

SESSION WEEKLY



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RULES OF ENGAGEMENT
RECYCLING E-WASTE
PRESCRIPTION DRUG PRICING

HF1338- HF1623

SESSION WEEKLY

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CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

Bioscience • 5
Budget • 5
Consumers • 5
Crime • 6
Education • 6
Employment • 7

Environment • 7
Game & Fish • 9
Government • 9
Health & Human Services • 9
Higher Education • 11
Housing • 12

Insurance • 12
Local Government • 13
Metro Affairs • 13
Military • 13
Taxes • 15
Transportation • 15

BILL INTRODUCTIONS (HF1338-HF1623) • 18 - 23

FEATURES

FIRST READING: Rules of Engagement: The struggle to bridge the partisan divide • 3-4

PEOPLE: New members profiled: Knuth, Kranz and Tschumper • 16 - 17

MINNESOTA INDEX: Incarcerated information • 24

On the cover: Tom Stillday, spiritual leader of the Red Lake Community, speaks in the Rotunda, during a Feb. 22 ceremony for the signing of an agreement between the Minnesota Department of Human Services and the 11 state tribes.

—Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

'Rules' of engagement

New majority, minority struggle to bridge the partisan divide

By Nick Busse

On Jan. 11, a little more than a week into the 2007 legislative session, the House passed its first bill — a noncontroversial federal tax conformity bill. At least, it was supposed to be noncontroversial.

Instead, what ensued was a three-hour tussle between House Republicans and the new DFL majority. The bill eventually passed 132-0, but not before numerous Republican-sponsored amendments were either ruled out of order or voted down along party lines.

"So starts the food fight," declared [House Majority Leader Tony Sertich](#) (DFL-Chisholm).

The food fight continued — on a Great

Lakes water usage compact Feb. 1, an elections bill Feb. 13 and a renewable energy standards bill Feb. 19. During a Feb. 26 floor debate on the Permanent Rules of the House — the rules

of procedure that govern day-to-day business at the House — the food fight turned into an all-out partisan scrap.

After seven hours of debate and 29 amendments offered by Republicans (two of which were adopted), the rules had to be tabled so that the House Ways and Means Committee could board a waiting bus to attend a town hall meeting in Rochester. They were taken up again on March 1 on the floor and — after two more hours of debate on eight more amendments — finally adopted on a straight party-line vote.

Although the House rules are extremely important in that they lay the groundwork for all the legislation that is to follow, they also appear to be merely the latest bargaining chip in what is turning out to be a battle of wills between a Republican minority determined to assert itself and a DFL majority still struggling to find its footing.

During the Feb. 26 rules debate, exchanges between members grew heated on the issue of raising per diem — the daily expense allowance granted to legislators. The Senate recently

First Reading continued on page 4



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Majority Leader Tony Sertich, left, listens to a question from Minority Leader Marty Seifert during debate on the House Rules, Feb. 26.

First Reading continued from page 3

raised its per diem to \$96 by way of a floor vote; the House raised its per diem to \$77, but did it by way of the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee rather than voting on the floor.

Several amendments were offered that would have forced a floor vote on the House's per diem increase. At one point, former House speaker [Rep. Steve Sviggum](#) (R-Kenyon) declared that an increase wouldn't have happened under Republican leadership, which prompted an ugly trip down memory lane.

Sertich reminded Sviggum that Republicans increased the per diem just two years ago, to which Sviggum replied testily, "Rep. Sertich, if you would want me to stand here

on the House floor and call out the names of the Democrats who came to my office and Rep. Paulsen's office whining, complaining, coercing and telling us that we should increase it, I'll start calling out the names. Rep. Sertich, I'd be glad to do it. You just let me know. Are you ready for it?"

While such scenes of partisan rancor are certainly not new to the House, they might well point to a long and difficult session ahead. Both Sertich and [House Minority Leader Marty Seifert](#) (R-Marshall) admit that floor debates so far this session have drawn out longer than expected; however, neither one sees an easy way out of it.

Majority report

To be sure, this is not the first time the House rules have been a flashpoint of partisan controversy.

Often when there is a change in party control, the new ruling party tries to put its stamp on the rules, either to better suit its agenda or to improve the legislative process. When the Republicans took control in 1999, for example, they amended the rules by making a number of technical changes intended to streamline floor proceedings.

Even when no change in party control occurs, the rules are sometimes amended substantially. In 2000, for example, a heated debate erupted in the House Chamber over a proposal to do away with language in the rules requiring the House chaplain's prayer to be "nondenominational" and respect



"They have a right to talk. But if they're just trying to gum up the system, that is unfortunate. ... The people elected us in a bipartisan way looking for progress to be made, and you don't get there by just talking."

— House Majority Leader
Tony Sertich



"We're going to offer amendments to bills. The bottom line is, we're not going to just sit down and be little children at the little kids' table and not say anything. ... That's just not the way a representative democracy works."

— House Minority Leader
Marty Seifert

PHOTOS BY TOM OLMSCHIED

the "religious diversity of the House." (The language, which was added the previous year, was eliminated.)

Although the rules have always provided ample fodder for partisan quarreling, Sertich said this year's spat is different. He cites a larger pattern of long, difficult debates on the House floor — debates that he said have ended rather curiously with overwhelming bipartisan consensus.

"Every bill that has come to the floor — bills that have passed in a strong bipartisan way — have seemed to take many, many hours," he said.

What's the reason? Although hesitant to criticize a Republican minority that he says he would like to work with cooperatively, Sertich is frustrated enough to offer a theory.

"One avenue you can take as the minority is to try to gum up the system, and talk and try to stall things out. I'm hoping that's not what they're doing. I'm trying to take them at their word, but the trend is very alarming," Sertich said.

Sertich notes that Minnesota still has a Republican governor — one who he said has reacted with open arms to legislation that House Republicans have fought tooth and nail to amend on the floor.

"The governor has sent a letter or has openly discussed, 'This is the bill I want, and I'm looking forward to signing this bill.' Yet [House Republicans] go against their own governor and try to change it or do things against his wishes, too," he said.

Despite his disappointment, Sertich said that after spending six years in the minority, he understands how frustrating it can be, and refuses to try to stifle the Republicans in any way.

"They have a right to talk. But if they're just trying to gum up the system, that is unfortunate. ... The people elected us in a bipartisan way looking for progress to be made, and you don't get there by just talking."

Minority report

Seifert doesn't intend to be stifled. In fact, he intends to make sure his caucus's voice is heard loud and clear.

"We're going to offer amendments to bills," Seifert said. "The bottom line is, we're not going to just sit down and be little children at the little kids' table and not say anything

— be seen but not heard. That's just not the way a representative democracy works."

Seifert balked at the suggestion that he and his caucus is trying to hold up the process.

"There was not a concerted effort to gum up the works. ... That's just ludicrous," Seifert said, adding that the minority party has an obligation to offer its ideas and hold the majority party accountable.

In fact, some Republicans have said it's the Democrats who are failing to live up to their pledge of bipartisanship.

"I wonder if it's a new day here in the Legislature when the new majority is going to start rolling over the minority," [Rep. Mark Buesgens](#) (R-Jordan) declared Jan. 11 after watching a series of Republican amendments to a tax bill ruled out of order.

Seifert doesn't go that far, but he does point out that Democrats behaved similarly when they were in the minority.

"When we were marking the tax bill up last year, there were 72 amendments offered in the tax committee. So they can't come to me and say, 'Oh, well, we never did this.'" 🐼

Where to find information

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House Public Information Services is a nonpartisan office that provides committee meeting schedules; legislator information; and publications, including the Session Weekly newsmagazine, educational brochures, and member directories. All information is available at no charge.

Editor's note: The following Highlights are coverage of select bills heard in House committees held Feb. 22-March 1 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.

BIOSCIENCE

Cellulosic biofuel incentives

A bill approved by a House committee seeks to help establish locally owned biofuel and bioenergy production facilities by providing financial incentives to producers.

[HF589](#), sponsored by [Rep. Aaron Peterson](#) (DFL-Appleton), would provide subsidies to producers of cellulosic biofuels that utilize perennial native crops to produce ethanol. The bill was approved by the House Biosciences and Emerging Technology Committee Feb. 27 and now goes to the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

The bill would establish numerous programs to provide loans and incentive payments to producers who develop renewable alternatives to fossil fuels. Peterson said the goal is partially to establish energy independence for Minnesota.

"In Minnesota, we don't have any oil, we don't have any natural gas and we don't have any coal — but we do have lots of corn, soybeans, biomass, wind and livestock methane," Peterson said.

David Morris, vice president of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, said the bill would initiate the state's first step into what he called the "carbohydrate economy."

"We're in the process of shifting our raw material base from nonrenewables to renewables ... and we're going to continue increasingly to choose vegetables over minerals — biology over geology," Morris said. He added that the bill would create jobs, tax revenues and intellectual property that would benefit the state's economy.

[Rep. Mike Beard](#) (R-Shakopee) expressed concern that too much emphasis is being placed on isolating Minnesota's energy economy from other states.

"We don't have any coal or oil here. Is that necessarily an evil thing? I don't think so. But we continually have this raised as a reason we should be doing something here," Beard said.

A companion, [SF480](#), sponsored by [Sen. Gary Kuby](#) (DFL-Granite Falls), awaits action by the Senate Energy, Utilities, Technology and Communications Committee.

— N. BUSSE

BUDGET

Forecast basically unchanged

The much anticipated [February Economic Forecast](#) was a letdown for people hoping to find more money for various programs.

However, as a whole, the forecast, released Feb. 28, still provides Minnesota lawmakers with a \$2.16 billion surplus to work with.

The budget balance for the next biennium shows a projected \$1.15 billion surplus, \$7 million less than projected three months earlier. The projected surplus at the end of the current biennium, June 30, 2007, is \$1.01 billion, a \$25 million reduction from the [November Economic Forecast](#).

"I don't think we're at the stage where we can expect surplus after surplus, so we need to be careful where we budget for future expenses in the out years," said Finance Commissioner Tom Hanson. He warned that about \$1 billion in inflation costs are not accounted for in the projection.

"We shouldn't expect revenue changes this small into the future depending on what the economy does," State Economist Tom Stinson said. He noted the recent stock market drop and the release by the [U.S. Department of Commerce](#) of the revised fourth quarter real gross domestic product report, which showed that the American economy grew slower than expected.

"If you look at inflation, the money available to us is modest," said [House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher](#) (DFL-Mpls). "The economy underneath is not as robust as we had hoped."

The new projection will be used by lawmakers to establish a state budget for July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2009.

Kelliher said the numbers do not change the focus of her caucus. "Education, health care and reducing property taxes are what we'll continue to work on in the weeks ahead." She plans to help pay for these priorities by potentially closing corporate tax loopholes and better tax compliance.

However, the majority may not get all that it wants this session — all-day kindergarten and more early childhood programming, for example. "I'm afraid school advocates are going to be disappointed with this," said [Rep. Mindy Greiling](#) (DFL-Roseville), who chairs the House K-12 Finance Division. "I'd been asking them to pray for a good forecast."

[House Minority Leader Marty Seifert](#) (R-Marshall) isn't so sure that DFLers will be able to provide the property tax relief they've

been promoting because of too many special interests.

"With Democrats in charge, the chance for relief is precipitously falling," he said. "Property tax relief and reform will be minimal at best."

— M. COOK

CONSUMERS

Prescription drug pricing

People struggling to pay medical prescriptions could benefit from a bill that would require pharmacies in larger cities to sell prescription drugs within 10 percent of the lowest price of each other.

Buying prescription drugs at a reduced rate significantly helps those who struggle to make ends meet, Kim Crockett told the House Commerce and Labor Committee Feb. 22. A diabetic, Crockett said that some months she can't afford to purchase all her medications, so she tries to get by with only a few.

Sponsored by [Rep. Joe Atkins](#) (DFL-Inver Grove Heights), [HF282](#) would provide an exemption in predatory pricing laws for two or more competitors that price a pharmaceutical product within 10 percent of the lowest prices charged by each of these competitors, even if one or more of the prices is below cost. The measure would only apply to cities with a population of at least 50,000.

The approved bill now goes to the House Health and Human Services Committee.

Rural customers would be forced to drive into metropolitan areas to purchase drugs at lower costs, [Rep. Dean Simpson](#) (R-Perham) said.

"The greatest challenge to the small pharmacies now isn't going to be this legislation. It's probably the Internet and mail order," Atkins said.

The bill protects certain businesses and doesn't allow pharmacists to help patients with drug therapy if they are going to various locations, said Julie Johnson, executive vice president of the Minnesota Pharmacists Association. Pharmacists can't examine drugs being taken to make sure they are safe together if patients are purchasing them in different locations, she said.

Atkins countered that those issues exist now, with the costs varying widely and people shopping around. Those shopping around should take and show those prescriptions to their local pharmacist, he said.

A companion bill, [SF1233](#), sponsored by [Senate President James Metzen](#) (DFL-South St.

Paul), awaits action by the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

— P. OSTBERG

CRIME

Penalties for predators

Anyone convicted of using the Internet to solicit a child to engage in sexual conduct could face up to three years in prison and a \$5,000 fine.

Sponsored by [Rep. Debra Hilstrom](#) (DFL-Brooklyn Center), [HF503](#) proposes to expand the statute criminalizing the solicitation of anyone age 15 or younger. Approved by the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee Feb. 27, the bill's next stop is the House Finance Committee.

Currently, Minnesota law prohibits anyone 18 and over from sexually soliciting a minor, but does not make it illegal to engage in sexually explicit communication dealing with sexual contact or performance.

Assistant Attorney General David Voigt said the Internet provides such easy access to children that there is a desperate need for this legislation. Before any contact takes place, there can be "grooming" of the child for further specific sexual solicitation, Voigt said.

Craig Martin, a detective with the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office, spoke about a convicted sex offender in Minnesota who began having sexually explicit communication with a minor in Illinois. This happens quite frequently, he said, but under current law, there is no way to prosecute the offender.

The bill allows for a conviction whether the communication originated or was received within the state.

A companion bill, [SF643](#), sponsored by [Sen. Mee Moua](#) (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— C. GREEN

EDUCATION

After school funding

In 2003, before, after and summer school programs serving at-risk youth lost their state funding.

The programs are designed to increase school connectedness, academic achievement in one or more core academic areas and help attendees become a more productive adult, according to the bill.

Sponsored by [Rep. Nora Slawik](#) (DFL-Maplewood), [HF976](#) would appropriate \$10 million in fiscal year 2008 for after-school learning grants. The House E-12 Education Committee approved the bill Feb. 27 and

referred it to the House Finance Committee.

"We're looking at a program that does a lot of good in the community," Slawik said. "It helps kids in terms of academic work after school and keeps kids in good constructive programs."

[Department of Education](#) findings point out that with these programs, 82 percent of attendees increased their technology skills, 76 percent report increased academic achievement, 74 percent were involved in community service, 47 percent improved their school attendance and there was a 38 percent decrease in juvenile crime.

"Young people have over 2,000 hours of discretionary time on their hands, which equates to a full-time job," said Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn, executive director of the Youth Community Connections. "They have more time not in school than in school. ... In the past five years, we have seen a 60 percent increase of 10-12 year olds going home alone."

In 2003, more than \$11 million in grants for these programs were cut from the budget. The cuts came, in part, because programs for youth attending schools in high poverty areas could receive funding through the federal "No Child Left Behind Act." The department anticipates that \$5 million would be available in future years.

A companion bill, [SF1223](#), sponsored by [Sen. Patricia Torres Ray](#) (DFL-Mpls), was scheduled to be heard Feb. 28 by the Senate Education Committee.

— S. HARDING

Interactive learning

Technology similar to a telestrator used during football broadcasts could end up in more Minnesota classrooms.

Sponsored by [Rep. John Benson](#) (DFL-Minnetonka), [HF803](#) would make a one-time \$10 million appropriation in fiscal year 2008 for school site grants to demonstrate the educational advantages of the interactive white board. The bill was laid over Feb. 27 by the House K-12 Finance Division for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

"The interactive whiteboard is a quantum leap over the old blackboard, overhead projectors and the whiteboard," Benson said.

The cost for each whiteboard system is approximately \$4,200. The grant could supply each of the state's 323 school districts with seven boards. A teacher would need about four hours of training to learn to use the device.

Kim Hoehne, a Minnetonka High School physics teacher, has one in her classroom. "It has a gazillion different tools," she said. As an example, Hoehne showed the committee how she could solve a physics problem with a

video clip off the Internet of a person on a dirt bike jumping off a ramp and crashing into a parked van.

The interactive whiteboard typically has a 10-year life span, and, at this time, the software upgrades are free. Janet Swiecichowski, communications director of the Minnetonka School District, demonstrated the strength of the board by hitting it. "One of our concerns was if we put them in the elementary classroom would they last. They can take a beating," she said.

A companion bill, [SF616](#), sponsored by [Sen. Terri Bonoff](#) (DFL-Minnetonka), is scheduled to be heard March 7 by the Senate Education Committee.

— S. HARDING

Comprehensive school reform funding

A three-year federal grant has been terminated in its last year, sending some public schools in high poverty areas across the state scrambling to make up the difference in their budgets.

[HF975](#), sponsored by [Rep. Lyle Koenen](#) (DFL-Clara City), would make a one-time appropriation of \$2.1 million for fiscal year 2008 to the General Fund for grants to school districts that had received a portion of the \$3.36 million Comprehensive School Reform grant, which had been awarded to qualifying state schools.

The House K-12 Finance Division laid the bill over Feb. 27 for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill.

CSR was a federally funded program designed to provide financial incentives almost exclusively to high-poverty, Title I-eligible schools that need to improve achievement scores, according to the [Department of Education](#).

"CSR is a systematic approach to improvement that focuses on reorganizing and revitalizing entire schools," said Dwayne Strand, superintendent of the Yellow Medicine East School District. "It uses scientifically based comprehensive models of school wide change that are supported by expert trainers and facilitators."

To qualify for funding, a program must follow 11 components in the Title I legislation, including schools must provide ongoing high-quality professional development for teachers and staff include measurable goals and benchmarks for student achievement; and maintain faculty, administrative and staff support.

A companion bill, [SF202](#), sponsored by Sen. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— S. HARDING



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Stacy Hinz proudly sits by her daughter, Jordan, as she reads a story to the House K-12 Finance Division Feb. 27. Hinz, principal of two Yellow Medicine East elementary schools, testified in support of a bill for comprehensive school reform funding to replace reduced federal funds.

Working together

A bill to improve communication between early childhood centers, parents and schools was approved Feb. 27 by the House E-12 Education Committee and referred to the House Finance Committee.

Sponsored by [Rep. Sandra Peterson](#) (DFL-New Hope), [HF302](#) would allow school districts to be eligible for a grant program to establish early childhood community hubs that promote coordination of high-quality early care programs and schools.

Some legislators feel that the proposed funding is directed at the wrong group of children, however.

Middle and high school per pupil funding is greater than for younger learners, but test scores show that we're having problems at those levels, said [Rep. Bob Dettmer](#) (R-Forest Lake). "Why are we not funding these groups instead?"

"We ought to be funding all of them; however, I am convinced that if we haven't done a good job with our pre-school and grades through third we will have children with a deficit that they will carry with them throughout their school years," Peterson said. All of the research shows that if we don't put our money in the early years, we're missing an important component of success in later years."

The \$5 million for fiscal year 2008 and also 2009 would provide funding for early childhood community hub planning and implementation grants, and pre-kindergarten through grade 3 program grants.

A companion bill, [SF274](#), sponsored by [Sen. Tom Saxhaug](#) (DFL-Grand Rapids), has been held over by the Senate E-12 Education Budget Division for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

— S. HARDING

EMPLOYMENT

Ensuring meatpacker safety

Some meatpacking workers work in dangerous and unhealthy conditions.

They use sharp tools on product as it moves at a rapid pace along a slaughter line, which can cause repetitive motion injuries, as well as strains and sprains, according to people — including union representatives and workers — speaking Feb. 23 before the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division. Sometimes buildings are extremely hot or extremely cold, a break or meal room is not available, and sometimes workers are not permitted bathroom breaks and must wear diapers during their shift.

[Rep. Rick Hansen](#) (DFL-South St. Paul) is sponsoring [HF643](#) to help meatpackers by setting forth a bill of rights and creating an ombudsman in the [Department of Labor and Industry](#).

Approved by the division, the bill now heads to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Minnesota has approximately 320 meatpacking plants and 16,000 workers, the majority of which are immigrants. The bill would affect only those businesses with 25 or more employees.

The bill of rights would state that employees have access to adequate facilities and equipment. In addition, basic job information, such as duties, hours and wages must be provided to employees in the employee's

native language.

An ombudsman would inspect and review state meatpacking operations to ensure workers have, among other things, the right to unionize, the opportunity to use adequate facilities and the right to be free from discrimination.

Hansen said the bill is modeled after legislation enacted in Nebraska. According to its 2005 annual report, that program resulted in "a 39 percent reduction in total recordable injury and illness resulting in restricted work, and cases requiring medical treatment."

Dave Dederichs, manager of fiscal and labor/management policy with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, said the bill is unnecessary because state and federal laws cover many provisions in the bill, and the bill contains ambiguities that could lead to "discretionary interpretation."

A companion bill, [SF879](#), sponsored by [Senate President James Metzen](#) (DFL-South St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

— M. COOK

ENVIRONMENT

Recycling e-waste

When the state banned the dumping of old TVs and other electronic devices into the municipal solid waste stream in July 2006, it left consumers with limited options for recycling them.



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Fardo Haji, left, and Abdi Omar of Faribault testify Feb. 23 before the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division in favor of a bill that would establish a meatpacking industry workers bill of rights. Haji works at Jennie-O and Omar is an organizer for United Food and Commercial Workers.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Karen Budick holds Tempest, an American Bald Eagle, in the Rotunda as part of "Zoo Day at the State Capitol." Tempest and other animals from the Minnesota Zoo visited Feb. 27 to thank legislators for their support, introduce them to animals that educate Minnesotans about the environment, and talk to them about the zoo's new master plan.

A bill sponsored by [Rep. Brita Sailer](#) (DFL-Park Rapids) aims to change that.

Sailer sponsors [HF854](#), which would establish a statewide system to collect and recycle "e-waste" — unwanted electronics devices like computers and TVs, which often contain materials that are harmful to the environment. The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee approved the bill Feb. 22. It now goes to the House Finance Committee.

The bill would force manufacturers to collect and recycle an amount of consumer electronics equal to the weight they sold during the previous year — except in the first

year of the program, when the requirement would be 80 percent of the weight sold. Additionally, electronics collected outside the Twin Cities metropolitan area would count for 1.5 times their actual weight.

Victoria Reinhardt, environment and natural resources chairwoman of the Association of Minnesota Counties, said that local governments have had to pick up the tab both for recycling and for dealing with illegal dumping, leading to higher property taxes in some cases.

Laura Bishop, director of government relations for Best Buy Co. Inc., said the company supports the bill because it

emphasizes a "manufacturer responsibility" approach to recycling e-waste that will encourage more environmentally friendly products as well as allow the marketplace to absorb the cost of recycling.

"If you incorporate [the cost of recycling] into the cost of the product, that's the only way, ultimately, that you can bring that price down," Bishop said.

Heather Bowman, a business policy analyst with Hewlett-Packard, called the goals set forth in the bill "incredibly, aggressively high," and warned that consumers are unlikely to recycle an amount of products sufficient for manufacturers to fulfill them.

Although the bill received bipartisan support from committee members, at least one dissented. [Rep. Tom Hackbarth](#) (R-Cedar) called it a "manufacturers' punishment bill" and warned that consumers would "revolt" over increased electronics prices brought on by recycling costs.

A companion, [SF235](#), sponsored by [Sen. Linda Higgins](#) (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— N. BUSSE

LCCMR bill passed

A bill passed 121-6 by the House Feb. 26 would appropriate more than \$23 million from the state's environmental trust funds for 32 different projects relating to land, water and air protection.

[HF293](#), sponsored by [Rep. Kathy Tingelstad](#) (R-Andover), represents the recommendations of the [Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources](#). Received by the Senate the same day, it has been referred to the Senate Finance Committee. [Sen. Ellen Anderson](#) (DFL-St. Paul) is the Senate sponsor.

The purpose of the LCCMR, formerly the Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR), is to make recommendations to the Legislature on how to use money from the state's environmental trust funds — primarily, the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund, which derives its money mostly from lottery proceeds.

"LCCMR funding is kind of the research and development branch of state government as it relates to environmental funding," Tingelstad said. "There's a lot of innovation in this package, a lot of opportunity to do land and water protection."

Briefly summarized, the bill includes:

- \$12.3 million for land acquisition, for an estimated total of 17,000 acres, to protect forests, wetlands and other natural habitats;
- \$4.1 million for biological surveys and data collection of natural resources;

- \$2.9 million for various research projects;
- \$2.5 million for land restoration, for an estimated total of 4,000 acres, including vegetation restoration and research into biological controls for invasive species; and
- \$1.3 million for administrative costs.

The LCCMR's current recommendations apply to fiscal year 2008; a second set of recommendations will be presented for fiscal year 2009.

[Rep. Denny McNamara](#) (R-Hastings) took the opportunity to point out that the majority of lottery proceeds go into the state's General Fund instead of the environmental trust fund, where he said they belong.

"As we see on TV, they always advertise about the loon and the great things that the lottery money is doing for the environment. ... It's important to know that actually twice as much money goes into the General Fund as goes into the trust account."

— N. BUSSE

Banning toxic chemicals

A bill sponsored by [Rep. Karen Clark](#) (DFL-Mpls) would ban a series of fire retardant chemicals commonly used in such household items as plastic television enclosures, cables and some textiles.

[HF934](#) would prohibit the manufacture and sale of products containing polybrominated diphenyl ethers. The House Environment and Natural Resources Committee took testimony on the bill Feb. 27 and laid it over for further consideration.

Clark said PBDEs are widely used as flame retardants and have been linked to developmental disabilities in children, and that safer alternatives are available. The bill would gradually phase out three types of PBDEs: Penta-BDE, Octa-BDE and Deca-BDE.

Kathleen Schuler, an environmental health scientist with the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, said that although the first two chemicals are no longer being manufactured, Deca-BDE is still widely used. She said that although it is considered safer than the other two chemicals, Deca-BDE has been proven to degrade into more toxic compounds.

Beth Fondell, a member of Arc Greater Twin Cities, testified that research was becoming "increasingly compelling" that a recent rise in the number of children diagnosed with developmental disorders is directly related to an increased use of toxic chemicals.

Laura Ruiz, representing the Bromine Science and Environmental Forum, said alternatives to Deca-BDE are potentially worse than the chemical itself, and that health concerns related to Deca-BDE should be balanced with the potential risk of fires that might result from

banning the chemical. She also took issue with the notion that the chemical could break down in a natural environment, arguing that it had only been proven to break down in controlled lab experiments.

Steve Maki, vice president of technology at RTP Company, said Deca-BDE is typically encapsulated in other materials and has no chance of leaking out by the time consumers get it. He said any Deca-BDE present in the environment is most likely the result of poor handling of the raw chemical.

A companion bill, [SF651](#), sponsored by [Sen. Sandy Pappas](#) (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— N. BUSSE

GAME & FISH

Fishing with two lines

A bill sponsored by [Rep. Bud Heidgerken](#) (R-Freeport) would allow anglers to fish with two lines simultaneously, but the Department of Natural Resources is less than enthusiastic about the idea.

[HF191](#) would amend state statute to allow fisherman the use of two lines instead of just one. The House Game, Fish and Forestry Division laid the bill over Feb. 26 for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill. A companion, [SF972](#), sponsored by [Sen. Pat Parisseau](#) (R-Farmington), awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

Jim Kalkofen, executive director of the In-Fisherman Professional Walleye Trail, testified in favor of the bill, arguing that using two lines wouldn't affect fish population numbers because of limits already in place on the amount of fish one person can catch.

"Fish populations can be governed by laws that limit when people can fish and how many fish they can keep each day, and how many they can possess," he said.

[Rep. Tony Cornish](#) (R-Good Thunder) thinks that is a moot point.

"We don't want everybody to catch their limit of fish," Cornish said. "That seems like a funny statement to make, but if they did, we wouldn't have any fish in the lake."

Ron Payer, section chief for DNR Fisheries Management, agreed with Cornish.

"It's pretty clear that more fish will be caught with two lines," Payer said, adding that catching more fish would result in lower-quality fish populations with smaller fish.

Bob Meier, assistant commissioner of the DNR, offered an alternative solution for people who would like to fish with two lines.

"The best way if you want to fish with two lines is just to take a kid fishing with you," Meier said.

— N. BUSSE

GOVERNMENT

Low bid or best value contracts

A bill approved by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee Feb. 28 would allow municipalities to award projects to vendors offering the best value as well as the best price. It now goes to the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

Sponsored by [Rep. Debra Hilstrom](#) (DFL-Brooklyn Center), [HF571](#) would eliminate the sole requirement of awards going to the lowest bid, and include consideration of the quality of vendor's previous projects, the level of customer service, timeliness and the ability to assess and minimize risks.

Representing the Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council, Richard Miller said that although the lowest bid is the current standard for government projects, this legislation would provide the best value for the state, consumers and contractors.

Gary Thaden, representing mechanical and electrical contractors, said that even though he agrees with the intent of the bill, the language is too broad. He also acknowledged a need for making good state and local construction contracts. Government has a higher standard, Thaden said, because it's the public's money.

A companion bill, [SF1278](#), sponsored by [Senate President James Metzen](#) (DFL-South St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— C. GREEN

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Birth defect data collection

The Birth Defects Information System was enacted in 2004 to track incidences of birth defects in Minnesota, refer affected families to services, stimulate research and inform the public of risk factors and prevention efforts.

[Rep. Paul Thissen](#) (DFL-Mpls) sponsors [HF906](#) to provide \$1.5 million in state funding for the system, which has operated on a limited basis through grants from the [Centers for Disease Control](#). The House Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division approved the bill Feb. 27 and sent it to the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee, after approving an amendment offered by [Rep. Karen Clark](#) (DFL-Mpls), the division chairwoman, which would establish

an additional information system to track families with possible toxic exposure.

The issue of privacy dominated discussion, with several members expressing concern about the consent process used to collect data.

When a child is born with a birth defect, hospitals currently notify the [Department of Health](#), which sends the family a packet of information that includes a form to “opt-out” of the system.

“If we want to do this right, let’s use the informed consent that the law asks us to use,” [Rep. Rob Eastlund](#) (R-Isanti) said. “To me, we’re jumping over some big hurdles here.”

Proponents acknowledged the concern as ongoing in public health research, but said the process they use has overcome legal scrutiny.

“I think the questions you raise are at the core of what’s going on in health care,” said Phil Griffin, a lobbyist for the March of Dimes. “We do have a number of public health laws that tend to jump over this issue of informed consent, and they relate to major public health issues.”

A companion bill, [SF772](#), sponsored by [Sen. Linda Berglin](#) (DFL-Mpls), was heard March 1 by the Senate Health and Human Services Budget Division and laid over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

— M. SIMPSON

Home visits for families

A plan to modify current law and appropriations to provide visiting services to parents of newborns and young-at-risk children turned into a discussion about privacy, efficacy, research and even constitutionality.

Ultimately approved Feb. 22 by the House Health and Human Services Committee, the bill next goes to the House Finance Committee.

The bill originally sought to provide two universal, voluntary visiting services: one for parents of newborns, and the other to parents of young at-risk children. Sponsor of [HF595](#), [Rep. Carolyn Laine](#) (DFL-Columbia Heights), successfully amended it to remove the newborn program.

Laine said the remaining provisions would update current practices by requiring more training, collaboration and evaluation for providers of home visiting services, which she described as voluntary counsel, referral and information for parents who may lack the knowledge and experience to care for their young children. No appropriations were specified.

“Many, many families know how to interact with the child, and provide the safety, the nutrition, the care, the interaction, the language

development just naturally,” she said. “But there are many families, many young mothers, who do not know how to do this.”

Supporters argued that without early quality care, children could suffer lasting consequences.

“Once that baby is born, it’s experience that informs the brain,” said Dr. Terrie Rose associate director of the Irving B. Harris Training Center for Infant and Toddler Development at the University of Minnesota. “Home visiting has the opportunity to help

these parents ... so they know how to create a nurturing environment.”

Opponents call home visits potentially intrusive and, by and large, ineffective in the long term. Testifiers also said home visiting practitioners don’t typically disclose their role as mandatory reporters of child abuse, or the extensive data collection and sharing of information that may occur.

“Do the families know that assessments are being made on them?” asked Twila Brase, president of the Citizens’ Council on Health

SEEKING COMFORT



PHOTO BY SARAH STACKE

Hundreds of women’s advocates and supporters gather in the Rotunda for the 2007 Violence Against Women Action Day Rally Feb. 28 at the Capitol. One of their goals is to bring attention to the work that needs to be done to end domestic violence and sexual assault. Jan Egge of Grove City is comforted by Judy Revier a victims advocate for the Renville County Shelter House. Egge’s sister, Kerri Marie Robinson, was killed by her boyfriend in January 2006.

Care. “Do they know that a record is being created on them? I am guessing that they do not.”

A companion bill, [SF434](#), sponsored by [Sen. Terri Bonoff](#) (DFL-Minnetonka), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

— M. SIMPSON

A big boost for hospitals

When the Legislature faced a \$4.5 billion deficit in 2003, Minnesota’s hospitals took a big hit in health care reimbursements. The same happened in 2005. The total tally, say advocates, is \$293.2 million in lost revenue.

[HF782](#), sponsored by [Rep. Thomas Huntley](#) (DFL-Duluth), attempts to make restitution.

It would eliminate rate reductions in Medical Assistance imposed in 2002, 2003 and 2005 for inpatient and outpatient services under the fee-for-service program. This would neutralize about 40 percent of the cuts when added with federal match dollars.

Heard by members of the House Health Care and Human Services Finance Division Feb. 27, the bill was laid over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

“We know that there’s a hefty fiscal note with this,” Mark McAfee, representing the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, said. “But there may be an even bigger one down the line if nothing is done.”

Huntley contested the fiscal note, which determined the legislation would cost the state approximately \$252 million. He said the analysis overestimated the price because it included appropriations not offered in the bill.

A companion bill, [SF635](#), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee. Its sponsor is [Sen. Ann Lynch](#) (DFL-Rochester).

— M. SIMPSON

Helping the mentally ill

Legislation seeking to reshape and financially replenish services affecting the mentally ill was approved by the House Mental Health Division Feb. 23 and sent to the House Health and Human Services Committee.

[Rep. Mindy Greiling](#) (DFL-Roseville), sponsor of [HF196](#), said that the legislation, which would affect corrections, public and higher education, families, health care and counties, would stay as a complete package as the bill moves its way through the committee process. She had initially broken it into dozens of smaller pieces of legislation.

Greiling successfully offered amendments that remove requirements for mental health assessments of specified convicts, slightly

modifies a loan forgiveness program for mental health professionals serving ethnic populations and exempts certain college students from a health insurance mandate imposed by the bill.

[Rep. Morrie Lanning](#) (R-Moorhead) expressed concern about those students who would be required to carry coverage.

“We’re adding to the cost of going to college,” he said. “I know you’re going to get a lot of reaction from the higher ed community.”

He pushed for better language on the type of coverage required, saying that students shouldn’t resign themselves to low quality plans. He successfully offered an amendment to remove penalties on noncompliant institutions.

[Rep. Kathy Tingelstad](#) (R-Andover) unsuccessfully tried to delete TeenScreen, a voluntary mental health screening program for youth, after extensive testimony about the flaws of the program.

“TeenScreen...has the significant problem of lack of expert agreement on the diagnostic criteria for the illnesses, much less the screening instruments themselves,” said Karen Effrem, a member of the EdWatch Board of Directors.

A companion bill, [SF148](#), sponsored by [Sen. John Marty](#) (DFL-Roseville), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— M. SIMPSON

Stem cell research

A bill that could potentially further stem cell research was approved by a House division.

Sponsored by [Rep. Phyllis Kahn](#) (DFL-Mpls), [HF34](#) would establish a state policy for stem cell research, and permit the [University of Minnesota](#) to spend state money on such research. It would also require health care providers treating infertility patients to provide information regarding the disposition of any human embryos after fertility treatment.

The House Higher Education and Work Force Development Policy and Finance Division devoted much of two meetings to the bill before giving its approval Feb. 27 and referring it to the House Public Safety and Civil Justice Committee.

“Public funding means research will be done in public view and that the results will be available to the public,” Kahn said. “We don’t want to outsource superior science. This research will be done somewhere.”

Proponents view research expansion as a potential way to discover cures for diseases such as Parkinson’s or Alzheimer’s diseases.

It’s not enough to just work on blood cells because they don’t work with all diseases, said

Jackie Hunt Christensen, who has Parkinson’s disease.

Opponents said that embryonic stem cell research terminates a human life and others expressed concern that this could ultimately lead to cloning.

“Deliberately destroying human life for research purposes, regardless of human development, is morally wrong,” said Bishop Richard Pates, auxiliary bishop for the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis. “We should not be forced by our state government to pay for the direct killing of innocent human persons with our tax dollars.”

Kahn countered that countless fertilized eggs are destroyed through in vitro fertilization.

“People with Parkinson’s disease, diabetes, ALS or multiple sclerosis should not be forced to suffer or die because of someone else’s religious convictions,” she said. “Cells that would have died are used to continue life. What could be more pro-life than that?”

An amendment put forth by Kahn, and successfully offered by [Rep. Tom Rukavina](#) (DFL-Virginia), the division chairman, said “a person who knowingly engages or assists, directly or indirectly, in the cloning of a human being is guilty of a felony.”

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

— M. COOK

HIGHER EDUCATION

Regent recommendations

The names of four people to serve on the [University of Minnesota Board of Regents](#) were forwarded Feb. 27 by a joint legislative committee, but only one received a favorable recommendation.

The committee, comprised of 10 House and 10 Senate members evenly divided by party, recommended that Linda Cohen serve on the university’s governing body.

Regents serve six-year terms without pay.

Cohen is a licensed psychologist and licensed marriage and family therapist, and seven-year member of the Wayzata School Board.

Peter Bell, Cynthia Leshner and Venora Hung were forwarded without recommendations to the joint legislative convention.

Bell, chairman of the Metropolitan Council, has been a regent since 2003; Leshner, the president and CEO of Northern States Power Company, was appointed last year by Gov. Tim Pawlenty to a fill a board vacancy; and Hung, who would serve as a student at-large member, is a university law student.

Each was approved 11-9, but because

none of them received a majority vote by each body, they were forwarded without recommendation.

However, that may be in violation of statute.

A change in the [2005 omnibus higher education law](#) requires the governor to forward the names of his choices to the joint committee.

The law states, "... the joint legislative committees shall meet to consider the governor's nominees for regent of the University of Minnesota for possible presentation to a joint convention of the legislature. The joint committee may only recommend to the joint convention nominees recommended by the governor. If the joint committee does not recommend a governor's nominee, the governor must submit a different nominee for the same vacancy."

After much discussion about the intent of the statute, and to what body the governor must recommend new candidates, the vote was 19-1 to forward Leshner's name to the convention without recommendation. [Sen. David Hann](#) (R-Eden Prairie) was the lone no vote, because he was uncertain if it was permissible. The names of Bell and Hung were also forwarded on 19-1 votes.

"Ultimately the constitution requires us to decide in a joint convention. People can be nominated from the floor whether they're recommended by the governor or not," said [Sen. Sandy Pappas](#) (DFL-St. Paul).

"If we're going to forward something without a recommendation, the governor must submit another nomination," said [Rep. Rob Eastlund](#) (R-Isanti). "This isn't a presentation, recommendation thing. That's the statute."

"Maybe that will happen," Pappas responded.

[Sen. Richard Cohen](#) (DFL-St. Paul) questioned if the other at-large finalists, former Senate Majority Leader Dean Johnson (DFL-Willmar) and former Hennepin County Commissioner John Derus, could be forwarded.

"I don't think we have the authority in statute, at least, but we can do anything we want once we get to the floor," said [Rep. Tom Rukavina](#) (DFL-Virginia).

No meeting date was set for the joint convention.

—M. Cook

HOUSING

Mobile homeowner rights

Mobile home residents contend with a set of issues unique from most homeowners because they own the house they occupy, but not the land beneath it.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Bev Adrian, a former resident of the Shady Lane manufactured home park that was sold in 2006, rearranges some of the 491 model homes that were placed outside the front doors of the Capitol Feb. 28 by the All Parks Alliance for Change. The group is attempting to get legislation passed that would protect manufactured home park residents and prevent the loss of affordable housing due to park closure. Fourteen parks have closed since 2000, resulting in the loss of 491 manufactured homes.

So when a mobile park owner announces the sale and closure of his or her property, tenants are faced with several expensive options: relocate and desert the home, move the home or buy the land.

Sponsored by [Rep. Scott Kranz](#) (DFL-Blaine), [HF1205](#) would force park owners to pay residents relocation costs upon the closure of a park. Sponsored by [Rep. Frank Moe](#) (DFL-Bemidji), [HF1301](#) would give park residents first right of refusal — the opportunity to match the purchase price — for a 90-day period if a park owner intends to sell. It also offers tax incentives to owners who sell to park residents.

"We need to be a leader at the state level to provide some stability to these homeowners," Kranz said. "There are 50,000 households — about 180,000 people — living in manufactured homes and 80 percent are low-income."

Current law allows municipalities to decide if and how much residents will be compensated by park owners if they're forced to move. Kranz's bill would mandate relocation costs and the expense items considered, and would entitle residents a payment based on the fair market value of their home if they can't relocate it.

Current law also provides first right of refusal for 45 days to mobile home residents if their park will close.

Opponents said the bills would unfairly punish park owners.

"We're talking about preserving this product-type," said Mike Schrader, executive

vice president of Venture Real Estate Services. He threatened legal action if Moe's bill were passed, saying it was unconstitutional.

The House Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division approved both bills Feb. 28 and sent HF1205 to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee and HF1301 to the House Taxes Committee.

A pair of companion bills, [SF1196](#), sponsored by [Sen. Michael Jungbauer](#) (R-East Bethel), and [SF1253](#), sponsored by [Sen. John Marty](#) (DFL-Roseville), await action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

— M. SIMPSON

INSURANCE

Expanding coverage for hearing aids

A phone call from a distressed parent prompted [House Majority Leader Tony Sertich](#) (DFL-Chisholm) to sponsor a bill that would require health insurers to cover hearing aids for children regardless of when or how hearing loss occurred.

Approved Feb. 22 by the House Health and Human Services Committee, HF633 was referred to the House Commerce and Labor Committee. A companion bill, [SF805](#), sponsored by [Sen. David Tomassoni](#) (DFL-Chisholm), awaits action by the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

Previously the state did not mandate coverage of hearing aids unless the child

suffered a hearing problem, known as functional congenital malformation, that is often tested for at birth.

Sertich questioned this policy. "I don't think we should delineate between those children who suffer from this very particular condition or (those who) potentially have hearing loss in any other way, shape or form."

After testimony in support of the bill, discussion turned to insurance mandates, which, according to Phil Stalboerger, director of legislative affairs for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota, total a nation-high 62.

"While the cost of this mandate will be minimal, we do continue to hear from small business (and) individuals that any increase, whether it be small or large, will bring greater and greater difficulty in affording those premiums," he said.

The bill would not affect the self-insured market — those employers that assume the risks of health insurance for their employees — which is exempt from state laws and taxes.

— M. SIMPSON

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

New city buildings

Sometimes it's better to own than rent.

For almost 10 years, the city of Winsted has paid out more than \$217,000 to rent space for its city hall and police station. To do so for another decade would cost approximately \$450,000.

Sponsored by [Rep. Ron Shimanski](#) (R-Silver Lake), [HF102](#) would help the city build its own facilities.

It would authorize the city of Winsted to issue \$4.9 million in bonds, backed by city property taxes, for a new city hall, community center, police station and lakefront improvements. Approved Feb. 28 by the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, the bill was referred to the House Taxes Committee.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Winsted City Administrator Brent Mareck testifies before the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee Feb. 28 in support of a bill that would authorize the city to issue bonds for construction of a city hall, community center and police station.

Mary Ippel, an attorney with Briggs and Morgan, said the bill is necessary because Winsted cannot issue bonds outside of the net debt limitations for the city currently in statute.

In discussing the project with residents for more than three years, Winsted City Administrator Brent Mareck said residents have indicated they don't need a referendum, and have told city leaders to do what it takes to get the job done.

A companion bill, [SF98](#), sponsored by [Sen. Steve Dille](#) (R-Dassel), was laid over Feb. 7 by the Senate Taxes Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

— C. GREEN

Events center funding

Bemidji wants to extend a 0.5 percent sales tax to fund a new regional event and convention center.

[HF1103](#), sponsored by [Rep. Frank Moe](#) (DFL-Bemidji), proposes that the city be allowed to expand the projects funded from the existing sales tax revenues to cover its share of construction costs for the center, up to \$50 million plus bond costs. Presented to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee Feb. 27, the bill was referred to the House Taxes Committee without recommendation.

Bemidji Mayor Richard Lehmann said the current sales tax, dedicated to parks and trails projects, will expire when \$9.8 million is collected.

The proposed legislation would extend the tax until bonds for both projects are paid off or revenues to pay the parks and trails bonds have been raised, plus 30 years. In last year's general election, city residents approved the extension.

The Legislature has already appropriated \$3 million for the planning and design of the center, Lehmann said.

John Carlson, chairman of the events task force finance subcommittee, said that not only will the center provide a new venue for

some of the smaller communities in northern Minnesota, there could be up to \$12 million pumped into the local economy and more than 200 full- and part-time jobs created. The center is also proposed as the future home of the Bemidji State University hockey teams.

A companion bill, [SF1093](#), sponsored by [Sen. Mary Olson](#) (DFL-Bemidji), was laid over Feb. 27 by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— C. GREEN

METRO AFFAIRS

Commission elimination

The [Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government](#), which meets infrequently, would be eliminated, under a bill approved Feb. 28 by the House Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. It awaits action on the House floor.

Sponsored by Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center) and Sen. Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope), [HF15/SF19](#) would require the Metropolitan Council to submit information to the chairs of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over metropolitan affairs rather than the commission. The information would include the council's tax rates and dollar amounts levied for the current year, proposed property tax rates and levies, operating and capital budgets, work program and capital improvement program.

The 14-member commission, comprised of equal numbers of House and Senate members, addresses issues related to the Metropolitan Council, Hilstrom said. The commission has no authority but to make recommendations to legislative metropolitan affairs committees.

Hilstrom, chairwoman of the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee, said real oversight can happen more efficiently in the committee process.

The bill, approved 64-0 by the Senate Jan. 22, now goes to the House floor.

— P. OSTBERG

MILITARY

Deferred local assessments

Along with a new street or other local improvement, generally comes an assessment to the benefiting property owner. Under current law, a person who is over the age of 65 or permanently and totally disabled may be given a little more time to pay the bill.

[Rep. Connie Ruth](#) (R-Owatonna) sponsors [HF284](#), which would add any veteran who has been ordered into federal active service to the Hardship Assessment Statute. Approved Feb.

23 by the House Veterans Affairs Division, the bill was referred to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee. Approved there Feb. 28 it next goes to the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

Under the bill, eligible service members could make a case to their local unit of government for hardship and have their assessment payments deferred.

The bill's original language applied to those experiencing deployment of one year or longer, but [Rep. Mark Olson](#) (R-Big Lake) successfully amended the time limit to six months to coincide with the specified lengths of deployment of the various service branches. It was amended further by the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee to eliminate any reference to a time period deployed.

About 3,000 members of the Minnesota National Guard are deployed overseas, said Col. Eric Ahlness, government relations officer for the Guard. "One thing that we found is very important is to retain a sense of normalcy for the service members and their families during a deployment. A special assessment imposed upon them can sometimes be the straw that breaks the camel's back."

A companion bill, [SF170](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dick Day](#) (R-Owatonna), awaits action by the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

Keeping veterans here

Several states are aggressively working to attract veterans, recognizing the skill set they bring to the workforce.

Sponsored by [Rep. Larry Haws](#) (DFL-St. Cloud), [HF300](#) is part of Gov. Tim Pawlenty's package of proposals to make Minnesota a more veteran-friendly state.

Under the measure approved by the House Veterans Affairs Division Feb. 23, military and military retirement pay would be exempt from state income tax. The change would be phased in over tax years 2007 to 2010. It would also create a new income tax subtraction for survivor's benefits that would be phased in over four years beginning with taxable year 2007.

Before being approved Feb. 28 by the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee, the bill was amended to exclude for state income tax purposes the income earned by certain full-time Minnesota National Guard and Reserve members. Current law only applies to full-time military. The bill next goes to the House Taxes Committee.

[Rep. Dan Severson](#) (R-Sauk Rapids)

said that Minnesota has to become more competitive with states that are adjusting their tax policies to attract retired military personnel to fill the employment gap left by retiring baby boomers. Once here, they will be paying taxes because many will be employed in high-paying occupations or starting their own businesses.

"Minnesota is a leader in service to our country," retired Col. Paul Adams said. After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps for 27 years, he now works with the St. Paul School District, but resides in Prescott, Wis., because of that state's tax exemption for military retirement pay.

He said the bill would help Minnesota receive a return on its military tax dollar investment, by "attracting a highly trained workforce that the state needs to remain a

leader in the 21st century."

A companion bill, [SF160](#), sponsored by [Sen. Jim Vickerman](#) (DFL-Tracy), and was laid over Feb. 22 by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

Tax break for disabled veterans

A military veteran with a service-connected total or permanent disability would be eligible for a homestead exemption from property taxes, under [HF390](#), sponsored by [Rep. Tom Rukavina](#) (DFL-Virginia).

The proposed exemption would also carry over to the surviving spouse, if they co-own the property. Approved by the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee Feb. 28, the bill was

CHARACTER PLAY



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Portraying Josiah Snelling, Jeff Nordin plays the fife in the Rotunda Feb. 22 as part of the Minnesota Historical Society's "History Matters Day." A model of Fort Snelling, named for Josiah Snelling, sits on the table.

referred to the House Taxes Committee.

Rukavina sponsored a similar bill last year. A fiscal note at that time showed there is an estimated 2,800 homeowners who would qualify for the exemption. Any gain to the General Fund because qualifying homeowners would no longer be eligible for a state property tax refund could be offset by a tax-shift resulting in an increase in state-paid property tax refunds to other homeowners.

A companion bill, [SF1065](#), sponsored by [Sen. Tom Bakk](#) (DFL-Cook), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

TAXES

Border city enterprise

Keeping cities competitive on the state's western border is the basis for a bill heard by the House Taxes Committee Feb. 27.

Sponsored by [Rep. Morrie Lanning](#) (R-Moorhead), [HF130](#) would reauthorize \$1.5 million for border city enterprise zone and development zone tax reductions. The allocation would be divided equally between the two programs. The money would be divided among the western border cities of Moorhead, Dilworth, East Grand Forks, Breckenridge and Ortonville on a per capita basis.

"This will help those cities stay competitive," Lanning said. "North Dakota and South Dakota continue to be very stiff competition as we try to retain our businesses and attract new businesses."

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Moorhead lost about 15 percent of its population, seven schools were closed and 500,000-square feet of the commercial/industrial property in the city was vacant, Lanning said. In 1983, the border cities asked for targeted relief to enable them to be more competitive. He said the cities have seen modest growth since 1983 because of the allocation. He added that the bill would help "even the playing field" to keep businesses from going to North Dakota where businesses receive generous benefits.

Breckenridge Mayor Cliff Barth agreed with Lanning.

"We need that competitive edge for a town of 3,500," he said.

The money for the border cities would have to be reauthorized every two years, which has happened since 1983, Lanning said.

The bill was laid over for possible inclusion the omnibus tax bill.

A companion bill, [SF245](#), sponsored by [Sen. Keith Langseth](#) (DFL-Glyndon), has been laid over by the Senate Taxes Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

— S. HEGMAN

Corporate tax credits

Corporations would be allowed a tax deduction for contributions to a pre-kindergarten scholarship fund if [HF20](#) becomes law.

Under the bill, sponsored by [Rep. Paul Thissen](#) (DFL-Mpls), corporations would be able to deduct 50 percent of the amount, up to a maximum \$100,000, contributed for pre-kindergarten scholarships. The House Early Childhood Learning Finance Division approved the bill Feb. 27 and sent it to the House Finance Committee.

"We can draw in some private dollars to help supplement public dollars we spend on early childhood programs," Thissen said. "The programs would be aimed and focused at school readiness."

Children younger than 7 years old and not yet in kindergarten living in a household with an income less than 75 percent of the statewide median income would be eligible for the scholarships.

The bill stipulates that any organization granting the scholarships allocate 85 percent of its annual revenue for students to attend qualifying programs.

"Corporate tax credits can help expand access to school readiness programs," said Barbara Devlin, Richfield Public Schools superintendent. "Corporations have shown their interest in investing in our future by expanding access to early childhood learning experiences."

If the average scholarship amount were \$2,000, about 3,000 children would benefit. If the average scholarship amount were \$4,000 the number of recipients would be about 1,500, Devlin said.

The bill originally had a cap of \$3.5 million for tax-deductible contributions, but an amendment removed it and new amount has not been determined.

A companion bill, [SF1089](#), sponsored by [Sen. Dan Larson](#) (DFL-Bloomington), is scheduled to be heard March 7 by the Senate Education Committee.

— S. HARDING

Homestead tax cap

A bill that would limit homestead property taxes to 5 percent of the property owner's income was laid over Feb. 23 by the House Property Tax Relief and Local Sales Tax Division.

Sponsored by [Rep. Joe Atkins](#) (DFL-Inver Grove Heights), [HF856](#) would benefit low- to middle-income Minnesotans beginning in fiscal year 2009. It would have a \$55.3 million impact on the General Fund in fiscal year 2009.

"People are crying out for real property tax reform," Atkins said.

He added that having a 5 percent cap would

give property taxpayers some security and predictability. They would not have worry about paying 10 percent to 20 percent of their incomes to property tax. Homeowners making \$77,520 or less would get an additional refund for any payments made over 5 percent of their income.

Under the current law, homeowners receive a property tax refund based on the amount of their property taxes in relationship to their household income. The maximum refund is \$1,700 and is available for homeowners who make less than \$91,120.

The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in a division report.

A companion bill, [SF947](#), sponsored by [Sen. D. Scott Dibble](#) (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— S. HEGMAN

TRANSPORTATION

License reinstatement payments

As a prosecuting attorney, [Rep. John Lesch](#) (DFL-St. Paul) has found that many people charged with misdemeanors and gross misdemeanors for driving offenses would like to get their license back but they can't pay the fee.

Sponsored by Lesch, [HF693](#) would allow a defendant to pay 25 percent of the fee to reinstate their license for one year, and 25 percent in each of the next two years to keep the license valid. Once the final 25 percent is paid in year four, the license would become renewable on a standard schedule as measured from the date of original issuance. A handling charge may be imposed for each payment.

The bill was approved Feb. 22 by the House Transportation Finance Division and sent to the House Finance Committee.

Travis Schwantes, managing attorney for the 10th Judicial District, supports the bill.

That morning he was in court in Stillwater, where about half of the 60 cases on an arraignment calendar were for driving after suspension, revocation or cancellation. Most cases were continued for three months. "A good number of those drivers were unable to get valid because of the fee," he said. "There are significant costs to the court that need to be considered when staffing and processing these cases."

The provisions would apply in cases where the license was revoked for a DWI conviction, failure or refusal to take a chemical test, or a vehicular homicide conviction. According to the nonpartisan House Research Department, the revocations carry a \$250 reinstatement fee, plus a \$430 surcharge.

A fiscal note indicates the state would lose

about \$11 million in fiscal year 2008 and \$7.7 million, \$5.1 million and \$3 million in the three subsequent fiscal years.

“There are probably some reinstatement things that would be paid that otherwise

wouldn’t if we give them the opportunity for a payment plan, because a lot of people now just check out, ... they continue to drive revoked,” Lesch said.

A companion bill, [SF680](#), sponsored by [Sen. Ron Latz](#) (DFL-St. Louis Park), was to be heard March 1 by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— M. Cook

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PEOPLE

Focus on the future

Knuth looks to help shape the state’s ‘next 50 to 100 years’

By Nick Busse

Last October, a Twin Cities Public Television reporter billed House District 50B as a “classic swing seat,” and argued it was one of the key



Rep. Kate Knuth

paces that would help determine control of the Legislature.

[Rep. Kate Knuth](#) (DFL-New Brighton), who won that race, has a simpler view.

“I decided that I could step up and be part of a positive vision for the future of the state,” Knuth said.

Knuth, one of the Legislature’s youngest members, said she was motivated less by partisan politics than a desire to see government focus on issues critical to the state’s future, like education, health care, transportation and the environment.

She said the state has been “distracted” in recent years by issues that don’t necessarily affect people’s everyday lives.

“I’m a relatively young elected official, but really I think we are in a crucial time for a lot of important issues, and shaping how we want the next 50 to 100 years of Minnesota to be,” she said.

Youth aside, Knuth comes to the Capitol with a fairly impressive resume, including degrees from Oxford University and the University of Chicago, where she was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study the oil industry in Norway.

She currently works at Hamline University as a fellow in the Center for Global Environmental Education — a job that perhaps leaves her well-prepared for her House committee assignments, three out of four of which are environment-related.

Although she’s been around the world,

DISTRICT 50B

2002 population: 36,953

Largest city: Fridley

Counties: Anoka and Ramsey

Top concerns: Education, health care, transportation and environment

Knuth said her heart belongs in Minnesota and in her home city of New Brighton, where her father, Daniel, served as a state representative from 1983-1988.

“I think Minnesota is a really special place in the way that people are involved in government, and the way people make government work by being a part of it. So, I really value that, and a lot of the things that lead to that, like a good education system and the ability to move around the state — a lot of the infrastructure we have,” Knuth said, adding, “I saw a lot of those things being jeopardized in some ways.”

Man toward the middle

Kranz aims for balanced approach in oft-partisan politics

By **MIKE COOK**

[Rep. Scott Kranz](#) (DFL-Blaine) calls himself a “Suburban Democrat.”

“Out on the campaign trail it hit me that, to a lot of my constituents, Democrat or Republican means nothing. People are just fed up,” he said. “I’m a 25-year resident of this area, I deliberately chose to raise my kids (Lucas, 10, and Ryan, 8) here; I like this area. I’m not either one, so I started calling myself a ‘Suburban Democrat.’”



Rep. Scott Kranz

He sees himself as “fiscally responsible, even to the point of being conservative,” but with a moderate point of view on social issues. “I like to think that in most cases my opinion goes to the direction of if you want to do

something on your own time you should have the freedom to do that, but when it affects the rights of others we need to seriously look at it.”

It should come as no surprise that education is a top priority for Kranz, who teaches social studies at Spring Lake Park High School and serves on the House Early Childhood Learning and the Education Finance and Economic Competitiveness finance divisions. His wife, Kristi, also teaches social studies at the school.

“The reason I ran was primarily the lack of investment in our children from the womb up through paying college tuition,” he said. “I’ve had many discussions with kids going into college, or considering college, and realistically not having a way to pay for it. That really bothers me. I saw some very bright kids from average or low-income families

DISTRICT 51A
2002 population: 36,756 Largest city: Blaine County: Anoka Top concerns: Education, affordable health care and property taxes

that didn’t go to college because of the recent increases in tuition.”

Serving as a union president and contract negotiator, Kranz also knows firsthand the impact of health care on a school district budget. He has also heard stories of small businesses losing good employees because they can’t afford to offer benefits.

Like most members, his constituents see rising property taxes as a concern.

“The increases and the lack of state support for our services have really hit a lot of our homeowners,” he said. “There are people that have grown up in that area that can’t afford to retire in that area.”

A viable rural lifestyle

Tschumper will work to make health care affordable

By **LEE ANN SCHUTZ**

[Rep. Ken Tschumper](#) (DFL-La Crescent) is one of a declining breed amongst members.

“I am the last dairy farmer,” he may say in jest, but the state’s declining dairy industry is no laughing matter to this farmer who lives on land his great-grandfather established in 1867. “In 1977, there were 30,000 dairy farms in the state, today there are 5,000,” said Tschumper, who runs one of the 115 dairy farms left in Houston County.



Rep. Ken Tschumper

Tschumper campaigned on issues that can make a rural lifestyle viable for the next generation of farmers and small businesses. But nothing can happen without affordable health care, he said.

“I can do more for rural families by

trying to do something to make health care affordable,” he said. That’s why he is happy with his assignment to the House Health and Human Services Committee.

“Huge numbers of people, farmers and business owners can no longer afford health care for their employees or themselves,” Tschumper said, adding that highly educated spouses of farmers often work at a minimum wage job just to provide health care coverage for the family.

A supporter of universal health care, he said the affordability issue also affects health care providers and nursing homes.

He favors increasing the reimbursement to nursing homes, and says they play a very important role in small communities by providing employment and keeping the elderly close to their extended families.

Another key to a vibrant rural economy is quality education, he said. “People are not going to live in rural areas unless we have

DISTRICT 31B
2002 population: 36,723 Largest city: La Crescent Counties: Houston and Fillmore Top concerns: Health care, education and economic development

good schools,” he said, while emphasizing that health care, good schools and economic development are intertwined.

“If we can come up with health care solutions, it will make it possible for small businesses to locate in rural areas, provide employment and the tax base to support the schools. We have to move ahead on all three of these things.”

Tschumper also serves on the House Housing Policy and Finance and Public Health Finance Division, House Ways and Means Committee, and is vice-chairman of the House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee.

Monday, February 26

HF1338-Brynaert (DFL)

Finance

Extended employment services for persons with disabilities funding provided, and purpose and need established.

HF1339-Poppe (DFL)

Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

State government record retention provision deleted.

HF1340-Tingelstad (R)

Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

State boards and advisory groups governing laws revised.

HF1341-Tingelstad (R)

Taxes

Adoption expenses refundable income tax credit authorized.

HF1342-Smith (R)

Public Safety & Civil Justice

Qualified domestic violence-related offenses and crimes of violence defined and technical changes provided.

HF1343-Hansen (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Wetland replacement requirements and agency service requirements modified and civil enforcement provided.

HF1344-Kranz (DFL)

Finance

Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission funding provided.

HF1345-Dittrich (DFL)

Finance

Minnesota Early Learning Foundation funding provided.

HF1346-Koenen (DFL)

Finance

Bird Island; Victory Center construction funding provided.

HF1347-Thissen (DFL)

Finance

Special motor vehicle license plates remembering victims of impaired drivers authorized.

HF1348-Paymar (DFL)

Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Ethanol producer payment program replaced with a need-based, market-driven subsidy.

HF1349-Paulsen (R)

Finance

India Center established at the University of Minnesota.

HF1350-Eken (DFL)

Finance

White Earth Band of Chippewa renewable energy feasibility grant provided.

HF1351-Hornstein (DFL)

Finance

Long-range transportation solutions study provided.

HF1352-Moe (DFL)

Finance

Youth job skills development statewide program funding provided.

HF1353-Hilstrom (DFL)

Finance

Hennepin County Violent Offender Task Force funding provided.

HF1354-Paymar (DFL)

Public Safety & Civil Justice

Criminal sexual conduct victims polygraph requirement prohibited.

HF1355-Clark (DFL)

Finance

WomenVenture grant provided for women's business development program.

HF1356-Anzelc (DFL)

Taxes

Land utilization project land payments in lieu of taxation increased.

HF1357-Walker (DFL)

Finance

Low-income heating assistance funding provided.

HF1358-Solberg (DFL)

Finance

Grand Rapids; Northern Minnesota RuralPlex Initiative grant provided to operate a pilot workforce program.

HF1359-Atkins (DFL)

Commerce & Labor

Auto insurance medical expense and other benefits modified.

HF1360-Simon (DFL)

Public Safety & Civil Justice

Data practices duties and classifications clarified.

HF1361-Fritz (DFL)

Finance

Deaf and hard-of-hearing mentor program funding provided for families of infants and children that have a hearing loss.

HF1362-Doty (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Sucker regulations expanded to include early season for spearing and netting.

HF1363-Morrow (DFL)

Finance

Trunk Highway 14 and Nicollet County State-Aid Highway 41 interchange construction provided.

HF1364-Atkins (DFL)

Commerce & Labor

Building contractors insurance requirements modified.

HF1365-Kohls (R)

Finance

Local bridge improvement program established and previous bridge improvement fund appropriations criteria expanded.

HF1366-Rukavina (DFL)

Finance

Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board forest land purchase authorized using the Douglas J. Johnson economic trust fund, Iron Range Miners' Memorial Forest established and funds transfer authorized.

HF1367-Liebling (DFL)

Taxes

Alternative minimum tax exemption phaseout threshold inflation adjustment provided.

HF1368-Olin (DFL)

Taxes

County program aid appropriation increased.

HF1369-Garofalo (R)

Finance

Cannon River pedestrian bridge funding provided.

HF1370-Murphy, M. (DFL)

Finance

Midway Township sewer reconstruction funding provided.

HF1371-Murphy, M. (DFL)

Finance

North Shore Express Intercity Rail Initiative funding provided.

HF1372-Ward (DFL)

Taxes

Homeowners' property tax refunds maximum amount increased.

HF1373-Hansen (DFL)

Finance

Roadsides for wildlife program funding provided.

HF1374-Anzelc (DFL)

Finance

Northeast Entrepreneur Fund technical assistance and business training funding provided.

HF1375-Liebling (DFL)

Finance

Rochester; Mayo Civic Center Complex improvements design funding provided.

HF1376-Holberg (R)

Transportation Finance Division

Extinguishing interest in abandoned town road requirements modified.

HF1377-Johnson (DFL)

Finance

Greenhouse gas emissions reduction policy development process and report required.

HF1378-Paulsen (R)

Taxes

Minnesota college savings plan contributions income tax subtraction provided.

HF1379-Paulsen (R)

Finance

Postsecondary study abroad grant program established.

HF1380-Dominguez (DFL)

Public Safety & Civil Justice

Criminal justice data sealed under specified circumstances, legal consequences provided, business screening services required to correct and delete disputed records and civil penalties imposed.

HF1381-Atkins (DFL)

Taxes

Local government aid inflation adjustment provided.

HF1382-Thissen (DFL)

Environment & Natural Resources

Phosphorus use in household dishwasher detergent restricted.

HF1383-Moe (DFL)

Finance

American Indian scholarship administration transferred and office required to distribute scholarships.

HF1384-Bunn (DFL)

Taxes

Federal tax conformity provided relating to individual income, corporate franchise, and estate taxes, and property tax refunds.

HF1385-Liebling (DFL)

Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections

State flag design task force established.

HF1386-Jaros (DFL)**Finance**

Duluth Children's Museum funding provided.

HF1387-Benson (DFL)**Finance**

Long-term homeless supportive services funding provided.

HF1388-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Court provisions modified relating to attorney general, state court administrator, guardian ad litem and judges; and obsolete provisions removed.

HF1389-Thissen (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

State forest traditional areas provided.

HF1390-Howes (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Managed forests eliminated for purposes of off-road vehicle travel and forest classification requirements modified.

HF1391-Lesch (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Parenting plans custody designations modified.

HF1392-Hilty (DFL)**Finance**

Hydrogen renewable energy initiative established and hydrogen energy use policies established.

HF1393-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

MINNCOR prison industries governing laws clarified and updated, and community corrections counties expenditure and cost statements date adjusted.

HF1394-Lenczewski (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Independent School District No. 271, Bloomington, single-member school board election districts established.

HF1395-Eken (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Nursing facilities, ICFs/MR, and community-based long-term care providers rate increases provided; nursing facility payment rates floor established; and long-term care payment rate account established.

HF1396-Madore (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Guardians and conservators requirements and procedures modified.

HF1397-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

Duluth nursing facility payment rates increased to the Duluth median rate.

HF1398-Huntley (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Newborns and mothers transfer, accompaniment and hospital care coverage required.

HF1399-Huntley (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Northeastern Minnesota community-based health care coverage program demonstration project established, federal grant program references removed and evaluation report due dates modified.

HF1400-Tingelstad (R)**Health & Human Services**

Adoption; genetic siblings provided information assistance regarding other siblings.

HF1401-Fritz (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Reverse mortgage incentive program established, eligibility requirements and other standards provided.

HF1402-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Inpatient hospital payment system; ratable reductions eliminated from rebased rate relating to an essential hospital for children with disabilities.

HF1403-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Inpatient hospital payment system rates provided for essential hospital for children with disabilities.

HF1404-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Hospital outpatient services rate increase provided for a specified essential hospital for children with disabilities.

HF1405-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Incidental nursing services coverage authorized under the elderly waiver, rate exceptions provided, and elderly waiver reimbursement rate limits increased.

HF1406-Otremba (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Preschool programs operated by schools exempted from child care licensure.

HF1407-Clark (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Environmental justice mapping federal funding application required.

HF1408-Howes (R)**Finance**

Programs for the all-inclusive care of the elderly (PACE) programs authorization modified.

HF1409-Gottwalt (R)**Finance**

Well contractor's license provisions modified.

HF1410-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Technical and vocational revenue program for collaborative high school and postsecondary vocational programs established.

HF1411-Howes (R)**Finance**

Small schools declining enrollment revenue provided.

HF1412-Benson (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Location equity index created, general education revenue formula modified and specified school districts' revenue increased.

HF1413-Bly (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Supportive community partnerships planning grant provided.

HF1414-Davnie (DFL)**Finance**

Learning Law and Democracy Foundation grant provided.

HF1415-Hortman (DFL)**Finance**

Hazardous pupil transportation services levy authorized.

HF1416-Ward (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Cuyuna County State Recreation Area Citizens Advisory Council established and state park permit exemption provided.

HF1417-Juhnke (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Kandiyohi County; Green Lake Eurasian water milfoil pilot project established.

HF1418-Eken (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Natural resources rulemaking authority state park permit, and other provisions modified; and Mineral Coordinating Committee expiration extended.

HF1419-Garofalo (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Dakota County tax-forfeited land bordering public water conveyance authorized.

HF1420-Poppe (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Individual sewage treatment design, installation, maintenance, inspection and operation licensing requirements modified.

HF1421-Wagenius (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Natural Resources Department easement acquisition requirements established.

HF1422-Hilstrom (DFL)**Finance**

School finance equalizing factors indexed.

HF1423-Anzelc (DFL)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 361, International Falls, authorized to purchase property with its building lease levy authority.

HF1424-Paulsen (R)**E-12 Education**

World language academic standards, proficiency, resources and capacity development provided.

HF1425-Holberg (R)**E-12 Education**

Students allowed to participate in high school league-sponsored activities after completing licensed treatment programs.

HF1426-Davnie (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Extended year kindergarten program created.

HF1427-Ward (DFL)**Finance**

Independent School District No. 181, Brainerd, fund transfer authorized.

HF1428-Davnie (DFL)**Finance**

Site decision-making program grants provided.

HF1429-Urdahl (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Meeker County EDA authorized to increase its membership to nine.

HF1430-Clark (DFL)**Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division**

Workforce development intermediaries' grants-in-aid authorized.

HF1431-Moe (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Board of Water and Soil Resources membership modified.

HF1432-Huntley (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

St. Louis County civil service director provisions modified.

HF1433-Olin (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Livestock compensation provisions modified.

HF1434-Atkins (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Building contractors right to bring an action for contribution or indemnity preserved.

HF1435-Anzelc (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

Forest products load permissible items defined.

HF1436-Hamilton (R)**Taxes**

Relative agricultural homestead minimum acreage modified.

HF1437-Hornstein (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Metropolitan Airports Commission required to meet in a neighborhood affected by airport noise, and advance notice of proposed annual budget required.

HF1438-Mariani (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Drivers' licenses; public safety commissioner prohibited from complying with the Real ID Act.

HF1439-Atkins (DFL)**Taxes**

Contraband cigarettes disposition provided.

HF1440-Kahn (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Certificates of pay equity compliance required as condition for certain state contracts.

HF1441-Simon (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Limited purpose trust companies non-substantive term changes provided.

HF1442-Slawik (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Compassionate Care of Sexual Assault Victims Act requiring hospital emergency rooms to provide emergency contraception, prophylactic antibiotics and information to sexual assault victims.

HF1443-Mullery (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Contractors requirements and prevailing wage provisions modified and penalties imposed.

HF1444-Bigham (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Health risk limits established for perfluorooctanoic acid, perfluorooctane sulfonate and perfluorobutanoic acid.

HF1445-Tingelstad (R)**Health & Human Services**

Adoption records access provided and data classification modified.

HF1446-Clark (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Alcohol health impact fund and fee established, controlled substance, DWI and prostitution provisions modified, Phillips neighborhood pilot project established.

HF1447-Hortman (DFL)**Taxes**

Diesel truck idling reduction equipment income tax credit provided.

HF1448-Juhnke (DFL)**Ways & Means**

Bovine spongiform encephalopathy mitigation and outreach efforts funding provided.

HF1449-Hansen (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Natural resources and clean water purposes dedicated funding provided, sales tax increased, funds and council established, bonds issued and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1450-Lesch (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Homeless outreach grant program established.

HF1451-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Department of Agriculture money appropriated for invasive aquatic species research.

HF1452-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

University of Minnesota money appropriated to study the economic implications of growing perennial grasses.

HF1453-Hilty (DFL)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

Public Utilities Commission monthly reports from utilities required regarding residential accounts.

HF1454-Peterson, S. (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Neighborhood youth organization money appropriated.

HF1455-Morrow (DFL)**Finance**

Rural renewable energy initiatives provided.

HF1456-Dominguez (DFL)**Finance**

Squad car camera technology upgrade grants money appropriated.

HF1457-Rukavina (DFL)**Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division**

MnSCU Board of Trustees increased and appointments to the board changed.

HF1458-Dill (DFL)**Taxes**

Sales tax applied to sales of prefabricated homes.

HF1459-Murphy, M. (DFL)**Taxes**

Modular homes exempted from the property tax.

HF1460-Murphy, M. (DFL)**Taxes**

Modular and manufactured home sourcing rules modified.

HF1461-Smith (R)**Finance**

Verdict, awards and judgments interest regulated.

HF1462-Liebling (DFL)**Biosciences & Emerging Technology**

Biobusiness center construction materials sales tax exemption provided.

HF1463-Hortman (DFL)**Finance**

Referendum to impose a 0.50 percent metropolitan area sales tax for transportation and transit in the metropolitan area required, and imposition of county sales taxes for transportation purposes authorized.

HF1464-Hilstrom (DFL)**Finance**

Emergency 911 emergency telecommunications service fee increased and statewide public safety radio communication system provided.

HF1465-Kohls (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Corrections commissioner required to develop a standard formula for calculating the per diem cost in county and regional jails.

HF1466-Atkins (DFL)**Taxes**

Dakota County authorized to impose a county mortgage registry and deed tax, and use of the proceeds provided.

HF1467-Dittrich (DFL)**Finance**

Transportation commissioner directed to enter into agreements with radio and television media for public service announcements in exchange for traffic information.

HF1468-Eken (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Legislators' salaries established by council, composition of the compensation council provided and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1469-Tschumper (DFL)**Taxes**

Motor fuels excise tax increased and refundable income tax credit allowed.

HF1470-Scalze (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Voluntary Clean Campaign Council, clean campaign pledge and clean campaign advertising code established.

HF1471-Morrow (DFL)**Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division**

Minnesota Agriculture Education Leadership Council membership expanded to include a representative of private colleges.

HF1472-Huntley (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Compulsive gambling education, treatment, and assessment provided, and social and economic costs of gambling study provided.

HF1473-Smith (R)**Finance**

Crime victims service programs and crime prevention grants authorized.

HF1474-Koenen (DFL)**Taxes**

Lawful gambling tax rate reduced.

Thursday, March 1

HF1475-Hornstein (DFL)**Finance**

Paratransit services coordination and service standards provided, inter-county service required and one-stop paratransit call centers established.

HF1476-Knuth (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Individual sewage treatment systems provisions modified.

HF1477-Knuth (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Individual sewage treatment systems disclosure provisions modified.

HF1478-Hilstrom (DFL)**Taxes**

Motor vehicle sales tax exemption provided for purchases by lessees who donate the leased vehicle to a charitable organization within 30 days of purchase.

HF1479-Peterson, S. (DFL)**Finance**

Transit fund and transportation endowment fund established and rebate plan rejected.

HF1480-Haws (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Special primary and special election requirements and provisions modified.

HF1481-Peterson, N. (R)
Finance
Bloomington; Hyland K70 ski jump funding provided.

HF1482-Mullery (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Publicly funded employers prohibited from using those funds to influence employee activities.

HF1483-Winkler (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Regional water quality protection and restoration provided.

HF1484-Dittrich (DFL)
Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division
Personal financial management information and skills training required at state colleges and universities.

HF1485-Clark (DFL)
Finance
Minority enterprise retention funding provided.

HF1486-Pelowski (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Charitable organizations authorized to participate in joint powers agreements.

HF1487-Peterson, A. (DFL)
Finance
Independent School District No. 891, Canby, border aid provided.

HF1488-Peterson, A. (DFL)
Finance
Ecological services for native habitats funding provided.

HF1489-Peterson, A. (DFL)
Finance
Clean Water Legacy Act ecological services funding provided.

HF1490-Beard (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Scott County hiring process and personnel provisions modified.

HF1491-Kranz (DFL)
Taxes
Residential homestead and agricultural market value credits indexing provided.

HF1492-Hornstein (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Metropolitan Council discount bus passes authorized for charitable organizations.

HF1493-Simon (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Surplus property rulemaking authority granted to the commissioner of administration.

HF1494-Simon (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Campaign finance contribution limits provided for certain candidates.

HF1495-Demmer (R)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Public Employees Retirement Association police and fire plan survivor benefit authorized for the survivor of a deceased member.

HF1496-Johnson (DFL)
Finance
Ramsey County Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative pilot project funding provided.

HF1497-Johnson (DFL)
Finance
Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board funding provided for the building lives program.

HF1498-Thissen (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Uniform Power of Attorney Act adopted.

HF1499-Hortman (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act adopted as approved and recommended by the National Conference of Commissions on Uniform State Law.

HF1500-Smith (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Child support policy clarifications and improvements provided.

HF1501-Welti (DFL)
Taxes
Residential heating fuels sales tax exemption expanded to include all fuels except natural gas and electricity.

HF1502-Erhardt (R)
Taxes
Seasonal recreational property exempted from the state general property tax levy.

HF1503-Walker (DFL)
Taxes
Taxpayer assistance services funding provided.

HF1504-Clark (DFL)
Higher Education & Work Force Development Policy & Finance Division
Minnesota investment fund scope amended to promote environmentally safe production and products.

HF1505-Cornish (R)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Gang and Drug Oversight Council membership expanded to include legislators as nonvoting members.

HF1506-Olin (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Public criminal history data; innocent party's name associated with a criminal history authorized to be redacted under certain circumstances.

HF1507-Olin (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
State trails acquisition authority and recreational vehicle requirements modified, off-highway vehicle safety and conservation program established, off-trail snowmobile use provided in certain state forests and state trails modified.

HF1508-Moe (DFL)
Finance
Textbook Pricing and Access Act adopted and pilot textbook rental program established.

HF1509-Tschumper (DFL)
Taxes
Toll-free telephone access required for taxpayer assistance, income tax return processing provided, withholding returns electronic filing required, sales tax assistance study and additional auditors provided.

HF1510-Lesch (DFL)
Finance
Public safety funding provided to replace eliminated federal funds.

HF1511-Simon (DFL)
Taxes
Alternative minimum tax exemption amount increased.

HF1512-Hortman (DFL)
Taxes
Motor vehicle transfer by charitable organization definition modified.

HF1513-Hausman (DFL)
Finance
Monticello nuclear power plant phase out, contingency planning and storage approval required.

HF1514-Atkins (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Aggregate material host fees authorized.

HF1515-Davnie (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Credit counseling and debt management services businesses regulated.

HF1516-Swails (DFL)
Taxes
Washington County courts facility construction materials and equipment sales tax exemption provided, and obsolete provision removed.

HF1517-Gunther (R)
Finance
Commission Serving Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing People funding provided.

HF1518-Brown (DFL)
Taxes
Local government aid programs and appropriations modified, and school finance equalizing factors indexed.

HF1519-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Finance
Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board appropriations provided from money received by the board from other public bodies, and decennial comprehensive planning and zoning review funding provided.

HF1520-Dill (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Phosphorus reduction requirements on wastewater treatment facilities modified based on need.

HF1521-Lillie (DFL)
Finance
Trunk Highway 36 improvements funding provided.

HF1522-Lillie (DFL)
Finance
Gateway Trail tunnel funding provided.

HF1523-Bigham (DFL)
Finance
Washington County Disabled Veterans' Rest Camp funding provided.

HF1524-Sailer (DFL)
Finance
American Indian child welfare project expanded.

HF1525-Hackbarth (R)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Aquaculture water use permitting fees limited.

HF1526-Simon (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Fair Campaign Practices Act complaints hearing funding provided.

HF1527-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Special motor vehicle bronze star veteran's license plates authorized.

HF1528-Paymar (DFL)**Finance**

St. Paul; Ordway Center for the Performing Arts renovation funding provided.

HF1529-Hausman (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

Highway rest operators prohibited from preventing commercial motor vehicle operators from observing federal "Hours of Service of Drivers" regulations, and maximum vehicle weight on highways provisions modified.

HF1530-Solberg (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Athletic and outdoor equipment for youths in need contributions provided.

HF1531-Solberg (DFL)**Taxes**

Apprenticeship training facilities property tax exemption provided.

HF1532-Hilstrom (DFL)**Taxes**

Public safety retiree pensions federal tax rules conformity provided.

HF1533-Slocum (DFL)**Finance**

Hennepin-Carver Workforce Investment Board funding provided.

HF1534-Hilstrom (DFL)**Taxes**

Local government aid distribution modified and appropriation increased.

HF1535-Poppe (DFL)**Finance**

Workforce Development Inc., employment and training services pilot project funding provided.

HF1536-Hansen (DFL)**Finance**

Mississippi River barrier construction provided to prevent aquatic invasive species from migrating up river.

HF1537-Gunther (R)**Taxes**

Education loans principal and interest payments income tax subtraction provided.

HF1538-Hoppe (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Big game ammunition requirements modified.

HF1539-Hoppe (R)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Big game bow minimum draw weight imposed.

HF1540-Wagenius (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Endocrine disruptors in waters of the state report required.

HF1541-Thissen (DFL)**Taxes**

Tuition savings plan federal taxable income subtraction provided.

HF1542-Zellers (R)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Methamphetamine precursor drugs consumer purchase limit specified.

HF1543-Lesch (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

President and Congress memorialized, by resolution, to replace the Fast Track Trade Authority system.

HF1544-Gunther (R)**Finance**

Propane pre-purchase funding provided as part of the low-income home energy assistance program.

HF1545-Olin (DFL)**Finance**

Roseau flood hazard mitigation project funding provided.

HF1546-Simon (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Driver's license and identification card applicants automatic voter registration provided.

HF1547-Simon (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

State elections campaign fund appropriation increased.

HF1548-Lesch (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Expungements of criminal records law recodified and restructured, and eligibility for expungements expanded.

HF1549-Johnson (DFL)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

Public Utilities Commission ex parte rules technical change provided.

HF1550-Hortman (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

Commercial vehicle inspections provisions modified.

HF1551-Nelson (DFL)**Transportation Finance Division**

Vehicle weight schedules modified for purposes of the vehicle registration tax.

HF1552-Hortman (DFL)**Taxes**

Charitable organizations exempted from gasoline tax.

HF1553-Buesgens (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Agent wagering provided.

HF1554-Atkins (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Payroll cards regulated.

HF1555-Simon (DFL)**Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections**

Energy forward pricing mechanisms terms defined.

HF1556-Berns (R)**E-12 Education**

Alternative teacher professional pay system continued funding provided, staff development revenue restrictions removed and certain districts exempted from 2 percent set-aside for staff development.

HF1557-Tillberry (DFL)**E-12 Education**

School counselors required to supervise non-licensed individuals advising students on educational opportunities and academic planning.

HF1558-Demmer (R)**E-12 Education**

School district timely employment contracts financial incentive provided.

HF1559-Dittrich (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Master teacher training in economics and personal finance provided.

HF1560-Carlson (DFL)**E-12 Education**

State Board of Education established.

HF1561-Faust (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Early intervention adequate yearly progress grants established and formula allowance increased.

HF1562-Mariani (DFL)**E-12 Education**

Literacy skills for students required.

HF1563-Cornish (R)**Finance**

Cooperative secondary facilities program eligibility expanded.

HF1564-Greiling (DFL)**Finance**

Special education maintenance of effort adjustment provided.

HF1565-Welti (DFL)**Finance**

Consolidating school districts state aid increased.

HF1566-Hornstein (DFL)**Finance**

Safe schools levy increased.

HF1567-Simon (DFL)**Finance**

Special education programs funding restored and special education appropriation made open and standing.

HF1568-Hornstein (DFL)**Finance**

Pupil transportation formulas modified for charter schools.

HF1569-Olin (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Driver's license offenses committed in Canada effects specified.

HF1570-Thao (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Compulsive gambling public awareness and treatment funding provided.

HF1571-Lesch (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Uniform Real Property Electronic Recording Act adopted.

HF1572-Hortman (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Uniform Principal and Income Act of 2000 adopted.

HF1573-Clark (DFL)**Public Safety & Civil Justice**

Congress memorialized, by resolution, to block rules published by the Department of Homeland Security that would preempt state authority to strengthen security at plants housing hazardous chemicals.

HF1574-Abeler (R)**Health & Human Services**

Pharmacists required to obtain consent to dispense certain epilepsy drugs.

HF1575-Thissen (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

School-based health clinic grants program established.

HF1576-Fritz (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Quality of care impact statement required prior to contracting for basic health care services to persons with disabilities.

HF1577-Lesch (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Human services licensing and policy provisions modified.

HF1578-Walker (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Mental health services required under all health plans.

HF1579-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Community health workers coverage provided by medical assistance, MinnesotaCare and general assistance medical care.

HF1580-Dettmer (R)
Health & Human Services
Adult foster care and family adult day services license requirements modified.

HF1581-Pelowski (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Youth with disabilities programs licensure granted and licensure standards modification recommendations required.

HF1582-Norton (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Radioactive material license renewal fee eliminated, ionizing radiation-producing equipment fees established, and X-ray equipment operating requirements and lead abatement program provisions modified.

HF1583-Nelson (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Intermediate care facilities for persons with developmental disabilities licensure authorized to replace one larger facility, transition period rate established and payment rate for new facilities provided.

HF1584-Benson (DFL)
Finance
School district operating cost differential revenue provided.

HF1585-Simon (DFL)
Finance
Special education programs funding restored, special education revenue formulas fully funded and special education aid appropriation made open and standing.

HF1586-Tschumper (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Statewide health plan purchasing pool study group established.

HF1587-Tschumper (DFL)
Finance
Office of Ombudsman for Older Minnesotans staff positions authorized.

HF1588-Winkler (DFL)
Health & Human Services
State employees electronic health records pilot project established.

HF1589-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Patient visitation by health care agents provided, and visitation rights and right to designate a domestic partner for certain purposes established.

HF1590-Brynaert (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Regional Children's Mental Health Initiative pilot project authorized and enhanced regional children's mental health service system developed.

HF1591-Anzelc (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Workers' compensation payment and retraining provisions modified.

HF1592-Anzelc (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Workers' Compensation Advisory Council appointing authorities modified.

HF1593-Kohls (R)
Commerce & Labor
Retail liquor license fees set by local governments.

HF1594-Hosch (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
National Guard reenlistment bonus program expanded and academic awards provided.

HF1595-Swails (DFL)
Public Safety & Civil Justice
Statutory housing warranties recovery for breaches regulated.

HF1596-Nelson (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Project labor agreements use regulated.

HF1597-Hornstein (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Southwest transitway included as a top priority Metropolitan Council item.

HF1598-Lillie (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Labor agreements and compensation plans ratified for the Minnesota Law Enforcement Association, the Minnesota Nurses Association and the Office of Higher Education.

HF1599-Masin (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Northwest Airlines Inc., mechanics unemployment benefits eligibility and extra benefits provided.

HF1600-Magnus (R)
Transportation Finance Division
E85-capable vehicles' registration renewal notice required to inform owners of all service stations that provide E85 in owner's area.

HF1601-Anderson, B. (R)
Finance
Novice driver safety education program established and driver instruction permit and provisional drivers' license provisions modified.

HF1602-Hortman (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Teachers additional retirement benefits provided.

HF1603-Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Statewide and major local retirement plans submission and review of proposed public pension plan administrative legislation process revised.

HF1604-Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
First-class city teacher retirement fund association's sabbatical leave service credit provisions updated.

HF1605-Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
First-class city teacher retirement fund associations conforming changes provided in the extended leave of absence program.

HF1606-Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Minneapolis Firefighters Relief Association statutory references updated.

HF1607-Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Salary and average salary definitions updated relating to retirement plans covered by the combined service annuity provision.

HF1608-Bigham (DFL)
Governmental Operations, Reform, Technology & Elections
Secretary of State; registrations, filings and dissolutions of certain entities regulated; fees provided; foreign limited partnership name changes regulated; and notaries public regulation provided.

HF1609-Clark (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Employee statements protected from employer retaliation, complaint procedures established, investigative jurisdiction specified and civil penalties imposed.

HF1610-Hausman (DFL)
Finance
Agricultural society authorized to retain certain admissions sales tax proceeds.

HF1611-Hornstein (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Light rail transit planning, design and construction provisions modified.

HF1612-Fritz (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Veterans and soldiers counseling services access improved.

HF1613-Peterson, A. (DFL)
Taxes
Biomass fuel stoves sales tax exemption provided and biomass-fueled electric generation facility construction sales tax exemption extended.

HF1614-Lenczewski (DFL)
Finance
Tax compliance expanded efforts required.

HF1615-Brod (R)
Health & Human Services
Non-hospital performed abortions physician requirement provided and penalties imposed.

HF1616-Mariani (DFL)
Finance
Legislative Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020 funding provided.

HF1617-Slawik (DFL)
Ways & Means
Early childhood family education, school readiness and Head Start programs funding increased.

HF1618-Kahn (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Domestic partners of state employees provided health insurance benefits if they are also made available to spouses.

HF1619-Hilstrom (DFL)
Finance
Incarcerated individuals allowed to remain eligible for medical assistance until conviction.

HF1620-Kalin (DFL)
Finance
Chisago County nursing facilities payment rates increased to geographic group III median rate.

HF1621-Bunn (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Environmental health tracking and biomonitoring program established.

HF1622-Clark (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Lead-containing children's items sale prohibited and paint retailers requirements established.

HF1623-Clark (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Dental care for children access pilot program established.

MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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MINNESOTA INDEX

Incarcerated information

Persons who were in a state correctional facility at some point in fiscal year 2006....	13,056
Percent of those that had group or individual contact with a mental health professional.....	62
Offenders who combined for 32,306 individual therapy sessions.....	2,459
As percent of all offenders.....	18.8
Chemical dependency assessments completed in fiscal year 2006.....	3,283
Inmates diagnosed as either chemical abuser or chemically dependent	3,253
Percent of offenders involved in various types of programming in fiscal year 2006.....	87
In fiscal year 2005.....	84
Three-year, post-release felony reconviction rate for adult offenders released in 2002, as percent	36
Reincarceration rate, as percent.....	25
Three-year, post-release felony reconviction rate for juveniles released in 2001 and 2002, as percent.....	58
Reincarceration rate, as percent.....	38
Offenders participating in reentry classes in fiscal year 2006.....	3,058
In fiscal year 2005.....	2,033
In fiscal year 2004.....	2,073
Inmates, as percent, participating in MINNCOR to learn job skills and develop a sound work ethic.....	15
Offenders assigned to educational programming on a full-time basis, as approximate	1,600
On a part-time basis, as approximate.....	1,500
GEDs awarded in 2004.....	658
Average department per diem costs for incarcerating offenders at adult facilities in fiscal year 2006.....	\$80.11
In fiscal year 2005.....	\$76.43
Since the Challenge Incarceration Program began in 1992, estimated millions in savings to the state through reduced prison time and decrease in recidivism...	\$18.1
Fiscal year 2007 budget from the General Fund, in millions	\$435.47
Number of staff	4,096
Facilities operated	10
Year first territorial prison was established at Stillwater	1853
Of the 9,010 adult inmates on July 1, 2006, number sentenced to life without possibility of parole.....	35
Number sentenced to life with possibility of parole.....	415
Level 3 sex offenders under supervision in Minnesota communities, as of July 1, 2006 ...	50

Sources: [Department of Corrections, including Performance Report Fiscal Year 2006, January 2007; FOCUS on Strategic Planning July 2004-December 2006, March 2005, and An Outcome Evaluation of the Challenge Incarceration Program, October 2006.](#)

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