF681-Svigum (R)**Taxes**

Agricultural property excluded from tax base for school bonded debt levies and agricultural land valuation based on production value.

HF682-Hilstrom (DFL)**Finance**

Resident tuition at public postsecondary institutions provided.

HF683-Huntley (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Affordable health care right for every resident established and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF684-Paymar (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

County reimbursement for housing short-term offenders funding provided.

HF685-Slawik (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Preschool program and home visiting program for children diagnosed with mental illness or development delays funding provided.

Thursday, February 8**HF686-Ward (DFL)****Commerce & Labor**

Motor vehicle dealers selling only recreational vehicles exempted from the Sunday closing law.

HF687-Ward (DFL)**Finance**

Defibrillator purchase grants provided to local law enforcement agencies.

HF688-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Regional emergency medical services programs funding provided.

HF689-Demmer (R)**Finance**

Trunk Highway 52 in Olmsted County specific service sign required.

HF690-Lesch (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

DWI and criminal vehicular operation provisions modified and simplified.

HF691-Erickson (R)**Finance**

Highways, local roads and local bridges funding provided.

HF692-Morrow (DFL)**Finance**

Nicollet County Historical Society funding provided for improvements to the Treaty Site History Center in St. Peter.

HF693-Lesch (DFL)**Finance**

Driver’s license reinstatement fee and surcharge partial installation payments authorized.

HF694-Morgan (DFL)**Finance**

Declining enrollment school district funding increased.

HF695-Clark (DFL)**Finance**

Lead Poisoning Prevention Act modified relating to testing and blood lead levels reporting, sale of children’s items containing lead prohibited, medical assistance coverage provided and lead hazards in properties disclosure required.

HF696-Clark (DFL)**Finance**

Lead abatement program modified.

HF697-Welti (DFL)**Finance**

Chester Woods Trail funding provided.

HF698-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Mentoring program organizations authorized to request criminal background checks from the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

HF699-Nornes (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Adult certification for juvenile violent offenses lowered to age 13.

HF700-Eastlund (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Safe cabs program established to provide matching grants to communities providing safe transportation for intoxicated persons and report required.

HF701-Brynaert (DFL)**Finance**

Mankato district transportation headquarters funding provided.

HF702-Erickson (R)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Volunteer firefighter relief association’s funds investment with the State Board of Investment required.

HF703-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Finance**

School districts that have participated in the cooperative secondary facilities program authorized to levy for certain unfunded severance and retirement costs.

HF704-Kohls (R)**Taxes**

Universal tuition income tax credit provided.

HF705-Loeffler (DFL)**Finance**

Mental retardation and related conditions waiver, family support grants and semi-independent living services funding provided.

HF706-Hosch (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Medical assistance employed persons with disabilities program modified, and commissioner directed to seek federal approval.

HF707-Thao (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Dental access for persons with disabilities study required.

HF708-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Medicare Part D assistance program established, ombudsman for managed care funding provided, and limited medical assistance coverage provided for individuals eligible under Medicare Part D.

HF709-Ruth (R)**Finance**

Trunk highway project expedited construction authorized.

HF710-Peterson, A. (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Sustainable agriculture demonstration grants provided.

HF711-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Midwest Bioenergy Research Center matching funds provided.

HF712-Fritz (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Safe Patient Handling Act adopted, programs and committees established, grant funding provided and funds transferred to the assigned risk safety account.

HF713-Erhardt (R)**Finance**

Special motor vehicle license plates authorized for all disabled veterans.

HF714-Erhardt (R)**Finance**

Special motorcycle license plates authorized for combat wounded veterans.

HF715-Haws (DFL)**Taxes**

Truth in taxation property tax program evaluation study provided.

HF716-Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

June accelerated sales and excise tax payments reduced.

HF717-Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

Single sales apportionment accelerated relating to corporate franchise tax.

HF718-Erhardt (R)**Taxes**

Federal tax conformity provided for individual income, corporate franchise, estate taxes, and property tax refund.

HF719-Dill (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Lake County; temporary suspension of tax-forfeited lands proceeds provided to reimburse county for purchase of Clair A. Nelson Memorial Forest land.

HF720-Lanning (R)**Finance**

Workforce transition assistance pilot program funding provided.

HF721-Fritz (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Long-term care provider rates increased, new nursing facility case mix indices use required, MinnesotaCare employer-subsidized coverage exemption provided and initiatives and study required.

HF722-Mariani (DFL)**Finance**

Resident tuition regulated.

HF723-Demmer (R)**E-12 Education**

Structurally balanced school district budget requirements clarified.

HF724-Madore (DFL)**Finance**

Family homeless prevention and assistance program funding provided.

HF725-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Assistive technology provided for people with disabilities, and statewide study and reports required.

HF726-Tschumper (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota community action grants funding provided.

HF727-Tschumper (DFL)**Finance**

Waivered services program for persons with developmental disabilities county repayment requirement eliminated for certain expenditures.

HF728-Moe (DFL)**Finance**

Bemidji State University adjacent land purchase funding provided.

HF729-Emmer (R)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Competitive bidding contracts prohibited with companies or entities that have certain criminal or civil judgments.

HF730-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

Special license plates provisions modified.

HF731-Haws (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Minnesota GI Bill program for veterans established.

HF732-Haws (DFL)**Taxes**

Military pay income tax deduction expanded and military pension and survivor benefit payments subtraction created.

HF733-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

Red River Valley flood protection farmstead ring levees construction funding provided.

HF734-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

Transit fund and accounts established and motor vehicle lease sales tax disposition modified.

HF735-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

State entry authorized onto real property for geotechnical investigation under eminent domain, bridge and culvert provisions modified, rail service improvements funds regulated, state rail bank property regulated and penalties imposed.

HF736-Huntley (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Ambulance service personnel longevity award and incentive program renamed the Cooper/Sams volunteer ambulance program.

HF737-Thao (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Collaborative services for high-risk children established.

HF738-Greiling (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Civil commitment early intervention services expanded to include chemically dependent pregnant women.

HF739-Thissen (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Arbitration award decisions required to include explanation.

HF740-Mahoney (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Price gouging prohibited on essential consumer good and services including food, water, fuel, gasoline, medical supplies and other items; and enforcement authority provided.

HF741-Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Indecent exposure by caregiver in the presence of a vulnerable adult criminal penalties imposed.

HF742-Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Drug crime conveyance device forfeiture expanded.

HF743-Mullery (DFL)**Finance**

Women in nontraditional careers grants provided.

HF744-Mullery (DFL)**E-12 Education**

School conference and activity employment leave granted and parent authorized to consent to a significant individual to participate in school conferences.

HF745-Greiling (DFL)**Finance**

Special retired firefighter emblem motor vehicle license plates authorized.

HF746-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Family stabilization services program established, work participation bonus provided and work for low-income families support funding provided.

HF747-Simon (DFL)**Taxes**

Citizenship income tax credit provided.

HF748-Hosch (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Naturopathic physician-prescribed medicines authorized to be administered in schools.

HF749-Hosch (DFL)

Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Legislature required to vote on each unpassed major finance and revenue bill at the end of each odd-numbered year session.

HF750-Hosch (DFL)

Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Conference committee provisions required to have been passed by either the House of Representatives or the Senate.

HF751-Hornstein (DFL)**Finance**

General Education Development (GED) test fee waiver authorized in cases of homelessness.

HF752-Hornstein (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Career and college counseling pilot program established for high school students, program evaluation and reporting provided and research consortium established.

HF753-Howes (R)**Finance**

Special Gold Star vehicle license plate created for family members of military personnel who have died in active service, and plate fees exempted for surviving spouses or parents.

HF754-Mullery (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Plumbers licenses required statewide.

HF755-Scalze (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources
Fishing license and waterfowl stamp recipients required to check off agreement to remove aquatic plant material from boats and trailers.

HF756-Doty (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
National Historic Places property sale restriction repealed.

HF757-Doty (DFL)
Finance
Upsala regional community center funding provided.

HF758-Laine (DFL)
Finance
Emergency assistance and transitional housing funding provided.

HF759-Slawik (DFL)
Finance
Minnesota Children's Museum funding provided.

HF760-Fritz (DFL)
Finance
Remembering With Dignity project funding provided.

HF761-Ward (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Soldiers, veterans and peace officers exempted from requirements relating to state firearms safety certificate as a prerequisite to purchasing a hunting license.

HF762-Mullery (DFL)
Finance
Library basic system support grants limitations modified.

HF763-Lieder (DFL)
Transportation Finance Division
Highway contracts regulation modified.

HF764-Loeffler (DFL)
Finance
Chemical dependency allocations modified.

HF765-Loeffler (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Motor vehicle insurance database development required.

HF766-Westrom (R)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Ethanol-gasoline blend provisions modified and state departments directed to expand consumer options.

HF767-Dominguez (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Offender re-entry pilot project funding provided and report required.

HF768-Kalin (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Absentee ballot voting eligibility expanded.

HF769-Hansen (DFL)
Finance
Native plant agronomic research funding provided and technical advisory committee established.

HF770-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance
Giants Ridge Recreation Area definition provided.

HF771-Mariani (DFL)
Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division
A resolution memorializing the president and Congress to promote the United States' ability to compete in the global marketplace for talented and necessary workers.

HF772-Paymar (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Aircraft insurance minimum liability requirements increased, and aircraft insurance made not voidable retroactively after a claim.

HF773-Hosch (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Legislative per diem payments prohibited during special sessions called due to failure of the Legislature to pass major budget bills.

HF774-Dill (DFL)
Finance
Bois Forte Band of Chippewa renewable energy facility feasibility grant provided.

HF775-Hackbarth (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Right to keep, bear and use arms defined as a fundamental right; and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF776-Benson (DFL)
Finance
School lunch aid increased.

HF777-Lesch (DFL)
Finance
Housing opportunity tax abatement program established.

HF778-Haws (DFL)
Finance
Extraordinary special education revenue provided.

HF779-Bly (DFL)
Finance
Native American languages; Council on Indigenous Languages funding provided.

HF780-Tschumper (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Veteran-owned businesses designated as targeted group businesses for purposes of awarding certain state and metro agency procurement contracts.

HF781-Loeffler (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Intermediate care facilities for persons with developmental disabilities to replace one larger facility authorized and payment rate for new facilities established.

HF782-Huntley (DFL)
Finance
Certain hospital payment reductions eliminated and money appropriated.

HF783-Eastlund (R)
Finance
Tuition increase limits on public post-secondary institutions established.

HF784-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Finance
Medical assistance asset limit and excess income standard for aged, blind or disabled persons increased.

HF785-Norton (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Parental contribution for services for persons with developmental disabilities modified.

HF786-Hilstrom (DFL)
Finance
Special education programs funding increased and intensive intervention funding source established.

HF787-Hosch (DFL)
Finance
Portable radios and related equipment by local government units participating in statewide public safety radio communication system purchase provided.

HF788-Bunn (DFL)
Ways & Means
Demographic trends with forecast of state revenue and expenditures analysis required.

HF789-Kalin (DFL)
Finance
Energy efficiency and conservation improvement plans by public utilities and setting energy savings goals required.

HF790-Moe (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Minnesota Public Facilities Authority Act provisions modified, technical and housekeeping changes made and Pollution Control Agency project priority rule modified.

HF791-Kohls (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Certain remedies for neglect, abuse and other actions against incapacitated and vulnerable adults provided.

HF792-Ruud (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Essential community provider designation provided.

HF793-Thissen (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Essential community provider designation to a mental health provider in Hennepin County extended.

HF794-Otremba (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Medical assistance coverage modified to include consultations with psychologists, and medical assistance reimbursement rate for critical access mental health services increased.

HF795-Walker (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Administrative law judge's order made final, disqualifications set aside and definition of 'child neglect' clarified.

HF796-Murphy, E. (DFL)
E-12 Education
Family, friend, and neighbor grant program to promote children's early literacy, healthy development and school readiness, and to foster community partnerships to promote children's school readiness established.

HF797-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance
Certain provisions for senior citizen's tuition modified, certain reporting requirements amended and certain banking services authorized.

HF798-Davnie (DFL)
E-12 Education
Funding mechanism for rewarding excellent education results created and money appropriated.

HF799-Holberg (R)
Finance
Transportation, Metropolitan Council and public safety funding provided; bonds issued; fees, funds and accounts modified; motor vehicle sales and lease tax proceeds allocated, and money appropriated.

HF800-Demmer (R)
Taxes
School districts and counties mutually agreeing to extend the time allowed before the date of the proposed property tax levy certification authorized.

HF801-Hornstein (DFL)
Finance
Bioenergy producer payment program established; bioenergy production incentive program established; bioenergy working lands conservation program established; rulemaking and general obligation bonds authorized.

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota nonprofits

Estimated number of nonprofit organizations in state in 2005	31,000
Nonprofit employers in Minnesota in 2005	3,551
Employment locations operated by these employers	5,104
Percent increase from 2004	6
Percent of nonprofit employment locations in seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area	52
Percent in northwest Minnesota	13
People employed by a nonprofit organization in 2005	257,000
Approximate percent of the state's workforce	10
Percent annual increase in nonprofit workforce during last decade	3
Overall growth in employment in state during same time, as percent	1
Approximate percent of nonprofit sector jobs in the health care industry	66.7
Percent employed in the social assistance industry	10
Wages paid, in billions, by nonprofit employers in 2005	\$9.8
Percent of all wages in state	9
Average weekly wage for nonprofit employees	\$735
For government employees	\$765
For for-profit employees	\$795
Of the state 501(c)(3) and (4) organizations required to file returns with the IRS, billions in revenues in fiscal year 2006	\$30.4
Billions in expenditures	\$28.9
Nonprofit organizations that received state funds in 2005	3,178
Organizations that received 75 percent of the money	229
Billions in state payments to nonprofit organizations for all purposes, including grants and contracts, in 2005	\$4.7
Approximate percent of state funds paid to nonprofit organizations that came from the Department of Human Services	66.7
State agencies that spent less than \$10,000 in 2005 on services delivered by nonprofit organizations	40
State- or county-administered nonprofit organizations that received, cumulatively, approximately \$1 billion in state grants in 2005	1,900

Sources: 2006 Minnesota Nonprofit Economy Report, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits; [State Grants to Nonprofit Organizations](#), Office of the Legislative Auditor, January 2007.

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