

SESSION WEEKLY

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FORECAST: FROM WORSE TO BAD

GRAPES AND WINE

LUNCH MONEY FOR SCHOOLS

WHEN IS A HORSE A HORSE?

HF1180 - HF1404

SESSION WEEKLY

Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services. During the 2009-2010 Legislative Session, each issue reports House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and provides other information. No fee.

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On the cover: A visitor exits the State Capitol to brave a Feb. 26 snowstorm. The storm dropped more than 7 inches of the white stuff on St. Paul.

— Photo by: Andrew VonBank

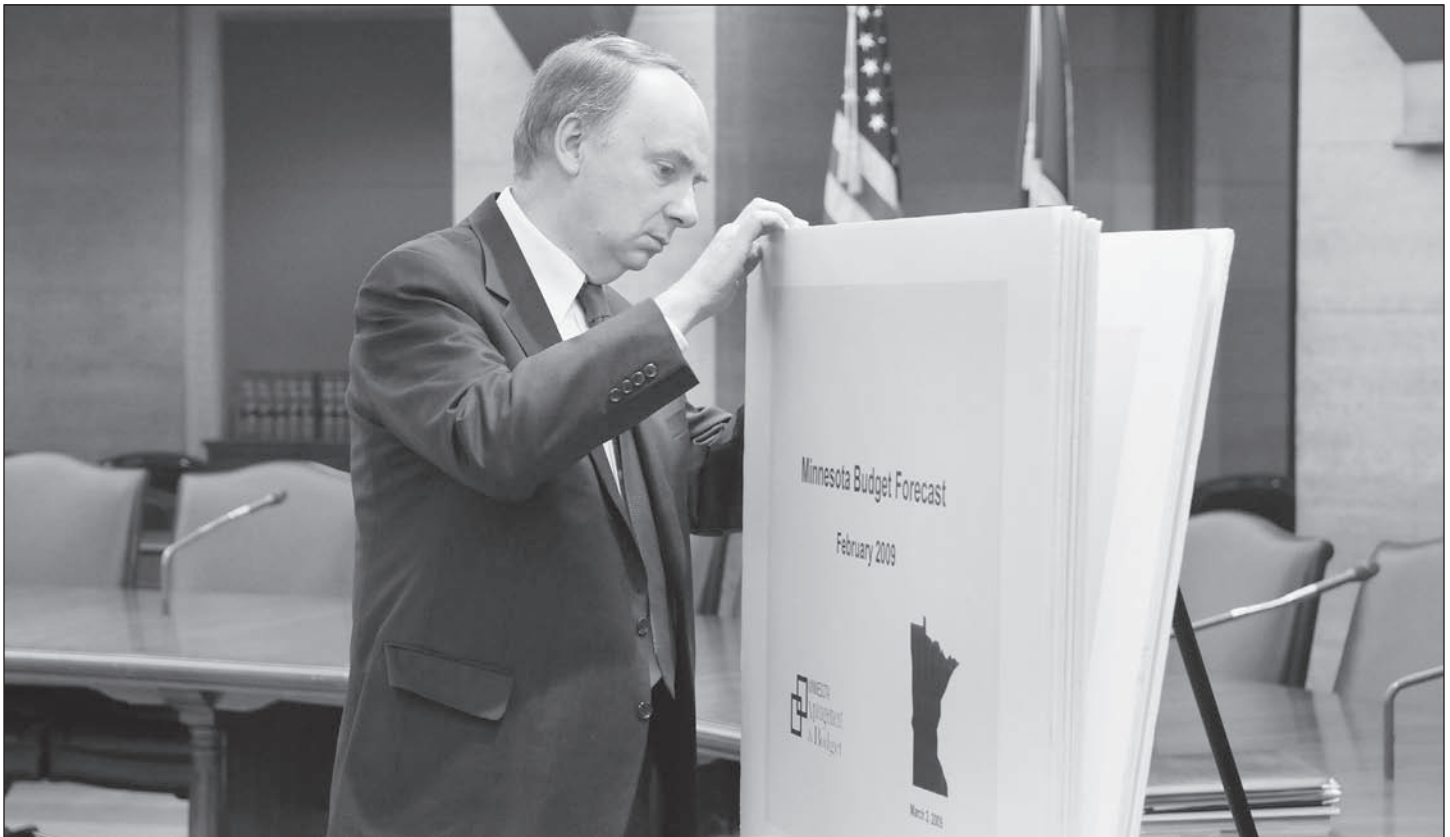


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

State Economist Tom Stinson takes a peek at the charts and graphs that illustrate the state budget forecast prior to a March 3 news conference.

From worse to bad

Stimulus helps, but lawmakers still face a record deficit

By Nick Busse

Lawmakers finally have a definitive number to work with: \$4.57 billion.

That's the size of the budget deficit the Legislature will have to eliminate before its May 18 constitutional adjournment deadline. And while it may not sound like good news — actually, it's the single largest deficit in state history — it could have been worse.

On March 3, Minnesota Management and Budget Commissioner Tom Hanson presented the state's February Forecast, which predicts a \$6.4 billion gap between what the state is scheduled to spend and what it will collect in revenues over the next biennium.

In what passes for good news in these trying

times, Hanson announced that state leaders will only have to deal with \$4.57 billion of that gap. The rest, he said, will be filled in by an infusion of \$1.8 billion in Medical Assistance funding from the federal stimulus package. The stimulus will also give the state more than enough money to balance out the remainder

of the current fiscal year.

"The one-time stimulus helps, but we continue to have an ongoing problem. We're not out of the woods yet," Hanson said.

Not by a long shot.

The February Forecast sets the stage for what is sure to be a difficult road ahead in the slightly more than 10 weeks the Legislature has left to do its work. Last year, legislative leaders and Gov. Tim Pawlenty negotiated down to the wire on a fix to a comparatively modest \$1 billion deficit — half of which was ultimately resolved using state budget reserves.

This year, the deficit is vastly bigger, the budget reserve is gone, and the options left to state leaders are seemingly fewer.

Where things stand

DFL legislative leaders and the governor disagree on whether, as House Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher (DFL-Mpls) put it, "all options are on the table" for balancing the state budget. In particular, Pawlenty and DFL lawmakers disagree on the issue of revenue.

First Reading continued on page 4

First Reading continued from page 3

Reiterating his oft-repeated position that government “needs to learn to live within its means,” Pawlenty said flat-out that he will veto any tax increases.

“If they plan on raising taxes, we’re going to have a collision,” Pawlenty said.

But according to Kelliher, the “collision” the governor speaks of has already happened.

“This situation is like having a broken leg, and we are in the emergency room,” Kelliher said, comparing the economic crisis to a car crash. “The help that we have gotten from the federal government is like short-term pain medication . . . and it is certainly helpful, but the underlying problem remains.”

Kelliher said the state needs to look at long-term solutions that balance the budget not only in the next biennium, but also into the future. She said Pawlenty’s proposed budget solutions, such as K-12 accounting shifts and tobacco revenue bonds, are one-time fixes that would just put the state deeper in the hole in the 2012-13 biennium.

“We will propose a budget that is balanced for four years,” Kelliher pledged, adding that DFL budget proposals will have balanced “inflows and outflows.”

To House Minority Leader Marty Seifert (R-Marshall), that sounds like tax increases.

“They need to come out and say whether they’re going to raise taxes or not,” Seifert said. “Let’s have the discussion, let’s have the debate, and let’s get session finished on time.”

Seifert has accused DFLers of inaction on the budget. At a March 2 press conference, he joined other Republicans in accusing the DFL of refusing to hear Republican ideas for solutions, and of wasting 40 percent of the legislative session without proposing any budget fixes.

DFLers say the Republicans are just playing politics.

“It’s a trite political argument that has been tried year after year after year,” said House Majority Leader Tony Sertich (DFL-Chisholm). “The fiscally responsible thing to do is to wait until we get a forecast to get the most accurate data.”

Although the DFL has not released a budget proposal of its own, Pawlenty is having to redo much of his proposal because of the changes wrought by the stimulus and the deteriorating economy.

According to Hanson, a \$920 million placeholder in the governor’s original budget plan did not materialize. Instead, the stimulus provides Minnesota with some \$800 million in “state stabilization” money that could potentially be used to shore up the General Fund, but only if the Legislature authorizes

it and only if the money is used for specific purposes.

No end in sight

The root cause of the state’s budget woes is the worsening recession. At a March 3 briefing, State Economist Tom Stinson said the problem isn’t going away anytime soon.

“This recession is longer and it’s going to be deeper than we thought in November.

It’s probably going to be the longest and deepest recession since World War II,” Stinson said.

Stinson said the economic downturn is “broad-based.” Virtually every sector of the economy, from the stocks to consumer spending to the housing market, is not just stagnant but in a state of decline.

What’s worse, Stinson said the recovery – when it comes – is expected to be slow. While many economists think the economy will show signs of improvement possibly in the first

Minnesota Recession Related Job Losses Reach 120,000 by 2010

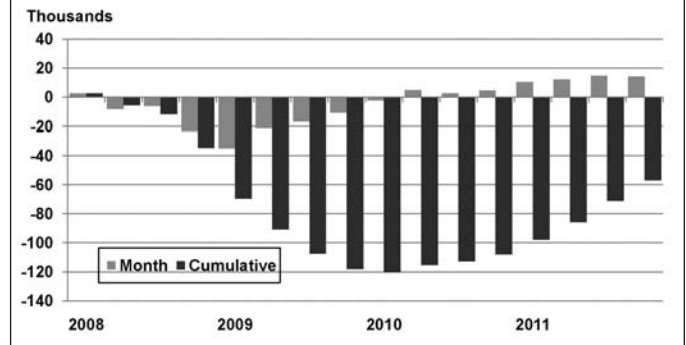


Chart courtesy of Minnesota Management and Budget

quarter of next year, Stinson said the 120,000 jobs the state estimates it will have lost by then will take a lot longer to regain. “Those jobs that have been lost won’t be recovered until 2012.”

As bad as things are, Stinson said they would likely be worse without the federal stimulus, which he predicted would save some 45,000 jobs from being lost in Minnesota alone. However, he cautioned that stimulus money would take some time to trickle out into economy.

At a March 4 joint meeting of the House Finance and Ways and Means committees, Stinson offered his own answer to the taxes vs. spending cuts debate — one that took some members aback.

Speaking about a phenomenon called the “balanced budget multiplier,” Stinson said cutting taxes and spending during a recession can actually make a recession worse by taking more spending out of the economy.

“The implication of that is that it’s better to raise taxes than to cut spending,” Stinson said.

Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake) questioned Stinson’s logic, arguing that taxes take money out of the wallets of people who could otherwise use it to buy consumer goods and help get the economy moving again.

Stinson responded that, “If there’s no money put in the wallet in the first place because they lose their job, they’re not spending it for consumer goods either.”

“Would the logic then follow that you might want to tax 100 percent and then everybody would have jobs?” Kiffmeyer asked.

Stinson declined to reply, adding, “I think this has gone far enough.”



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Rep. Michael Paymar, from bottom, Rep. Phyllis Kahn and Rep. Thomas Huntley follow a budget handout March 4 as State Economist Tom Stinson reviews the February Forecast with members of the House Ways and Means and Finance committees.

If you have Internet access, visit the Legislature’s Web page at: www.leg.mn

Editor's note: The following Highlights are coverage of select bills heard in House committees and other House activities held Feb. 26-March 5. Designations used in Highlight summaries: HF-House File; SF-Senate File; Ch-Chapter; and *- the bill version considered by the House or the bill language signed by the governor.

AGRICULTURE

When is a horse a horse?

"A horse is a horse, of course, of course," may be familiar as a phrase from the theme song for the old Mister Ed television show. But it took on new meaning during a March 2 discussion over a bill that would clarify whether a horse should be classified as livestock or as a companion animal.

For those involved in the state's horse industry, each of the classifications carries economic ramifications, as well as how a horse is treated when it dies.

Sponsored by Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Delano), HF797 would clarify that raising equines for riding, driving, competition, racing, recreation, sale or as breeding stock, is an agricultural pursuit and they should be considered as livestock for the purpose of financial transactions. Approved by the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee, it awaits action by the full House.

Emmer maintained the bill was only about clarifying definitions, but some committee members questioned whether the bill could impact how horse farmers are defined for property tax purposes and wanted the bill sent to the House Taxes Committee.

John Hagen, assistant director of the Department of Revenue Property Tax Division, said the clarification would not "affect how we deal with horses for property tax purposes."

Other members said the definition change could impact the disposal of dead horses and whether they would be covered under federal animal cruelty laws. Some questioned if the bill's intent was to permit horse slaughtering.

Rep. Dave Olin (DFL-Thief River Falls) said the Animal Humane Society had issues with the bill's language and successfully amended it deleting the phrase, "Horses may be used for meat, hides, and animal by-products." Emmer said he did not oppose the amendment.

The bill's companion, SF755, sponsored by

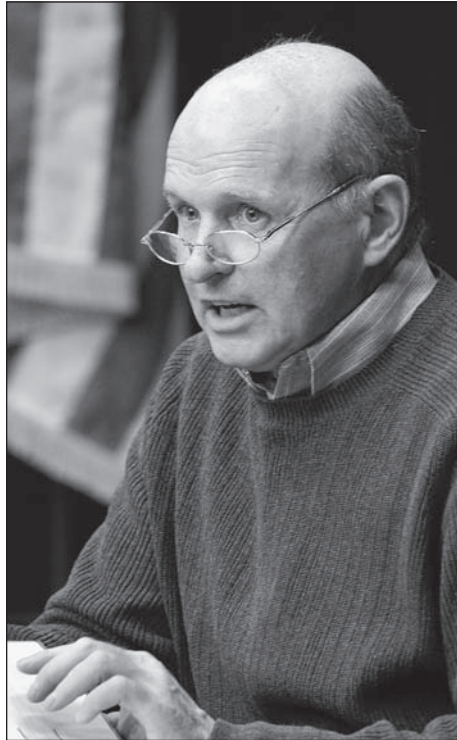


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Horse farm owner David Dayon testifies before the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee March 2 in support of a bill that would clarify horses and other equines as livestock and that raising them is an agricultural pursuit.

Sen. Amy Koch (R-Buffalo), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

BONDING

Wrong name now righted

Stearns County was slated to receive \$492,000 through last year's capital investment law for acquisition of land for new parks and trails.

However, the agency named as the fund recipient, the Central Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Coordination Board, cannot own land.

Sponsored by Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph), and passed 115-17 by the House March 5, HF56 makes a technical correction to the law by appropriating the money directly to Stearns County, so that 23 acres adjacent to Warner Lake Park can be integrated into the Central Minnesota Parks and Trails.

The bill now moves to the Senate where Sen. Michelle Fischbach (R-Paynesville) is its sponsor.

— L. SCHUTZ

BUDGET

Surplus can be used for spending

Signed by the governor

If Minnesota is to spend federal stimulus money during fiscal years 2010-2011, state law regarding carryover funds needed to be changed.

Sponsored by Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Grand Rapids) and Sen. Richard Cohen (DFL-St. Paul), a new law, signed by Gov. Tim Pawlenty March 2 and effective the next day, allows money remaining in the General Fund at the end of fiscal year 2009 to be appropriated in the next biennium.

According to the nonpartisan House Research Department, the stimulus money changes federal Medicaid reimbursement to the state, possibly resulting in a positive General Fund balance at the end of the fiscal year. Federal law prohibits the state from using the Medicaid reimbursement for a budget reserve. This conflicted with state law requiring any surplus to be first used for shoring up the state's cash flow account, paying back any school funding shifts and funding the reserve account. This account was depleted as part of the governor's December 2008 unallotment to bring the current biennial budget into balance.

The law also requires a budget enacted for the 2010-2011 biennium to provide for a balanced General Fund budget in fiscal years 2012-2013.

HF886*/SF824/CH5

— L. SCHUTZ

CONSUMERS

For insurance sake, no repair shops

The Allstate Corporation owns a vehicle repair shop in New York, and Rep. Leon Lillie (DFL-North St. Paul) doesn't want them to open one here.

He sponsors HF978 that would prohibit auto insurance companies or their affiliates from owning an auto repair shop in the state.

"By law, consumers are entitled to have their vehicle completely and safely repaired to its pre-accident condition," Mike Schoonover, told the House Commerce and Labor Committee March 3. The owner of a St. Paul auto repair shop and member of the Alliance of Automotive Service Providers-Minnesota said, "A conflict of interest arises when an insurance company that is paying for the

repair is also performing the repair.” He said that if insurance companies can own repair shops, this would lead to fewer consumer choices, and there is the fear companies would “aggressively steer consumers to their own shops.”

“It’s like Byerly’s coming to the Legislature saying Target should not be allowed to sell groceries,” countered Doug Franzen, representing the Property Casualty Insurers Association of America and Allstate.

Although the company does have an interest in a body shop, he said they are not currently pursuing the business strategy. “But we do have a concern about limiting a business model,” he said.

Franzen also thinks the bill could prevent Allstate from doing business in the state. Lillie said that is not the intent of the bill.

The committee approved the bill, and it now awaits action on the House floor.

The companion, SF842, sponsored by Sen. Mary Olson (DFL-Bemidji), awaits action in the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

CRIME

Alternative testifying for children

For children, the mental trauma of a crime committed against them can be overwhelming, and having to face their offender in court may only add to the problem.

Sponsored by Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center), HF720 would have Minnesota adopt the Uniform Child Witness Testimony by Alternative Methods Act, already adopted in Idaho, Nevada and Oklahoma.

Promulgated in 2002 by The National Conference of Commissioners on State Uniform Laws, the act provides alternative methods for children to testify in criminal and noncriminal proceedings when doing so would prevent further emotional trauma and is deemed to be in the child’s best interest, such as not seeing the defendant face-to-face or having to testify in an open forum.

“Minnesota was early into this field, and we come now to build on the successful experience we’ve had in Minnesota, but this goes a little further,” Jack Davies, a member of Minnesota’s Uniform Laws Commission, told the House Crime Victims/Criminal Records Division Feb. 27.

He said Minnesota’s original law only applied to cases where the child was the victim of criminal behavior, but this act expands coverage to some non-criminal proceedings.

An order for alternative testifying, issued

by a presiding officer of the court, would include the method used, persons allowed in or excluded from the room during testimony and any special conditions needed to examine or cross-examine the child.

Glen Norton, legislative chairman of the Minnesota State Bar Association’s family law section, was unsure how this would affect family court, where a child is the focus of the hearing. Hilstrom vowed to work with the association before the bill’s next stop.

“The family court is somewhat unique because sometimes, frequently, in issues of divorce, paternity, the children are the issue we are arguing over,” he said. “We haven’t studied this.”

Approved by the division, and March 5 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, the bill was sent to the House Civil Justice Committee. A companion, SF563, sponsored by Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— M. COOK

Juvenile drug court funding

Money paid by drug offenders could better help youth stay away from illegal substances.

Current law requires that a person convicted of a controlled substance crime must be fined at least 30 percent of the maximum fine authorized. Seventy percent of the penalty is forwarded to drug abuse prevention programs, such as DARE, in the county where the crime was committed and 30 percent goes to the state’s General Fund.

Rep. Jeremy Kalin (DFL-North Branch) would like to see juvenile drug court programs be eligible to receive part of the 70 percent. A bill he sponsors, HF600, was held over March 3 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

Kalin said there are four juvenile drug courts in the state, including one in Chisago County.

“It’s essentially a diversion program from juvenile detention, and, I think, ultimately to jail or (Department of Corrections) facilities,” he said. “The impact on not only the youth, but the families, is really constructive. It’s not one-size-fits-all, but I’ve seen it work very effectively to stop problems, especially drug-related, that can turn into much more serious crimes.”

Offenders work toward sobriety and recovery with a team that can include prosecutors, judges, law enforcement and mental health professionals. This can be done through ongoing treatment, frequent drug testing, mandatory court appearances and

other incentives to encourage change.

“We feel that expansion of the funding options is in keeping with the original intent of the DARE statute by focusing on juvenile drug abuse issues in the local community,” said Steve Paquay, Chisago County probation director. “We hope the passage will result in a new stable funding stream for these programs.”

A companion, SF321, sponsored by Sen. Rick Olseen (DFL-Harris), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Budget Division.

— M. COOK

Offender Web site use reconsidered

A bill to prohibit sexual predators access to certain computer sites cleared a House committee that defeated it five days earlier.

Sponsored by Rep. Karla Bigham (DFL-Cottage Grove), HF130 would prohibit predators from using social networking sites, like Facebook and MySpace. Offenders would also be prohibited from using instant messaging or chat room Internet sites, even when playing an online game.

Ten members of the House Civil Justice Committee voted yes March 2, with Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls), the committee chairman, abstaining. The committee defeated the measure on a 6-6 vote Feb. 25. It now returns to the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, which gave its approval Feb. 10.

Bigham did not offer any changes to the bill before Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) moved to reconsider the previous vote.

Both Bigham and Paymar later said the reconsideration came after Bigham further discussed, and clarified, concerns previously made by then-bill opponents. For example, Paymar said he didn’t initially fully understand all the aspects related to online gaming, but felt more comfortable after speaking with Bigham.

Awaiting action by the Senate Judiciary Committee is the bill’s companion, SF403, sponsored by Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul).

— M. COOK

EDUCATION

Charter schools reforms welcome

Charter schools are here to stay, but a significant overhaul could happen soon.

A 2008 report by the Office of the Legislative Auditor recommended changes that would strengthen and clarify the ongoing responsibilities of school sponsors, improve their governance and fiscal accountability and clarify the Department of Education’s oversight role.

Sponsored by Rep. Linda Slocum (DFL-Richfield), HF935 would implement the recommendations and make other changes that supporters say would result in the most significant charter school reform since Minnesota became the first state in the nation to authorize them in 1991.

“Charters aren’t going away; therefore, wouldn’t it make some sense to make them more responsive and more responsible and better in our communities?” Slocum asked. “This bill represents a lot of compromise and months of work. It’s good policy; it represents good government.”

The bill has garnered bipartisan support, but still sparked debate March 4 in the House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee over several amendments.

One successfully offered by Rep. Sandra Peterson (DFL-New Hope) would prohibit a charter school from locating near a district school that was closed within the previous 36 months. It surfaced tensions about the relationship between charters and traditional schools. Some members perceive charters as healthy competition that gives parents freedom of choice. Others fear charters and district schools can become like mom’s house and dad’s house in a divorce, when students — and the education dollars that follow

them — shift from one to the other while the responsibility for their academic performance is lost.

“What the Peterson amendment does is start to put a framework in place for ending the war and focusing instead on the kids,” said Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls).

Approved as amended, the bill now goes to the House Finance Committee. A companion, SF867, sponsored by Sen. Kathy Saltzman (DFL-Woodbury), is scheduled to be heard March 6 by the Senate Subcommittee on Charter Schools.

— K. BERGGREN

Governor’s school budget critiqued

Education advocates praised the governor’s commitment to K-12 education in the challenging economic climate, but critiqued a bill sponsored by Rep. Pat Garofalo (R-Farmington) reflecting the governor’s education budget.

“Our primary area of concern relates to accounting and property tax shifts,” said Scott Croonquist, executive director of the Association of Metropolitan School Districts.

Presented to the House K-12 Education Finance Division March 3, HF1172 would delay a portion of state aid payments to school districts and require them to recognize a

portion of their property tax levies early, saving the state \$1.3 billion. However, this could force many districts to borrow or spend down cash reserves to cover the shortfall.

“We are balancing the state’s budget on our credit card. That, to me, is the most troubling part of this budget,” said Brad Lundell, executive director of Schools for Equity in Education.

However, Lundell liked the proposed “pay for progress” revenue that would reward schools for demonstrating student academic growth, not just proficiency.

New spending proposals include:

- expanding Q Comp, the teacher alternative pay system, statewide and increasing the maximum per pupil bonus from \$260 to \$300;
- a “Summer of Success” to help eighth graders not proficient in reading and math improve before beginning ninth grade;
- a midcareer alternative teacher licensure path; and
- creating a virtual education program.

The bill would save \$4.6 million by converting the Perpich Center for Arts Education from a state agency and magnet school to a charter school effective July 1, 2010.

It would also mandate a minimum number

PATRIOTIC PUPILS



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Fourth-grade students from Bel Air Elementary School in New Brighton wave American flags as they sing a patriotic song March 3 in the Rotunda.

of instruction hours, not days, so nearly 100 schools would add between 0.9 and 120 minutes of daily instruction; eliminate teachers' right to strike except in certain circumstances; and require binding arbitration in others.

The bill was held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus K-12 education finance bill. Its companion, SF836, sponsored by Sen. LeRoy Stumpf (DFL-Plummer), awaits action by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

— K. BERGGREN

Teachers of early readers

Two bills promoting preschool literacy programs receive bipartisan support for their long-lasting benefits, but not their price tag.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) sponsors HF1046 that would appropriate \$3 million in the 2010-11 biennium to grow the Minnesota Reading Corps, an AmeriCorps program providing trained reading tutors for children from age 3 to grade three in Head Start settings and elsewhere.

Eighty percent of the first Minnesota Reading Corps "graduates" who began the program six years ago, and 85 percent of the second group, have attained proficiency on their third grade MCA-II reading assessments, said Audrey Suker, executive director of ServeMinnesota, a nonprofit organization coordinating AmeriCorps placements.

Such "proven results" demonstrate the program's value, Suker told the House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division March 3. She said increased funding would expand the program's reach to serve an additional 10,000 children, while leveraging \$15.5 million in federal funds and \$1.5 million in private funds.

Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina) said he's "very supportive" of the program because of its "data-driven" emphasis on "building core skills," but in the interest of balancing the budget offered unsuccessfully an amendment to reduce the appropriation by \$1 million.

Mariani countered that he would like to maximize "pretty modest investments in these areas for pretty big payoff for the K-12 system."

His bill was approved and sent to the House Finance Committee. A companion, SF851, sponsored by Sen. Kathy Saltzman (DFL-Woodbury), is scheduled to be heard March 12 by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

Division Chairwoman Rep. Nora Slawik (DFL-Maplewood) sponsors HF223, which would appropriate \$1 million in the upcoming biennium to WordsWork, another early literacy program serving 2,800 Head Start children in 16 counties. Independent evaluators found its

students, all from populations linked to risk of poor academic achievement, significantly outperformed a comparison group of similar students on last year's standardized tests.

It was held for possible inclusion in an omnibus early childhood finance bill. Its companion, SF291, sponsored by Sen. Chuck Wiger (DFL-Maplewood), awaits action by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

— K. BERGGREN

Closing district would pay its debt

McLeod West Public Schools is facing its imminent demise, but would like to minimize the consequences for neighboring districts that will absorb its 500 students.

A May 2009 election is scheduled to decide if the district is to be consolidated among three neighboring districts — Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop, Buffalo Lake-Hector and Glencoe-Silver Lake. The trio has agreed to absorb McLeod West students, but will not accept its estimated \$3 million reorganization debt.

A "no" vote would dissolve the district and force McLeod County commissioners to redraw district lines. Under current law, any reorganization debt would be pushed onto the three districts that take McLeod West pupils.

However, HF1040 would allow McLeod West to authorize a general obligation bond issue, without voter approval, to keep reorganization debt responsibility in its original district.

"We would just like to have this legislation in place to have an orderly transition to move this debt through the consolidation process," said Rep. Ron Shimanski (R-Silver Lake), the bill's sponsor.

Approved March 2 by the House Finance Committee, it was sent to the House Taxes Committee with the intent to reach the floor quickly. Its companion, SF811, sponsored by Sen. Steve Dille (R-Dassel), was scheduled to be heard March 5 by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

McLeod West was created when Stewart and Brownton schools merged in 1998. It has experienced severe enrollment decline, as well as facility disrepair in the face of voters' defeat of both building bond and operating referenda.

Acting McLeod West Superintendent Tony Boyer told the House K-12 Education Finance Division Feb. 25 he'd cautioned voters that defeating the November referendum would only result in higher taxes resulting from the reorganization debt.

"I think you're going to see this happen again and again in rural Minnesota," he

warned. For now, he said, "We are looking out for the best interests of our students and constituents, not just for today but for the future."

— K. BERGGREN

Schools need lunch money

Two bills would keep school lunches accessible to students whose families are dealing with kitchen table concerns.

More families are applying for free- or reduced-cost lunch eligibility, Sherri Knutson, Minnesota School Nutrition Association public policy chairwoman, told the House K-12 Education Finance Division Feb. 26. She said some school food service directors report that even some students who pay full price are skimping now.

"Mom and dad are giving them money to eat maybe only twice a week because there just isn't enough household money to spare," Knutson said.

Rochester Public Schools, where Knutson coordinates school nutrition services, has approved 346 applications for reduced-cost lunch since November, compared with 122 in the same period last year.

Susan Richardson, Roseville Area Schools' nutrition services coordinator, said 1,800 of 6,500 families in the district qualify for free lunches. Though another 500 qualify for reduced-cost meals, about a quarter can't pay the 40 cents they're charged.

HF784, sponsored by Rep. Jerry Newton (DFL-Coon Rapids), would increase the state reimbursement for reduced priced meals from 12 cents to 52 cents per meal, and require that schools offer reduced priced meals at no cost to eligible students. Its estimated price tag is \$3.5 million annually.

Sponsored by Rep. John Benson (DFL-Minnetonka), HF252 would increase state aid to school food programs from 12 cents to 15 cents per meal. It's estimated to cost \$3 million per year.

School food programs are raising money and saving costs, testifiers said. For example, sales of a la carte snacks, such as chips and cookies, often help underwrite higher prices for fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains — even as the high-fat snacks undermine today's stricter nutrition standards. Rochester and dozens of other districts economize through membership in buying groups. Some schools subsidize meals for those who can't pay from unclaimed funds from former students' lunch accounts. Still, as the number of paid meals decreases, said Knutson, costs per meal increase.

Both bills were held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus education finance bill. Their respective companions, SF856,

sponsored by Sen. LeRoy Stumpf (DFL-Plummer), and SF1015, sponsored by Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul), await action by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

— K. BERGGREN

ELECTIONS

Fixing an election 'quirk'

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) wants to make sure that a "quirk" in state law doesn't leave people in some cities without representation on their city councils after redistricting.

Kahn sponsors HF653, which is designed to prevent a problem that occurs when city council elections are held after a census has occurred, but before the city's ward boundaries are redrawn based on census data.

In essence, in cities using a ward system, such as Minneapolis and St. Paul, city council candidates campaign and get elected in the old ward boundaries, only to end up representing the new ward boundaries. Kahn said this leaves some city residents without equal representation.

"This is a basic aspect of democracy, and it's just fixing up a quirk in state law that needs to be fixed," Kahn said.



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Ramsey County Elections Manager Joe Mansky testifies before the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee March 3 in support of a bill that would address St. Paul City Council elections.

The bill was approved March 3 by the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. It now goes to the House floor.

Kahn successfully amended the bill with language that Ramsey County Elections Manager Joe Mansky said would prevent it from causing problems with St. Paul's city council elections.

A companion, SF834, sponsored by Sen. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), was laid over Feb. 26 by the elections subcommittee of the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— N. BUSSE

EMPLOYMENT

Contractor or employee?

A bill could require trucking and delivery companies to take a different fork in the road.

HF813 would crack down on misclassification of some workers, which its sponsor, Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-St. Paul), called a "huge problem" in Minnesota, particularly in the courier business. He said 14 percent of Minnesota employers — and 35 percent of a sampling of those in the trucking industry — wrongly misclassify some workers as independent contractors not subject to withholding taxes, Social Security or health insurance benefits, although in practice they're treated as employees who may be required to wear company uniforms, attend trainings and adhere to a company schedule.

Approved Feb. 27 by the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division and the House Commerce and Labor Committee March 3, the bill now awaits action on the House floor. A companion, SF910, sponsored by Sen. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), awaits action by the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

Edward Reynoso, field action director for the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Joint Council 32, acknowledged that 13.5 million "legitimate" independent contractors work nationwide, but said misclassifying workers leads to \$15 million in lost income tax revenue in Minnesota annually, while taxpayers foot the bill for those without health care insurance.

The bill's opponents said it could threaten the industry.

Minnesota Trucking Association President John Hausladen said his group's members are "highly skilled professionals" who are free to "decide when to take a load, what route to take, when to put fuel in their vehicles."

"I consider myself a small businessman,"

said trucker Robert Towey, who contracts with Dart Transit Company and took an unpaid day off the road to oppose the bill at the hearing. He said he owns his equipment, negotiates rates with employers and pays taxes, worker's compensation and medical insurance.

Rep. Kurt Zellers (R-Maple Grove) said compliance would unfairly burden small businesses, such as construction companies that rely on seasonal independent contractors to supplement their regular employee pool.

— K. BERGGREN

Workers' compensation problems

A report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor finds that Minnesota's workers' compensation system works well overall, but still has room for improvement.

Legislative Auditor James Nobles presented the report, "Oversight of Workers' Compensation," to members of the House Bioscience and Workforce Development Policy and Oversight Division March 4. No action was taken.

Deborah Parker Junod, who managed the audit, outlined the report's major findings, which indicate shortcomings in several areas, including:

- staff cuts have harmed the Department of Labor and Industry's ability to enforce workers' compensation laws;
- the department does an inadequate job of tracking reimbursements from uninsured employers; and
- the state's dispute resolution process is overly complex.

The report found that the department does an inadequate job of recovering state expenses. In cases where employers without workers' compensation insurance were ordered to reimburse the state for paying benefits to injured workers, the department was only able to recover about 19 percent of the total penalties assessed for employers.

A number of concerning trends are also identified in the report. Among them, workers' compensation insurers are underpaying benefits at an increasing rate. Also, the proportion of claims in which workers and insurers have disputes has been rising.

To fix many of the issues identified in the report, the office recommends improved information technology systems, more aggressive pursuit of reimbursements from uninsured employers and establishment by the Legislature of an ombudsman for workers' compensation, among other changes.

Labor and Industry Commissioner Steve Sviggum, whose agency manages the state's workers' compensation system, said the department is in "complete harmony" with

the OLA findings, and will work to implement the recommended changes.

— N. BUSSE

ENERGY

Thermal energy supported

A policy to encourage use of solar energy to produce thermal energy for heating buildings was approved March 2 by the House Energy Finance and Policy Division.

HF1078, sponsored by Rep. Paul Thissen (DFL-Mpls), would require the commerce commissioner and Pollution Control Agency to make recommendations to the Legislature for achieving solar and thermal energy goals, specifically the federal requirement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 25 percent by 2025. Passage of the bill would be the catalyst needed to reduce energy dependence on coal and to expand the number of green jobs in Minnesota, Thissen said.

About one-third of the energy consumed in Minnesota is thermal, said Anders Rydaker, president of District Energy in St. Paul. "To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and set goals for reducing our carbon footprint, we should not ignore that third."

Minneapolis receives as much direct sunlight as Houston, Texas, and is therefore poised to produce more thermal and solar energy, assuming that incentives and policies are in place, said Rydaker, adding that solar-thermal energy is three times more efficient than solar-electric production.

Once a policy is established, incentives will follow, Thissen said, adding that incentives do not necessarily mean tax incentives.

Republican members called the bill ambiguous, and the vote was split along party lines.

The bill was sent to the House floor, and also could be considered for possible inclusion in the division's omnibus bill. A companion, SF1020, sponsored by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Energy, Utilities, Technologies and Communications Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

PUC may require excess fee refunds

The Public Utilities Commission could require repayment when utility and telephone companies overcharge ratepayers, according to a bill approved March 4 by the House Energy Finance and Policy Division.

HF1038, sponsored by Rep. Gail Kulick Jackson (DFL-Milaca), would give the PUC authority to require ratepayer reimbursement by the utilities and telecom companies if it's determined funds were collected as a result

of unlawful conduct. Currently there is no such authority. Refunds would have a statute of limitations up to six years prior to learning of the infraction.

Janet Gonzalez, PUC energy unit manager, said the bill was developed for policy reasons and that, although there may be pending cases, she does not have any anticipated refund estimates. Examples of misconduct include utilities that place surcharges on bills without pre-approval from the PUC or if lower rates are approved by the PUC, but the utility keeps charging the previous higher rate.

Rep. Joe Atkins (DFL-Inver Grove Heights) said ratepayers should be given refunds with interest. However that is not currently provided for in the bill, which was referred to the House Commerce and Labor Committee. Atkins said an amendment to require interest payments may be introduced there.

Any refunds issued would not preclude the PUC from also pursuing penalties for the misconduct.

A companion, SF574, sponsored by Sen. Kevin Dahle (DFL-Northfield), awaits action by the Senate Energy, Utilities, Technology and Communications Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

ENVIRONMENT

Program for DNR asset preservation

A recent Department of Natural Resources' report indicates the department is about \$120 million behind schedule in facility maintenance and preservation.

Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul) sponsors a bill that creates a plan for the replacement and preservation of DNR buildings and recreation facilities.

HF983 would establish the Natural Resources Asset Preservation and Replacement program, patterned after a similar program for facility repairs and replacement at higher education institutions.

Hansen said the program is a way to streamline requests for DNR bonding projects so that legislators are not competing for funding by introducing dozens of bonding proposals each session.

The bill was held over March 3 by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division for possible inclusion in recommendations to the House Capital Investment Finance Division or the division's omnibus bill.

According to the report, there is \$25 million in deferred maintenance projects, such as roofing, plumbing, heating, electrical and structural upgrades, for DNR buildings. Another \$15 million is needed for repairs to

septic and sewer systems, water resources and parking lots. In addition, an estimated \$80 million is necessary to upgrade recreational areas, such as campgrounds, state trails, wayside rest areas and water access locations.

If enacted, the program would allow up to 10 percent of any appropriation to be used for design costs for eligible projects, which would be prioritized by the DNR. By Jan. 15 each year, a list of the projects completed the previous year, as well as proposed projects for the current year, would need to be submitted to the commissioner of finance and the Legislature.

A companion bill, SF919, sponsored by Senate President James Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Budget Division.

— S. HEGARTY

FAMILY

Parenting time, expense adjustment

Non-custodial parents might be able to spend more time with their children.

The rebuttal presumption now found in state statute requires that, in the absence of other evidence, a parent be entitled to receive at least 25 percent of the parenting time for his or her child.

Sponsored by Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul), HF1003 would increase the presumption to 40 percent, if there are no issues related to the best interests of the child.

After an hour-plus discussion March 2 by the House Civil Justice Committee, Mahoney opted to hold the bill over for future discussion. There is no Senate companion.

Molly Olson, founder of the Center for Parental Responsibility, said children should have at least 40 percent time with each fit parent. "This will advance the well-founded premise that children need both parents and will maximize involvement by both parents," she said.

Other proponents wondered why they should have to spend \$100,000 or more in legal fees just to see their child a little more often. "It's easier to work out the remaining 73 days when each has 146 to start," said Mahoney. He said every-other-weekend, Friday night to Monday morning, is 78 days or nights. Half of a summer vacation is 46 days and equally divided school year breaks would be 15 days to equal 139 days.

Glen Norton, legislative chairman of the Minnesota State Bar Association's family law section, said judges can already determine what is best for a child. "This bill goes the other way."

The bill would also modify the parenting expense adjustment, so the non-custodial

YOUTH MENTORING

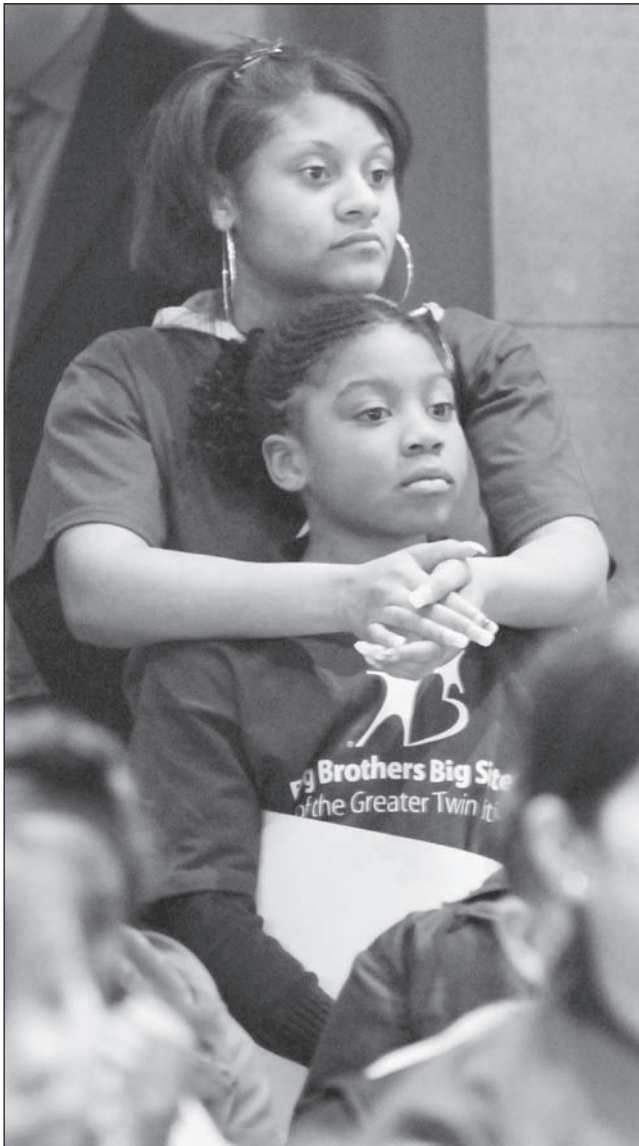


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Big Sister Paris Charles holds her Little Sister LaCariah Watts as they joined other participants in the Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Greater Twin Cities Area to rally Feb. 26 in the Rotunda to show support for youth mentoring.

parent's child support obligation would be based on parenting time established by the court.

Currently a 10 percent to 45 percent parenting time results in a 12 percent discount in child support. The bill would change the top percentage to "not less than 30 percent." It would add that between 30 percent and 45.1 percent parenting time results in a 30 percent decrease in child support.

Michael Dittberner, legislative chairman of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, said adding levels could lead to access fights based on financial benefit.

— M. COOK

GAME & FISH

Decoy rules adjusted

Waterfowl hunters may be able to put decoys in public waters or on public land earlier than usual, but they'd have to watch over them constantly, according to provisions approved March 2 by the House Game, Fish and Forestry Division.

Current law allows decoy placement one hour prior to the start of shooting times. HF709, sponsored by Rep. Mike Nelson (DFL-Brooklyn Park), would let decoys be placed earlier, but a licensed waterfowl hunter would

have to keep watch over them.

A second provision would make changes for private landowners.

Current law prohibits hunters from leaving decoys unattended longer than four hours during or after the hunt, unless a hunter is in waters adjacent to their private property. If there isn't sufficient vegetation in the water to partially conceal the hunter, they can leave the decoys in the water beyond four hours.

Anoka resident Jeff Weaver recommended dropping that exception for private landowners because, in his opinion, it gives them an unfair advantage. Weaver said some waterfront owners string upwards of 200 decoys in the water and leave them there throughout the hunting season.

Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder) supports repealing that portion of the statute.

Department of Natural Resources Enforcement Chief Jim Conrad said a possible repeal would not cause enforcement problems, although it might irritate the private landowners who hunt along their own shorelines.

Conrad agreed to work on refining the bill with Nelson prior its possible inclusion in the division's omnibus bill. It has no Senate companion.

— S. HEGARTY

GOVERNMENT

Crumbling Capitol?

Don't let its gleaming white exterior fool you: Minnesota's State Capitol is in need of a serious makeover.

That was the message from Administration Commissioner Dana Badgerow, who told members of a House division that the 105-year-old building is deteriorating from top to bottom.

"We've got a situation here that is really depressing in the condition of our State Capitol," Badgerow testified before the House State Government Finance Division March 3. No action was taken.

Dave Fielding, plant management director for the department, said the Capitol has everything from water damage in its dome structure to crumbling ceilings in parts of the basement. He said the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems in the building are old and inefficient, as is some of the technology and communications equipment.

Fielding stated the building is in need of a variety of updates to be brought into compliance with state building codes, and also failed a security vulnerability assessment by the Minnesota National Guard. He added the scale of work necessary would require "major



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Capitol Plant Management Engineer Dave Albien and Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer examine an aging heating system during a March 3 tour of Capitol building deficiencies by the House State Government Finance Division.

disruptions" to daily activities in the building.

"We just ought not to be letting things deteriorate like this," said Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake), who suggested the state create a special fund for Capitol renovations that could carry over from year to year.

Chairwoman Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) said legislators are often reluctant to spend money on the Capitol, and noted that a recent effort to address some of the problems legislatively failed.

However, Kahn related the story of former Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Wells), who many years ago was having his picture taken with a group of constituents when the arm of a statue on the side of the Capitol came tumbling down and crashed on the steps beside them.

"Our committee did that reconstruction funding so fast," Kahn said.

— N. BUSSE

Teleconferencing to save money

A bill that would allow state agencies to save on travel expenses by teleconferencing is headed to the House floor.

HF456, sponsored by Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-St. Paul), would allow agencies to hold meetings via telephone or other electronic means as long as the following conditions are met:

- all meeting participants can clearly hear one another and all discussion and testimony;
- members of the public present at the normal physical meeting location can hear all

discussion and votes and participate in the meeting;

- at least one member of the agency or entity is present at the normal meeting location; and
- all votes are conducted by roll call.

The House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee approved the bill March 3 and sent it to the House floor.

In its original form, the bill would have applied only to the Indian Affairs Council; however, the idea was expanded in a delete-all amendment successfully offered by Chairman Rep. Gene Pelowski Jr. (DFL-Winona) to include all state agencies.

The bill would not change public notice requirements for state agencies conducting meetings electronically. Many agencies already have the authority to conduct meetings via teleconference in certain circumstances, such as in emergencies.

At a Feb. 26 hearing in which the bill was temporarily laid over, some committee members were supportive of the idea as a cost-saving measure, while others said it opened the door to abuses.

Noting that people who participate in electronic meetings could still collect per diem payments, Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan) wondered if money saved on travel expenses and lodging would be partially offset by people collecting per diem for participating in meetings "at home in their pajamas."

Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul) sponsors the companion, SF764, which was recommended to pass March 4 by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— N. BUSSE

Better access to government

Have you ever had a question for a state agency but found it difficult to get someone on the phone to answer it? Rep. Jeremy Kalin (DFL-North Branch) feels your pain, and wants to help.

Kalin sponsors HF1018 that would require state agencies to clearly and prominently post contact information on each of their Web sites, including an e-mail address and a phone number "that will be answered by a human being."

Kalin said he came up with the idea for the bill after experiencing difficulty finding phone numbers on state agency Web sites. The goal of the bill is simply "to make sure that Minnesotans can actually access their government," he said.

The proposal was one of two bills focused on government transparency that were approved Feb. 26 by the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

The other, HF20, sponsored by Rep. Ryan Winkler (DFL-Golden Valley), would require Minnesota Management and Budget to maintain a public Web site with a searchable database of all state expenditures. Winkler said he got the idea from Missouri, which maintains its own public database of state contracts and appropriations.

Curt Yoakum, state program administration manager for Minnesota Management and Budget, said, that in the "worst case scenario," the project outlined in the bill could cost upwards of \$400,000. He said MMB is in the process of creating a database similar to that proposed through its own internal efforts.

Both bills were approved and referred to the House State Government Finance Division. Sen. Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope) sponsors SF91, the companion to Winkler's bill, which awaits action by the Senate State Government Budget Division. Kalin's bill has no Senate companion.

— N. BUSSE

HEALTH

Prevention for heart disease, strokes

Proponents for the prevention of heart disease and strokes are requesting \$500,000 to fund data collection and other activities associated with such medical conditions.

HF499, sponsored by Rep. Erin Murphy (DFL-St. Paul), was laid over March 4 for possible inclusion in the House Housing Finance and Policy and Public Health Finance Division's omnibus bill.

The bill raised questions with members and one testifier who believe there could be Data Practices Act issues. Murphy said there would be no personal identifiable collection of patient information. Data collected would be used to monitor and improve cardiovascular health through targeted prevention programs.

Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids) questioned the need and timing for the appropriation since other state health prevention programs overlap and there are General Fund deficit problems.

Dr. Russell Luepker, a University of Minnesota public health professor and 30-year American Heart Association volunteer, testified that the program would pay for itself if it can prevent nine people from experiencing a stroke or heart attack, and their subsequent hospitalization costs.

Also, the funds would be a needed match to acquire a federal grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A companion, SF432, sponsored by Sen. Ann Lynch (DFL-Rochester), rests with the Senate Health and Human Services Budget Division.

— S. HEGARTY

HIGHER EDUCATION

Regent candidates selected

The four open seats on the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents are one step closer to being filled.

The joint House and Senate committee on regent selection voted March 3 to recommend four of the nine finalists for election to the university's 12-member governing body.

- The recommended candidates are:
- from the 1st Congressional District, Patricia Simmons of Rochester, the current board chairwoman;
 - from the 4th Congressional District, Richard Beeson of St. Paul;
 - from the 6th Congressional District, current regent John Frobenius of St. Cloud; and
 - from the 7th Congressional District, Clyde Allen Jr. of Moorhead, current board vice-chairman.

The committee, which comprises the members of the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division and the Senate Higher Education Budget and Policy Division, will now make its recommendations to the full House and Senate, which will meet March 9

in a special joint session to formally elect the candidates.

Regents serve without pay for six-year, staggered terms, with one-third of the seats on the board open every two years. The Legislature elects one regent from each of Minnesota's eight congressional districts and four from the state at large.

At a Feb. 26 meeting, the candidates made their pitch to committee members on why they were best qualified for the job. Eight candidates were recommended by the Regent Candidate Advisory Council, and a ninth, Frobenius, was successfully nominated by Rep. Larry Haws (DFL-St. Cloud).

"I feel personally very torn over several of these seats," said committee co-chair Sen. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), who praised the quality of all the regent candidates.

— N. BUSSE

HUMAN SERVICES

Two views on radiation treatment

A bill described as "a fight between two groups," came under intense debate on the House floor March 5, with the chairs of the House health committees on opposite sides of the issue.

Rep. Paul Thissen (DFL-Mpls) and Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls) sponsor HF177/SF162*, which would extend the current moratorium on construction of new radiation oncology facilities from 2011 to 2014 in the Twin Cities metropolitan area, and several regional centers in Greater Minnesota.

Passed by the House 90-39, it now moves to the governor's desk. It passed the Senate 55-7 on Feb. 19.

"The Legislature has made the decision, on repeated occasions, that limiting the expansion of these machines is the right public policy for us to be pursuing," said Thissen, who chairs the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee. He pointed to information from the Minnesota Hospital Association and individual providers showing there are more radiation services available than needed, based on 2007 capacity. "This is in a large part about controlling costs," he said.

But the chairman of the House Health Care and Human Services Finance Division has a different take on the matter and encouraged members to vote against the bill.

"What we really have is a fight between Starbucks and Caribou Coffee, and Starbucks doesn't want Caribou to open any more shops. ... It's a fight between two good groups of radiation oncologists, both of them do a good job, but one of them wants to keep the

other out of the business," said Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth).

He said that one group owns their machines and leases space in hospitals. The other uses a model where the oncology professionals act as a team. Its machines could be in hospitals or in separate facilities. Huntley argued the latter provides greater access for patients.

Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake) was among those calling the moratorium a cap on free enterprise. "Why should government be making decisions regarding private enterprise. "I don't know why we want government picking winners and losers, and not letting the market doing its job."

— L. SCHUTZ

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Smarter, greener land use

A proposal working its way through the House would ask local governments to do their part to mitigate climate change — and possibly save themselves some money in the process.

HF1035, sponsored by Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph), would modify land use statutes by limiting rural development and allowing cities to establish planned growth areas in neighboring townships.

The goal is to slow suburban sprawl and encourage cities to develop in areas where there is already a relatively high population density. Hosch said the bill evolved from findings of the Minnesota Climate Change Advisory Group, which recommended the changes to stop fragmentation of agricultural land and reduce the number of vehicle miles driven in the state, both of which contribute to global warming.

But supporters say the bill could have other benefits as well. Focusing development around already populated areas would mean that cities would spend less money on extending roads, sewers and other services. Bradley Peterson, a lobbyist representing the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, said more compact growth areas will save taxpayers money.

Others interpret the bill's provisions quite differently. Kent Sulem, an attorney for the Minnesota Association of Townships, said the bill would give virtually unilateral authority to municipal governments that want to annex land in neighboring townships.

"This bill is simply an anti-township annexation bill trying to be guised in the arena of environmental policy," Sulem said, adding that he supported the greenhouse gas reduction goals of the legislation.

The House Local Government Division approved the bill on a 6-4 vote March 2

and referred it to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook) sponsors the companion, SF913, which awaits action by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

— N. BUSSE

MILITARY

Contract preference for veterans

Returning veterans face significant hurdles when it comes to business opportunities, and two House members are working together to address the issue.

Under current law, women and minorities are given preference in the letting of state contracts. A new category would provide preference in the state procurement process to businesses that are majority-owned and operated by service-disabled veterans.

Sponsored by Rep. Jerry Newton (DFL-Coon Rapids), HF715 was amended to contain language similar to HF557, sponsored by Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids), that would afford the advantage to all veteran-owned businesses.

Both bills were approved Feb. 27 by the House Veterans Affairs Division and sent to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.

Before the committee approval, however, HF715 was amended back to its original language offering the preference only to service-disabled veteran owned businesses. Now awaiting action by the House Finance Committee, it also calls for an up to 6 percent preference in the bid amount on state procurement to qualifying service-disabled veteran-owned small businesses. It has no Senate companion.

Newton said that after discussion with Severson, it was determined there were not accurate numbers to determine the fiscal impact if the bill encompassed all veteran-owned businesses.

Severson's bill is scheduled to be heard by the committee March 9. Its companion, SF861, sponsored by Sen. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

Supporters say that returning veterans face their own hardships in attaining contracts because, while they have been serving their country, they have been losing networking time and have been unable to build contacts needed to at least get their foot in the door.

— L. SCHUTZ

Reimbursing volunteers

The state's nationally recognized Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program relies heavily on volunteers to support reintegration of military men and women. However, the Department of Military Affairs, does not have the necessary state authority to accept volunteer services.

Sponsored by Rep. Al Doty (DFL-Royalton), HF905 would provide a process to accept volunteers and reimburse them for travel expenses.

Approved Feb. 27 by the House Veterans Affairs Division and March 4 by the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee, it now awaits action by the House Finance Committee.

Col. Eric Ahlness, director of government relations for the Minnesota National Guard, assuaged division members that the department was not substituting full- or part-time staff with volunteers.

"We are not going to use this in any way to replace full-time or part-time employees," Ahlness said. "We are prohibited from doing that by federal statute, as well as with existing protections within our union agreements." Additionally, he said the bill would provide a legal protection for volunteers injured during their service to the department.

A companion, SF858, sponsored by Sen. Lisa Fobbe (DFL-Zimmerman), awaits action by the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Budget and Policy Division.

— L. SCHUTZ

SAFETY

Domestic fatality team funding

What began as a pilot project in one judicial district could become permanent across the state.

Sponsored by Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul), HF248 would allow the state's Fourth Judicial District to maintain its domestic fatality review team, and permit other judicial districts to create the same.

Current law refers to the team as a pilot project, and limits its availability to the lone district.

Approved Feb. 27 by the House Crime Victims/Criminal Records Division, it was held over March 5 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion. A companion, SF17, sponsored by Sen. Warren Limmer (R-Maple Grove), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Established on Aug. 1, 2000, the team was created to improve policies and procedures to better address domestic violence in Hennepin County.

"A number of intervening agencies look at the facts when there's been a domestic violence homicide and try to figure out what systematic problems have occurred that might get corrected in the future," Paymar said. "It's my hope that more judicial districts will start review teams, this does not require that. There is no money involved here."

Program Coordinator Deena Anders said it would continue allowing the team access to non-public data, something essential to its work. "We mostly draw from county attorney files, police files, medical records to create a thorough analogy of the cases as far back as we can. We look at the relationship, other involvement of police all the way up to the homicide, as well as the court outcomes."

The bill also reduces, from two to one annually per team, a report to the Legislature that consists of aggregate recommendations without reference to specific cases.

Among changes that have been implemented because of team activity, Anders said, is the establishment of a domestic court calendar in the district. A pilot project is also underway at one Minneapolis Police Department precinct that enhances investigation techniques. "It has led to a 23 percent increase in convictions of domestic assaults," she said.

— M. COOK

Real officer or not

A person attempting to perform an act reserved for licensed peace officers had best be one.

Sponsored by Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul), HF180 would make it a gross misdemeanor for a person to be convicted more than once for misrepresenting themselves as a peace officer. A first-time offense is a misdemeanor.

The bill would also make it a misdemeanor for a peace officer to knowingly allow a person to represent themselves as a peace officer. The bill is supported by the Board of Peace Officers Standards and Training, the Minnesota Police & Peace Officers Association and the Minnesota Sheriffs' Association.

"We want to make sure that our sheriffs and chiefs of police understand that only a licensed police officer can perform police business," Paymar said.

"Part of the motivation for this bill was a situation that came about in my county where the Ramsey County sheriff hired a non-licensed police officer and had him assigned to the special investigation unit, where he was responsible to do police work. This individual was a friend of the sheriff, who admitted he hired this individual who was a public information officer and assigned him to this investigation unit. ... The individual has since

been convicted of stealing money.”

Paymar said the potential liability to the county had the person fired a weapon would have been “monumental.”

The bill would also permit a detention officer to carry a weapon if they are employed by the local sheriff’s office.

“Things have changed over the years, and sheriffs’ offices oftentimes use what’s similar to a corrections officer in the prisons,” Paymar said. “A detention officer wouldn’t actually be a licensed police officer, but they are allowed to carry weapons.”

Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Good Thunder) expressed concern about someone handling a firearm without specialized training. Paymar said he’d work with Cornish to address his concern.

The bill was held over March 3 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill. A companion, SF413, sponsored by Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— M. Cook

Help to find missing people

The name Keith Kennedy may not be familiar to many people, but his story is.

The 25-year-old with autism walked away from a camp near Grantsburg, Wis., last June. He was missing for seven days before being found lying in brush less than a mile away.

“There are few worse feelings for a parent than your child being missing,” his father, Bruce, told the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee March 3.

Hundreds of volunteers and law enforcement personnel searched for Keith, whose communication skills are extremely limited. The cost of the search was in the \$300,000-\$400,000 range, Bruce Kennedy said.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Andy Welti (DFL-Plainview) would make strides towards ensuring that no family has to go through Kennedy’s experience.

HF622 would establish a voluntary statewide advisory task force within the Department of Public Safety to administer a lifesaver response grant program. Funds would come from the state or private donations.

Counties alone or counties paired with local units of governments would be able to apply for grants that could only be used for an emergency response kit and training. The recipients would pick up operational costs.

The programs are designed to quickly find individuals who go missing and have medical conditions, such as Alzheimer’s disease, dementia or autism. “Lives will be saved, fewer families will grieve over a death of a child, parent or grandparent. Time spent



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Deputy Jonathan Jacobson from the Olmsted County Sheriff’s Office, left, and Bruce Kennedy testify before the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee March 3 in support of a bill that would establish a voluntary statewide advisory task force to administer a lifesaver response grant program to help locate lost or wandering persons who are mentally impaired.

searching for missing individuals will be greatly reduced,” Welti said.

Approved by the committee, it is headed to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. A companion, SF1138, sponsored by Senate Minority Leader David Senjem (R-Rochester), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Brad Trahan, co-founder of the RT Autism Awareness Foundation in Rochester, showed a transponder bracelet — about the size of a wristwatch — that a person wears. “Each has a frequency that you can track up to one mile on the ground or up to 10 miles in the air,” he said. Using a tracking device, authorities plug in to the frequency. On average, people are found in less than 30 minutes. Since a program in Olmsted County began in April 2007, 50 people have signed up. There were eight calls last year.

— M. Cook

Police exam eligibility change

Some military police veterans could need one more background requirement before taking the test to become state-licensed police officers.

A person with five years of active duty military police service who has been

honorably discharged is now eligible to take the examination, but HF980 would provide exam eligibility to someone who has graduated from a military law enforcement academy, has three years of military police experience and has earned at least a two-year college degree.

It would also permit someone who has five years of full-time peace officer experience in another state and some active duty military law enforcement experience to take the exam.

“The way you can tell if they’re eligible is the military has what they call ‘military occupational specialty numbers,’” said Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), the bill’s sponsor. “So it wouldn’t just be somebody that would be in the MPs maybe pulling guard duty or something. They actually have to be trained in law enforcement in the academy.”

Lieder said the law enforcement community supports the bill because “it would give some diversity to their applicants.”

Approved without discussion March 3 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, the bill next goes to the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee.

A companion, SF908, sponsored by Sen. Yvonne Prettnier Solon (DFL-Duluth), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— M. Cook

Predatory offender felonious offense

When an out-of-state sex offender moved to a Chisago City home four years ago, neighbors were not made aware of his Nebraska felony conviction for a sex crime against a minor. State law does not assign offender levels to sex perpetrators moving into the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

“In that case he was trying to drag a young female off the street and into his vehicle while she was rollerblading in her neighborhood with two friends,” said Bill Schlumbohm, deputy chief of the Lakes Area Police Department.

The man has since pleaded guilty to aggravated harassment and stalking in Minnesota for indecent exposure.

Sponsored by Rep. Jeremy Kalin (DFL-North Branch), HF551 would create a fifth degree criminal sexual conduct — a felony offense — for repeat no contact predatory offenders. At that point, the offender could serve time in a corrections facility and have a risk level assigned.

“Given the pattern of offenses, these repeat predatory offenders — even if all offenses were non-contact — stand a high likelihood of being assigned a Level 3 (probable recidivism) status,” Kalin wrote in a later e-mail. The public is notified when a Level 3 offender moves into an area.

Amended and approved Feb. 27 by the House



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Lakes Area Police Deputy Chief Bill Schlumbohm testifies before the House Crime Victims/Criminal Records Division Feb. 27 in support of a bill that would create a fifth degree criminal sexual conduct offense for repeat no contact predatory offenders.

Crime Victims/Criminal Records Division, and approved March 5 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, the bill was sent to the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee. A companion, SF788, sponsored by Sen. Rick Olseen (DFL-Harris), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

“(Now) you can have as many indecent exposures as you want, it doesn’t aggravate. It doesn’t get more serious. Each offense is treated on its own,” Schlumbohm said. “It doesn’t matter that he’s done it two other times before that or however many times. It doesn’t matter that he’s got a conviction for dragging a girl off the street.”

The bill would also require the Corrections and Public Safety departments to tailor current material on the dangers of predatory offenders to child-care providers, nursing and group home workers and providers, and the like.

— M. Cook

TAXES

Defining a nonprofit

Nonprofits are exempt from federal income taxes, but they are not always exempted from property taxes. Under a proposed bill, they could have to meet more requirements to continue that exemption.

After a year of deliberation, criteria for HF872, sponsored by Rep. Paul Marquart (DFL-Dilworth), would provide clarification for eligibility for property tax exemption for institutions of public charity. On its 24th draft, Marquart said, “This has been a very deliberative process.”

He said no consistency was found for how assessors are assessing nonprofits. “Some assessors are using the North Star standards and some are just saying, ‘I know a nonprofit when I see one.’” The bill would create the uniformity on defining a nonprofit, and would also give the security that if a nonprofit meets the bill’s criteria, it would be exempt from property tax, Marquart said.

“Nonprofits and assessors need clarity,” said Marcia Avner, public policy director with the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits. “One-size-fits-all doesn’t work.”

“I think the bill gets to what we’re concerned about,” said Tom May, Hennepin County assessor. “We wanted a clear definition of what we need to do and think the language in bill does that.”

John Hagen, assistant director for the property tax division of the Department of Revenue, said the department is recommending an administrative group be appointed to make determinations on more complex issues. “It would be a built-in safety net for issues that arise,” he said.

The bill was laid over for possible division report inclusion. A companion, SF751, sponsored by Sen. Tarryl Clark (DFL-St. Cloud), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

—S. HEGMAN

Taxing online sales

Companies selling merchandise online could be subject to the state’s sales tax.

HF401, sponsored by Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Grand Rapids), would establish a duty to collect sales tax on out-of-state Internet businesses.

Solberg said the bill is based on a law recently enacted in New York, and would apply to businesses like Amazon.com, who enter into contracts with bloggers to put links from their sites to the company’s Web site. Contract payment is often based on the number of referrals or the sales generated through these links. Amazon unsuccessfully challenged the New York law in a state court as violating the interstate commerce clause.

Joel Michael, with the nonpartisan House Research Department, said a sales tax applies only when a business has a physical presence in the state. Under the bill, if the business has a solicitor in Minnesota that would be enough for the sales tax to apply.

According to the Department of Revenue, the requirement would apply only if the total gross receipts from sales to Minnesota customers who were referred to the retailer by residents with this type of agreement with the retailer are at least \$10,000 in the previous 12-month period before the calendar quarter in which the sale is made.

The bill was laid over for possible omnibus bill inclusion. A companion, SF282, sponsored by Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

—S. HEGMAN

Helping the Amish

After a lively discussion in the House Taxes Committee March 4 about the tasks people can perform on computers, the committee heard HF526, sponsored by Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie).

“I have a lot of Amish in my area, so when we do sales tax, they don’t have computers to do it electronically,” she said. “This would allow them to have a paper trail.”

The bill would allow people to pay sales tax remittances by mail instead of remitting them electronically, if their religious beliefs prohibit the use of electronic means.

According to the nonpartisan House Research Department, anyone with an annual sales tax liability of \$10,000 or more is required to remit sales taxes electronically. If passed, a person intending to take advantage of this provision would have to notify the Department of Revenue of their intent to do so. The remittance would have to be postmarked two days before the due date for the electronic remittance to be considered filed in a timely fashion. The provision would be effective beginning with payments after June 30.

The bill was laid over for possible omnibus bill inclusion. There is no Senate companion.

—S. HEGMAN

Paying withholding tax

A proposed update to tax withholding penalties came under discussion March 3 by the House Taxes Committee.

The penalty proposed in HF885, sponsored by Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington), is part of a Department of Revenue bill to clean up technical language and has non-budget recommendations from the department.

The withholding penalty would affect employers in construction trades who fail to withhold income tax from wages, or pay to independent contractors, when required. Members questioned why the employer would be at fault and not the independent contractor who should be withholding the tax on their own.

"This is very confusing," said Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Grand Rapids).

Mark Pederson, a department attorney, said employers are allowed a credit for taxes paid by the employees. "So if the employees file their returns, the employer is off the hook for having to pay for the withholding," he said. If there is a question about whether the tax was withheld for an independent contractor, the department would have to conduct a full audit of each of the independent contractors hired to determine if they claimed all income.

"If I'm an employer, am I penalized in this situation if (the independent contractor) doesn't do what they are supposed to do or are they?" asked Rep. Laura Brod (R-New Prague).

Pederson said if the person hired is an independent contractor and they don't withhold any tax, there would be no consequence to the employer. Brod added that she, too, thought this section was confusing and hoped to have future discussion on the topic.

The bill was laid over for possible omnibus bill inclusion. A companion, SF681, sponsored by Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook), was tabled Feb. 18 by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— S. HEGMAN

TRANSPORTATION

Offering discounted transit passes

Getting from Point A to Point B can be one of their greatest obstacles for down-and-out Minnesotans looking to help themselves.

Sponsored by Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls), HF809 would require the Metropolitan Council, which operates the area's largest transit system, to offer half-price transit passes to nonprofit organizations that administer a job placement program or provide services to homeless people.

"Our goal with this bill is to provide people the tools to get out of homelessness, to have the self-sufficiency to no longer be in poverty, to get in housing and to get their lives better," said Joshua Lang, director of the human rights program at St. Stephen's Human Services in Minneapolis.

The House Transportation Finance and Policy Division held the bill over March 3 until a fiscal note is received. A companion, SF732, sponsored by Sen. D. Scott Dibble (DFL-Mpls), was tabled Feb. 17 by the Senate Transportation Committee.

Lang said the bill could be cost-neutral because more qualifying organizations might be inclined to buy passes at a 50 percent discount. A 10 percent discount is already provided for some nonprofit social service agencies. There would be no limit on the number of passes that could be purchased.

"This would mean a lot to people in my situation," said Chuck Hinshaw, who works two part-time jobs and rides the bus almost daily.

The bill would also eliminate current law requiring the council to increase transit availability and reduce costs for transit users who are looking for a job and do not have private transportation.

"We'd like to keep that and be able to see how we can craft something that works for everybody," said Judd Schetnan, Metropolitan Council government affairs director. "We know times are hard and we want to help."

— M. COOK

Online driver's education

A driver's education instructor in Minnesota can be partially trained online, but a teenager learning how to drive cannot.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park) would change that.

HF575 would allow the 30-hour classroom portion of driver's education to be Internet based, provided the program has been approved by the Department of Public Safety. Behind-the-wheel instruction would still to be done in the traditional way.

"This simply states that this is an option," he told the House Transportation and Transit Policy and Oversight Division March 4.

Approved by the division on a split-voice vote, the bill next goes to the House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee. A companion, SF766, sponsored by Sen. Jim Carlson (DFL-Eagan), failed to get the approval of the Senate Transportation Committee one day earlier.

DriversEd.com founder Gary Tsifrin said the course proffered by his company benefits students who live a long distance from a training program, families that struggle transporting a learner to and from a driving program and students who want to take a full class load during the school day and take driver's education at a more convenient time.

"For some kids, this is the best medium," said Rep. Kurt Zellers (R-Maple Grove). "If you're not prepared to take the permit test you'll fail."

Among concerns addressed by opponents were that online training does not provide for different scenarios and there is no guarantee students are following along intently. Tsifrin said his company's program asks questions every so often to ensure that a student is paying attention.

Chip Hayssen, owner of Safeway Driving School, said the classroom offers more opportunity for discussion, practical demonstrations, guest speakers, local stories, interaction with other students

and accountability for every student. "The Internet can't deliver teaching moments."

"When my own children were learning how to drive, having someone talking about the current weather conditions, hazards on local roadways, pointing those things out to young people has made a huge impact on them as drivers," said Rep. Marsha Swails (DFL-Woodbury).

— M. COOK

Minnesota State Agencies

Area code 651

Administration.....	651-201-2555
Agriculture	651-201-6550
	800-967-2474
Commerce.....	651-296-4026
Corrections	651-361-7200
Education	651-582-8200
Employee Relations	651-259-3637
Employment and	
Economic Development.....	651-259-7114
	800-657-3858
Enterprise Technology.....	651-296-8888
Explore Minnesota Tourism	651-215-9041
	800-657-3535
Travel Info	888-868-7476
Finance	651-201-8000
Health.....	651-201-5000
Higher Education Services	651-642-0567
	800-657-3866
Housing Finance Agency	651-296-7608
	800-657-3769
Human Rights	651-296-5663
Human Services	651-431-2000
Iron Range Resources	218-744-7400
	800-765-5043
Labor and Industry	651-284-5005
	800-342-5354
Mediation Services.....	651-649-5421
Metropolitan Council.....	651-602-1000
Military Affairs	651-268-8925
Natural Resources	651-296-6157
	888-646-6367
Pollution Control Agency.....	651-296-6300
	800-657-3864
Public Safety	
General Information	651-201-7000
Driver and Vehicle Services....	651-297-3608
Driver's License	651-297-3298
Driver & Public Vehicle Info ...	651-296-6911
Motor Vehicles	651-297-2126
Alcohol and Gambling	
Enforcement Division.....	651-201-7507
Division of Homeland Security	
and Emergency Management....	651-201-7400
State Duty Officer	
(24-Hour Emergency)	651-649-5451
	800-422-0798
State Patrol	651-201-7100
Revenue	
General Information	651-296-3403
Income Tax Helpline....	651-296-4444/296-3781
Sales and Use Tax Line	651-296-6181
Transportation	651-296-3000
	800-657-3774
Veterans Affairs	651-296-2562

Monday, March 2

HF1180-Hortman (DFL)

Civil Justice

Data practice provisions changed.

HF1181-Olin (DFL)

Civil Justice

Conciliation court civil claim limit increased.

HF1182-Bly (DFL)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Public service corporation exemptions repealed.

HF1183-Smith (R)

Civil Justice

Child custody and support provisions and presumptions changed.

HF1184-Champion (DFL)

Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Expungement of eviction record governing provisions modified, landlords required to provide receipt for rent paid with cash and tenant rights to possession modified.

HF1185-Masin (DFL)

Civil Justice

Full compliance with payment agreements requirements added.

HF1186-Mariani (DFL)

K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Center established for legislative educational analysis research and navigation in the next generation.

HF1187-Mariani (DFL)

K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Legislative and Citizen Commission on the Future of Public Education created.

HF1188-Winkler (DFL)

K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

E-16 reforms pursued to improve and expand opportunities for all students to attain educational success, E-16 advisory subcommittees established.

HF1189-Torkelson (R)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Sleepy Eye authorized to establish street improvement districts and apportion street improvement fees within district subject to reverse referendum, street improvement plan adoption required and fee collection authorized.

HF1190-Mariani (DFL)

Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Motor vehicle purchasing requirements modified.

HF1191-Hortman (DFL)

Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Provisions modified relating to loans to acquire highway right-of-way in the metropolitan area.

HF1192-Brod (R)

Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

New Prague; Trunk Highway 19 closure required for the Dozinky Festival.

HF1193-Koenen (DFL)

Finance

Department of Corrections and Department of Employment and Economic Development claims settlement provided.

HF1194-Downey (R)

Finance

Green job incentives provided, green job opportunity building zones provided, small business investment company and job growth investment tax credits provided, tax benefits allowed, conforming changes made, terms defined and biomethane energy projects allowed.

HF1195-Lanning (R)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Mandate relief provided, Legislative Commission on Mandate Reform established and levy limits abolished.

HF1196-Gottwalt (R)

Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Sex selection abortions prohibited, criminal and civil penalties provided and reporting requirement established.

HF1197-Smith (R)

Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Human Cloning Prohibition Act established.

HF1198-Davnie (DFL)

K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Harassment, bullying, intimidation and violence policies provided.

HF1199-Lesch (DFL)

Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Felony domestic assault and domestic assault by strangulation defined as crimes of violence.

HF1200-Dill (DFL)

Commerce & Labor

Grand Marais; on-sale liquor licenses authorized.

HF1201-Marquart (DFL)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Council on Local Results and Innovation created and local governments encouraged to develop performance measurement programs.

HF1202-Masin (DFL)

Commerce & Labor

Insurance proceed dollar amounts modified.

HF1203-Falk (DFL)

Finance

Benson; city street reconstruction funding provided.

HF1204-Dean (R)

Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Stillwater Lift Bridge weight limits restricted.

HF1205-Dean (R)

Finance

Stillwater flood control levee project funding provided.

HF1206-Simon (DFL)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Contribution limits provided for judicial candidates.

HF1207-Slocum (DFL)

Finance

Opportunities industrial centers funding provided.

HF1208-Davids (R)

Finance

Art organization regional capital fund created.

HF1209-Demmer (R)

Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Corporate deputy registrar expiration date removed.

HF1210-Urdahl (R)

Finance

Little Crow Transit Way funding provided.

HF1211-Ruud (DFL)

Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Interpreter service coverage required and interpreter services work group established.

HF1212-Brown (DFL)

K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Deaf or hard-of-hearing resource center provisions modified.

HF1213-Hortman (DFL)

Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Prostitution penalty enhancement provision for repeat offenders clarified, prostitution in a public place crime broadened, driving records relating to prostitution offenses made public for repeat offenders and record availability ensured to law enforcement for first-time offenders.

HF1214-Davnie (DFL)

Commerce & Labor

Eviction provisions clarified, governing contracts for deeds modified, and contracts regulated for deeds involving residential property and residential leases with an option to purchase.

HF1215-Koenen (DFL)

Taxes

Railroad track maintenance expenditure subtraction provided.

HF1216-Koenen (DFL)

Taxes

Railroad track maintenance credit provided.

HF1217-Gardner (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Product stewardship program required to be operated by drug producers to collect and dispose of unwanted drugs, civil penalties provided and account created.

HF1218-Lillie (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

State labor contracts ratified.

HF1219-Kahn (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Health insurance benefit availability required for domestic partners of state employees if they are also made available to spouses.

HF1220-Abeler (R)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

School board reports to commissioner modified and evidence of student achievement required.

HF1221-Bunn (DFL)**Finance**

Stillwater Lift Bridge endowment account established.

HF1222-Abeler (R)**Finance**

Equalizing factors indexed for the debt service and referendum equalization aid programs.

HF1223-Bigham (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Sentencing Guidelines Commission required to review its reports.

HF1224-Mullery (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

State policy established on disproportionate minority contact in juvenile justice system.

HF1225-Masin (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Independent Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning provided, duties transferred.

HF1226-Thao (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Licensure and practice limitations established for an oral health practitioner, fees established and rulemaking required.

HF1227-Rukavina (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Minnesota law conformed to the requirements necessary to receive federal stimulus funds.

HF1228-Hortman (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Uniform Probate Code updated, Uniform Estate Tax Apportionment Act, Uniform Disclaimer of Property Interests Act, Uniform Power of Attorney Act and the Uniform Multiple-Person Accounts Act adopted.

HF1229-Poppe (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Election judge service restrictions clarified, creation of election judge appointment lists modified, election judge lists prepared by major political parties requirements limited, additional election judge appointment authorized and requirements eliminated for election judge to initial ballots before use.

HF1230-Poppe (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Enhanced access required for voter registration records and records of returned absentee ballots on the World Wide Web.

HF1231-Murphy, M. (DFL)**Finance**

Dedicated funding provided for natural resource and cultural heritage.

HF1232-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Evaluating health care provider performance, certain factors prohibited and statement added to health plan issued identification cards.

HF1233-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Individuals on waiting lists for developmental disabilities waived services ranked.

HF1234-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Medication therapy management services required under certain conditions.

HF1235-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Aggravated sentencing departure factors included that are not elements of the crime of conviction.

HF1236-Koenen (DFL)**Finance**

Redwood County; veterans cemetery funding provided.

HF1237-Eken (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

State park permit requirements modified, authority to operate state monuments and establish secondary units modified, John A. Latsch State Park liquor service eliminated, boater waysides provided, watercraft requirements modified, penalty appeals and enforcement provided, wild animal taking provided, public waters inventory notice of change provided and critical habitat plate eligibility modified.

HF1238-Dill (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Refund provisions modified; definitions modified; publication requirements modified; restrictions in migratory feeding and resting areas modified; local law exemptions provided; wild animal and fish taking, possession and licensing requirements provided; and certain fees authorized.

HF1239-Hayden (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Group residential housing eligibility changed.

HF1240-Eken (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Volunteer working group established on native language revitalization and preservation, appointments provided and report required.

HF1241-Solberg (DFL)**Taxes**

Utility transition aid to counties provided.

HF1242-Seifert (R)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Brandon's law established, procedures implemented for investigating missing person cases and Minnesota Clearinghouse for Missing Persons established.

HF1243-Obermueller (DFL)**Finance**

Redevelopment funding provided.

HF1244-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

St. Louis County; day training and habilitation provider reimbursement rate increase provided.

HF1245-Simon (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Domestic abuse provisions modified, family or household member definition expanded and domestic abuse no contact orders use expanded.

HF1246-Urdahl (R)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Speed violations in excess of 10 mph over a speed limit of 60 mph kept off driver's driving record.

HF1247-Kalin (DFL)**Civil Justice**

University of Minnesota; private equity investment data classified.

HF1248-Hortman (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Data access identifying victims of witnesses in active criminal investigations restricted.

HF1249-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Medical laboratory science professionals licensure requirements established and Board of Medical Laboratory Science Established.

HF1250-Hornstein (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Electric vehicle infrastructure regulated and incentives for use and adoption established.

HF1251-Pelowski (DFL)**Higher Education & Workforce Development Finance & Policy Division**

Economic development authority authorized to become a member of a limited liability company.

HF1252-Anderson, S. (R)**Higher Education & Workforce Development Finance & Policy Division**

Vote by the student body required to increase optional student fees at a public postsecondary institution or campus.

HF1253-Abeler (R)

Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
MinnesotaCare inpatient hospital benefit limits expanded to allow managed care and county-based purchasing plans to offer supplemental health plans.

HF1254-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Taxes**

St. Paul; sales tax revenue use for the payment of principals of bonds extended to 2014, unexpended fund use clarified, neighborhood program application and proposal review process modified.

HF1255-Seifert (R)

Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Minnesota Family Investment Program and general assistance eligibility requirements modified, MinnesotaCare eligibility for persons convicted of crimes of violence eliminated.

HF1256-Mullery (DFL)**Finance**

Local hazardous pupil transportation zone establishment process defined and levy for hazardous pupil transportation services authorized.

HF1257-Mullery (DFL)**Taxes**

Taxation mandates imposed on pass-through interests of nonresident individuals clarified.

HF1258-Mullery (DFL)**Taxes**

Gift tax imposed, coordinated with the estate tax.

HF1259-Sailer (DFL)**Finance**

Solar energy projects in K-12 public schools funding provided.

HF1260-Sailer (DFL)**Finance**

Solar energy installation projects in K-12 public schools funding provided.

HF1261-Dittrich (DFL)**Taxes**

State property tax system benchmarks, critical indicators and principles provided; property tax working group established.

HF1262-Drazkowski (R)**Finance**

Goodview; water treatment funding provided.

HF1263-Mahoney (DFL)**Finance**

St. Paul; St. Paul RiverCentre finance loans forgiven, local bonds authorized to expand the Minnesota event district.

HF1264-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Trespass crime expanded to prohibit entry into areas cordoned off by peace officers.

HF1265-Poppe (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Mail balloting expanded to municipalities of fewer than 1,000 registered voters; later voting time for election days provided.

HF1266-Poppe (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Election judges' usage requirements of lists prepared by major political parties limited and ballot initialing by election judges requirements eliminated.

HF1267-Lesch (DFL)**Finance**

St. Paul; event district expansion funding provided.

HF1268-Paymar (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Employee fitness and wellness activities authorized in state space.

HF1269-Paymar (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Electronic submission of criminal justice agency reports to the Legislature required.

HF1270-Paymar (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Short-term offender pilot project development required.

HF1271-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Health care treatments performance measure and report required.

HF1272-Loeffler (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Emergency call interference offenders disqualified from possessing firearms.

HF1273-Rosenthal (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Domestic abuse arrest time expanded.

HF1274-Rosenthal (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Statewide Radio Board designated as Minnesota's State Interoperability Executive Committee.

HF1275-Poppe (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Sewage treatment systems provisions modified.

HF1276-Norton (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

County human services mandates modified.

HF1277-Hilstrom (DFL)**Taxes**

Sales tax and motor vehicle sales tax on purchases of public safety equipment by local police and fire departments eliminated.

HF1278-Sterner (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

County offices appointment and consolidation provided, subject to notice, hearing and reverse referendum.

HF1279-Paymar (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension account appropriation required; correctional state employee retirement plan revised; vesting period for retirement annuity modified; service credit transfer permitted; and money appropriated for courts, public defenders, public safety, corrections and other criminal justice agencies.

HF1280-Westrom (R)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Moose Lake correctional facility control transferred to the commissioner of human services, offender housing requirements modified, private and state-funded prison comparison standards established.

HF1281-Koenen (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Veteran in-state tuition status required, course equivalency guides required for military coursework.

HF1282-Poppe (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Polling place challengers subject to additional requirements.

HF1283-Pelowski (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Ballot and voting system requirements updated.

HF1284-Pelowski (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Elections provisions modified and clarified.

Thursday, March 5
HF1285-Persell (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

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

HF1286-Gardner (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Free fish and game license eligibility extended for disabled veterans.

HF1287-Hackbarth (R)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Decoy restrictions modified.

HF1288-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Taxes**

Sales and use tax electronic notification of change required.

HF1289-Rukavina (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Probable cause required for spot inspection of motor vehicles by state troopers, and implied consent to inspection provision repealed.

HF1290-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

Duluth Children's Museum funding provided to purchase land; renovate historic buildings; and construct, furnish and equip a new children's museum.

HF1291-Lesch (DFL)**Taxes**

St. Paul; Central Corridor light rail transit project area established and tax increment district duration extended.

HF1292-Davids (R)**Finance**

Rushford; 2005 appropriation transferred from a nanotechnology facility to a community center project.

HF1293-Loeffler (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Emergency medical transport provisions modified.

HF1294-Kahn (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Sunday sales regulated and statutory prohibitions removed against off-sale intoxicating liquor sales and the sales of motor vehicles.

HF1295-Thao (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Veterans' benefits extended to allied soldiers from Vietnam and Laos who assisted the United States armed forces during the Vietnam War.

HF1296-Mullery (DFL)**Taxes**

Brooklyn Park, St. Paul and Fridley; housing replacement district plan additional authority allowed to spend increments, housing replacement districts establishment authorized, housing replacement district local contribution requirement eliminated and special laws for housing replacement reauthorized.

HF1297-Winkler (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Municipal boundary adjustment law amended.

HF1298-Lenczewski (DFL)**Taxes**

Issuance of obligations and financing of public improvements terms and conditions provided, and restrictions on mail elections modified.

HF1299-Hackbarth (R)**Finance**

Environment, natural resources and energy funding provided; fees established; disposition of certain fees provided; insurance form requirements modified; and assessments for regulatory expenses modified and established.

HF1300-Persell (DFL)**Finance**

Paul Bunyan Trail bridge design and construction funding provided.

HF1301-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

County authority and detention orders clarified.

HF1302-Johnson (DFL)**Finance**

St. Paul; National Great River Park funding provided.

HF1303-Hackbarth (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Casino authorization proposed, gambling revenue tax imposed, construction provided for a new Vikings stadium, bonds issued and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1304-Faust (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Anti-epileptic drug coverage required and pharmacists prohibited from substituting anti-epileptic drugs without consent.

HF1305-Emmer (R)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Impaired driving civil sanction pretrial application eliminated, post-conviction driver's license revocation periods restructured, misdemeanor impaired driving offense payable fine authorized, requirements established for abstinence and rehabilitation for multiple repeat offenders, and computer source code governing rules specified.

HF1306-Hornstein (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Cocoa bean shell mulch retail sale notice required.

HF1307-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Finance**

Long-term care volunteer ombudsman program expanded.

HF1308-Norton (DFL)**Finance**

Uniform technology and data standards required for local public health agencies, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 funding provided.

HF1309-Lieder (DFL)**Finance**

Transportation, Metropolitan Council and public safety activity and program funding provided; fund transfers, contingent appropriations and tort claims provided; fees and accounts provided; and bridge collapse and highway construction projects for fiscal year 2009 appropriation reduced.

HF1310-Seifert (R)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

School bus crossing arms required.

HF1311-Howes (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Construction contracts regulated.

HF1312-Lesch (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Homeless outreach grant program continued and expanded.

HF1313-Dean (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Minnesota Sex Offender Program wages paid to patients allocated.

HF1314-Dean (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Nutritionist licensure provisions changed.

HF1315-Dean (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

State prepaid health care programs required to contract for services on a single-plan basis.

HF1316-Dean (R)**Finance**

Stillwater; flood control funding provided.

HF1317-Bly (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Retired teachers enlisted to help support newly licensed teachers in developing their teaching practice and improving students' learning.

HF1318-Dean (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

MinnesotaCare demonstration project established and required to allow flexibility in the delivery of benefits, and health benefits account required to be established for each demonstration project participant.

HF1319-Kiffmeyer (R)**Finance**

Big Lake Regional Ice Center funding provided.

HF1320-Swails (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Pharmacists prohibited from substituting epilepsy drugs without prior consent and notification.

HF1321-Clark (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Mourning dove taking prohibited.

HF1322-Thissen (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Health information technology incentive requirements created for the use of federal funding, legislative approval required and federal fund appropriation limited.

HF1323-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Hoyt Lakes; water plant improvement funding provided.

HF1324-Hornstein (DFL)**Finance**

General Education Development test fee waiver authorized.

HF1325-Doty (DFL)**Finance**

County geologic atlas program funding provided.

HF1326-Rukavina (DFL)**Finance**

Emergency employment development program established and wage subsidies provided.

HF1327-Murphy, M. (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Early retirement initiative modified.

HF1328-Thissen (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Youth violence addressed as a public health problem, prevention and intervention programs addressing risk factors of youth violence coordinated and aligned.

HF1329-Hosch (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Personal care assistance services modified.

HF1330-Benson (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

State participation in the No Child Left Behind Act ended.

HF1331-Benson (DFL)**Finance**

Alternative facility bonding and levy program qualification adjusted.

HF1332-Benson (DFL)**Finance**

Food shelves and food stamp outreach funding provided.

HF1333-Gardner (DFL)**Finance**

Metropolitan area transit and paratransit capital expenditures additional funding provided and certain obligations authorized.

HF1334-Gunther (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Medical Assistance treatment of life insurance policies modified, nursing facility rate modified for private paying residents and payment authorized for long-term care employer health insurance costs.

HF1335-Gunther (R)**Finance**

Winnepago; wastewater treatment pipeline funding provided.

HF1336-Gunther (R)**Taxes**

Small wind turbine investment tax credit established.

HF1337-Mahoney (DFL)**Finance**

St. Paul; 3M site redevelopment funding provided.

HF1338-Norton (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Standard reference compendia definition expanded.

HF1339-Ruud (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Wireless communications device use while operating a motor vehicle provisions modified.

HF1340-Mariani (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Teacher preparation program established and resident teacher license for qualified nontraditional candidates created.

HF1341-Thissen (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Newborn screening program provisions modified.

HF1342-Lillie (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

University of Minnesota; on-sale liquor sale requirements modified.

HF1343-Abeler (R)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Inattentive driving law clarified and failure to exercise due care penalties enhanced.

HF1344-Abeler (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Usury laws applicability to loans related to a right to sue clarified.

HF1345-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Claims processing practices by third-party administrators of health coverage plans prohibited, health claims clearinghouses regulated and insurer audits of health claims payments time limit provided.

HF1346-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Obstetric health care homes certification standards required and coordination of obstetric services payments by the health and human services commissioners required.

HF1347-Seifert (R)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

County, home rule charter and statutory city governing bodies authorized to reduce their salaries.

HF1348-Juhnke (DFL)**Finance**

Kandiyohi County; Green Lake water quality pilot program funding provided.

HF1349-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Victims of criminal sexual conduct required to receive information regarding orders for protection and restraining orders.

HF1350-Norton (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Fair claims processing act's automobile insurance claims provisions amended and third-party claimants rights in insurance settlements provided.

HF1351-Winkler (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Absentee ballot requirements and provisions modified.

HF1352-Clark (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Cancer surveillance system provisions modified.

HF1353-Clark (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Minneapolis school district; fragrance-free schools education campaign implemented.

HF1354-Clark (DFL)**Finance**

Nonprofit housing bonds authorized.

HF1355-Newton (DFL)**Finance**

Hazardous pupil transportation services levy authorized.

HF1356-Newton (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Free public transit use for disabled veterans and current, uniformed active service members provided.

HF1357-Koenen (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Manufactured home transportation vehicle width and axle requirements modified.

HF1358-Mahoney (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Retirement coverage provisions modified and technical changes provided.

HF1359-Peterson (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

School districts required to offer at least two academic years of elective high school-level world languages courses.

HF1360-Bigham (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Civil immunity extended to municipalities that donate public safety equipment.

HF1361-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

Prenatal alcohol or drug use prevention appropriation repealed.

HF1362-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

Commissioner of human services required to apply for federal funds.

HF1363-Dean (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Health care provider's liability for providing emergency care and treatment regulated and expert review affidavits in malpractice actions against health care providers regulated.

HF1364-Gunther (R)**Commerce & Labor**

School district boiler operator training required.

HF1365-Sertich (DFL)**Finance**

Retired firefighter special license plates established.

HF1366-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Social work licensing provisions modified and fees reduced.

HF1367-Juhnke (DFL)**Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs**

Minnesota Noxious Weed Law provisions modified, assistance fund and advisory committee established and grants provided.

HF1368-Simon (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Attorney general required to maintain a consumer complaint database.

HF1369-Simon (DFL)**Taxes**

Taxation; special service districts establishment time extended.

HF1370-Abeler (R)

Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare eligibility requirements modified.

HF1371-Kahn (DFL)

Finance
Minnesota Humanities Center grant provided.

HF1372-Gardner (DFL)

Environment Policy & Oversight
Infectious Waste Control Act modified.

HF1373-Gardner (DFL)

Finance
Minnesota Council on Transportation Access established and report required.

HF1374-Buesgens (R)

Higher Education & Workforce Development Finance & Policy Division
Stable undergraduate tuition rate guarantee provided.

HF1375-Buesgens (R)

Taxes
Municipal authority to issue bonds for other postemployment benefits eliminated.

HF1376-Buesgens (R)

Finance
Education; compensatory revenue concentration factor eliminated.

HF1377-Buesgens (R)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Cities prohibited from owning municipal liquor stores and divestiture required.

HF1378-Morrow (DFL)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Local disaster assistance program and local disaster fund established.

HF1379-Nelson (DFL)

Commerce & Labor
Abandoned property waiver of storage provided.

HF1380-Bly (DFL)

Finance
Commuter rail line between Northfield and St. Paul alternatives analysis funding provided.

HF1381-Hackbarth (R)

Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Drug screening required for MFIP eligibility.

HF1382-Demmer (R)

Finance
Education; staff revenue distribution restrictions modified.

HF1383-Gunther (R)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Fairmont Police Relief Association amortization date extended to 2020.

HF1384-Gunther (R)

Finance
School district minimum revenue increased for various youth and community education programs.

HF1385-Gunther (R)

Finance
Odin and Ormsby; wastewater treatment infrastructure funding provided.

HF1386-Gunther (R)

Finance
School district mandates suspended for fiscal years 2010 and 2011.

HF1387-Gunther (R)

Finance
Safe schools levy; student health personnel set-aside removed.

HF1388-Carlson (DFL)

Finance
Golden Valley; nursing facility providing residential rehabilitative services payment rates increased.

HF1389-Scalze (DFL)

Taxes
Taxation; levy limit provisions modified.

HF1390-Atkins (DFL)

Finance
Inver Grove Heights; swing bridge and surrounding public lands improvements funding provided.

HF1391-Emmer (R)

Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Broker use for medical transportation services prohibited, county social workers authorized to make level-of-need determinations.

HF1392-Lesch (DFL)

Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Omnibus sexual conduct technical review bill provided.

HF1393-Kelly (R)

Environment Policy & Oversight
Landfill cleanup program provisions modified.

HF1394-Hayden (DFL)

Civil Justice
Real property; notice requirements specified, reduced redemption period for abandoned property and public nuisances provisions modified, a duty to protect vacant foreclosed property established, failure to maintain property fines imposed, construction site trespassing posting requirements altered, civil and criminal penalties imposed.

HF1395-Mullery (DFL)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Tax-forfeited property uses and conveyances procedures modified.

HF1396-Smith (R)

Civil Justice
Domestic abuse; courts authorized to include pets and companion animals in protective orders.

HF1397-Hilstrom (DFL)

Civil Justice
Fourth Judicial District provided fiscal flexibility as to the location of court facilities.

HF1398-Winkler (DFL)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Official notices authorized to be publicized in newspaper alternatives.

HF1399-Clark (DFL)

Commerce & Labor
Minnesota Labor Relations Act amended.

HF1400-Kalin (DFL)

Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day declared for June 13, 2009.

HF1401-Kahn (DFL)

Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Person operating a bicycle stop sign or traffic-control signal requirements amended.

HF1402-Wagenius (DFL)

State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Public debt provided to be incurred for public information technology systems, licenses and infrastructure; constitutional amendment proposed.

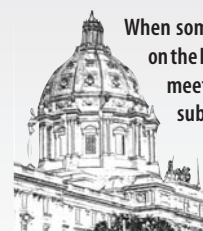
HF1403-Kahn (DFL)

Taxes
Local government appropriation and reinstating offsets modified.

HF1404-Rukavina (DFL)

Commerce & Labor
Voluntary leave limited eligibility for benefits provided.

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MINNESOTA INDEX

Grapes and wine

Number of vineyards in Minnesota in 2007	632
Percentage of those established prior to 1990	3
Percent planted during the previous five years	65
Number of vines growing in Minnesota, as estimate	587,000
Average number of vines per grower	921
Number of Marquette vines less than 4 years old	109,500
Number of Marquette vines more than 4 years old	3,779
Number of Frontenac vines less than 4 years old	63,338
Number of Frontenac vines more than 4 years old	53,044
Number of dominate grape varieties in Minnesota	4
Year the Frontenac was officially introduced	1996
Year the Frontenac gris was officially introduced	2003
Year the La Crescent was officially introduced	2002
Year the Marquette was officially introduced	2006
Growers that use grapes for their own purposes, as a percent	40
Use of grapes, by percent, under winery contract	17
Number of licensed wineries in Minnesota in 1975	2
In 1995	7
In 2007	26
Total number of jobs attributable to Minnesota's grape industry in 2007	101
In millions, 2007 economic impact from winery spending in state	\$8.5
In millions, impact from tourists visiting state wineries in 2007	\$8.4
Millions, as estimate, in total impact of the grape and winery industry in Minnesota in 2007	\$36.2
Liters of wine sold from Minnesota wineries in 2007	295,795
Percent increase from previous year	61
Sales tax collected by the state from wine sales in 2006, in millions	\$4.6
Number of states with wineries in 2007	50
Number of wineries in U.S. in 2007	4,712
Number of wineries in U.S. in 1975	579

Sources: The Land-Where Farm and Family Meet; The Minnesota Grape Growers Association; The Economic Contribution of Grape Growers and Wineries in the State of Minnesota, University of Minnesota; and Minnesota Grape Growers Profile 2007.

— L. SCHUTZ

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