

SESSION WEEKLY



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SESSION WEEKLY

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On the cover: Tenzin Yangdol of Minneapolis holds an American flag as it flies along with Tibetan flags on the front steps of the Capitol March 10. The gathering commemorated the day 50 years ago when thousands of Tibetans rose up to protest against China's decade-long occupation of their homeland.

— Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

Land wHOa!

Audit suggests DNR has more land than they can manage

By SUE HEGARTY

If there was any doubt how much Minnesotans love their parks and open spaces, it should have been erased with passage of a 25-year tax increase known as the outdoor heritage fund.

In fact, one-sixth of Minnesota is state-owned natural resource land. The Department of Natural Resources is charged with managing 5.6 million acres but, according to a legislative audit, it is falling down on the job.

The Natural Resource Land report, released March 5 by the Office of the Legislative Auditor, shows that the DNR lacks the resources to manage its current land holdings, much less additional purchases.

The department plans to acquire significantly more land, including 3,000 acres for the proposed Lake Vermilion State Park, the purchase of which Gov. Tim Pawlenty negotiated with U.S. Steel. Yet the audit identified \$125 million in deferred maintenance of current state parks, trails and recreation facilities. There is another \$16.7 million backlog for state forest roadways, and scientific and natural areas.

"Sometimes we wonder, 'How much is enough?' How much non-human land do we need before we've done our part to protect Mother Earth, or is the earth here for us to use in several different ways — play on it, log it and farm it, mine it?" questions Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee).

Vice-chairman of the Legislative Audit Commission, Beard said, "The mission has morphed. So we can hardly blame the DNR ... because I think we as legislators have given them conflicting missions. I can't read that report and throw rocks at the DNR. I think we have to hold up a mirror."

Going forward, the Legislature needs to require the DNR to prepare a long-range analysis that compares its budget needs to realistic funding levels, the audit stated. DNR

Commissioner Mark Holsten doesn't disagree and said he plans to implement many of the auditor's recommendations.

"We see it as being, quite frankly, a validation of all the things we've been talking about with

(legislators) over the last 46 years," Holsten said.

A bipartisan group of legislators requested the audit, which is being digested on both sides of the aisle.

"I think the auditor did an absolutely great service for the state," said Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls), chairwoman of the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division.

The forest through the trees

The DNR manages land for three purposes: recreation, conservation and economic benefit.

State forests, particularly in the Arrowhead region, weigh heavily on the DNR's role to provide economic benefits. Forests comprise the majority of the state's holdings. Acquired nearly 200 years ago from the federal

First Reading continued on page 4

State-owned lands

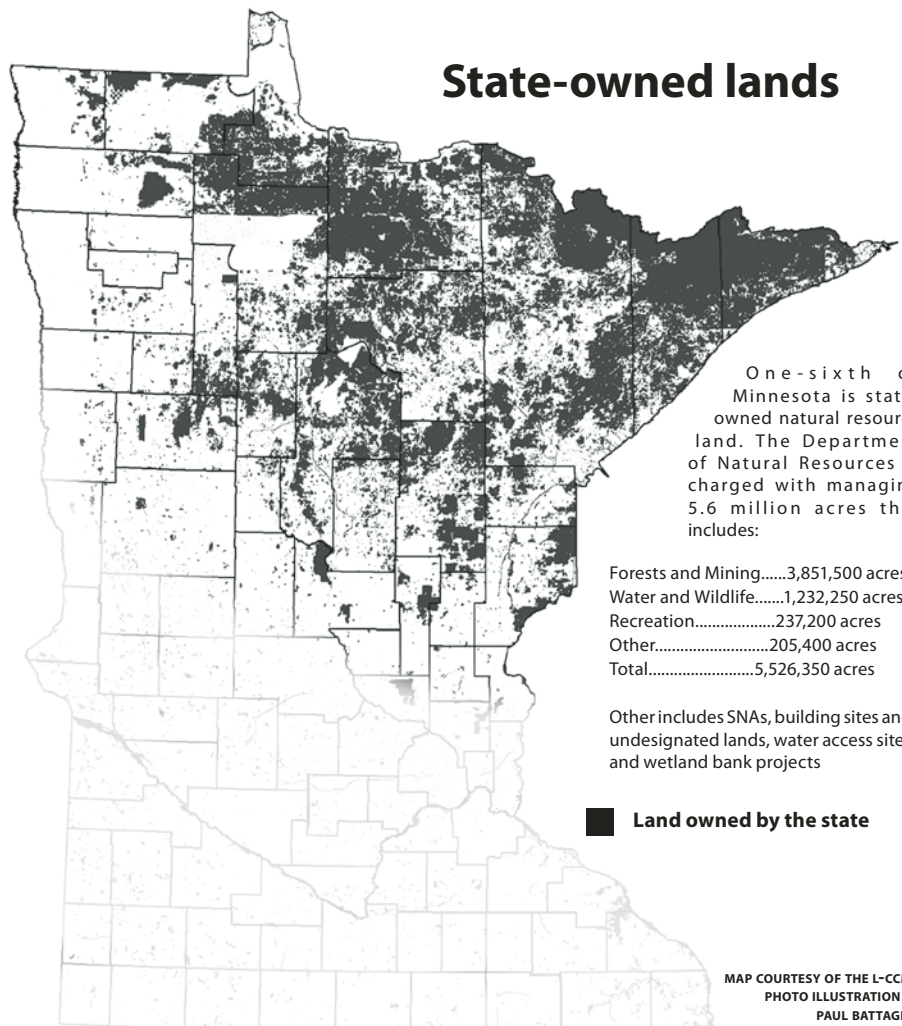




PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

From the Oberg Mountain Summit in Cook County, many public and private lands can be seen along the North Shore.

First Reading continued from page 3

government, the land is held in trust with the understanding that it gets harvested, and the revenue gets deposited in a Permanent School Trust Fund. Proceeds supplement K-12 education funding, so it is in the state's best interest to maximize trust land results. But a checkerboard pattern of land holdings in northern Minnesota produces inefficient results, according to the audit. Problems are compounded by the potential for invasive species and a lack of DNR staff to work on tree care. Legislative Auditor Jim Nobles said the DNR's new forest land asset management plan will help guide future sales, purchases and exchanges.

When deciding which school trust fund properties to buy and sell, the DNR receives direction from the Permanent School Fund Advisory Committee. Rep. Denise Dittrich (DFL-Champlin) said 3,800 acres within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness fail to generate revenue and the state is not meeting its financial obligations to the school trust fund. She sponsors HF3084, which would request negotiations with the U.S. Forest Service on the sale and exchange of school trust lands in the BWCA. The transaction could earn an estimated \$80 million for the fund, Dittrich said.

SF2494, a companion sponsored by Sen. Tom Saxhaug (DFL-Grand Rapids), awaits action by the Full Senate.

County collaboration

The report also concludes that the DNR should conduct more prudent sales, acquisitions or exchanges with local governments. For example, the state could expand a land asset pilot project underway in Roseau County.

Last year, the county and the DNR examined their land holdings, said Roseau County Commissioner Jack Swanson. Each has identified 320 acres to potentially "exchange," mostly

in northwest Roseau County. The DNR would obtain county parcels located within state land holdings and the county would receive the title to 320 acres of state land that it could then sell and put back on the property tax rolls.

It's a win-win proposition, in theory, but the deal isn't done yet. There are still appraisals to do, but Swanson is hopeful the details

can be worked out.

"It's a prime example of how the state and counties need to work together to solve problems, not work separately," he said. Swanson's advice for other counties is to strengthen relationships with the regional DNR office staff. Although the pilot project has been "frustratingly slow," Swanson said

it's "one of the more refreshing things I've worked on."

Unlike private landowners, the state is not required to pay real estate taxes for land it owns within local government boundaries. Instead, counties have come to rely upon a state funding formula that gives counties a "payment in lieu of taxes," a practice called PILT payments.

For the first 20 years, PILT payments did not keep pace with inflation, so changes were made to the formula beginning in 2001. Since then, 90 percent of the counties have been paid substantially more than if the land were privately held, while the other 10 percent receive less, according to the audit.

"There is an opportunity for reform of PILT," said Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul), a Legislative Audit Commission member.

Conserve and protect

Easements allow the state to conserve and protect sensitive land without owning it. Typically, the landowner is paid a sum for relinquishing use of their land that falls within the easement. But the DNR is grappling with how to monitor them all and lacks baseline information for some of the 1,000 conservation easements it owns, according to the audit.

By comparison, the Board of Water and Soil Resources owns and manages 5,000 conservation easements. Legislators are looking at ways to streamline easement management within each or across both departments.

A copy of the auditor's report is available online at www.auditor.leg.state.mn.us 



"I think the auditor did an absolutely great service for the state."

— Rep. Jean Wagenius
(DFL-Mpls)



"Sometimes we wonder, how much is enough?"

— Rep. Mike Beard
(R-Shakopee)

Editor's note: The following Highlights are coverage of select bills heard in House committees and other House activities held March 4-11. 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

Cuts a prelude to future

The House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Finance Division approved \$6.9 million in supplemental budget reductions for the current biennium March 11.

Sponsored by Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar), the division chairman, HF3438 would cut 7.9 percent from General Fund appropriations to the Department of Agriculture, Board of Animal Health and the Agriculture Utilization Research Institute, and defer ethanol producer payments. Veterans would receive a 0.2 percent increase for military funeral honor guard funding, homeless veterans' grants and veterans' homes.

The governor proposes \$5.8 million in agriculture cuts, with a 1.6 percent increase for veterans. The House veterans' percentage takes into account previous year's funding for programs and expected savings from veteran's homes, such as Medicare coverage for prescription drugs.

The bill would eliminate funding for invasive species programs, including gypsy moth and emerald ash borer. Juhnke said the Department of Agriculture should be responsible for prevention of species entering the state, and the Department of Natural Resources should be responsible for the eradication of species.

Agriculture is taking a large cut considering it is a small percentage of the state's overall budget, Juhnke said. "Remember the agriculture budget only accounts for about one-half of 1 percent of the state budget, yet I remind people every day we're about 20 percent of the state's gross national product. So they're getting a pretty darn good return on the money for the investment we make into agriculture... These cuts are minor compared to what's coming next year," he said.

Rep. Doug Magnus (R-Slayton) said he supports the bill's reductions, but can't support its approval without knowing what cuts are being suggested in other areas of the state budget. "I want to see all the cards on the

table. ... We know we've gotta have reductions here, but we know we gotta do what we can to protect the largest industry in the state, too."

The bill now goes to the House Finance Committee. There is no Senate companion.

— P. OSTBERG

BONDING

Verifying job creation numbers

Throughout this session's capital investment debate there have been questions about the number of jobs that would be created.

Rep. Sarah Anderson (R-Plymouth) sponsors HF2909, which would require

Minnesota Management & Budget to report each odd-numbered year on the number of jobs created or retained because of capital investment funding from the state.

"My goal is that we are more informed as legislators of what happens as a result of our actions," Anderson told the House Capital Investment Finance Division March 9. "My intent with this bill is not to add an extra burden to state agencies ... I view this as something they could include as a requirement from those vendors that we contract with. They'd have to provide that information on the front end."

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), the division chairwoman, said Anderson's bill is

LOCAL SUPPORT

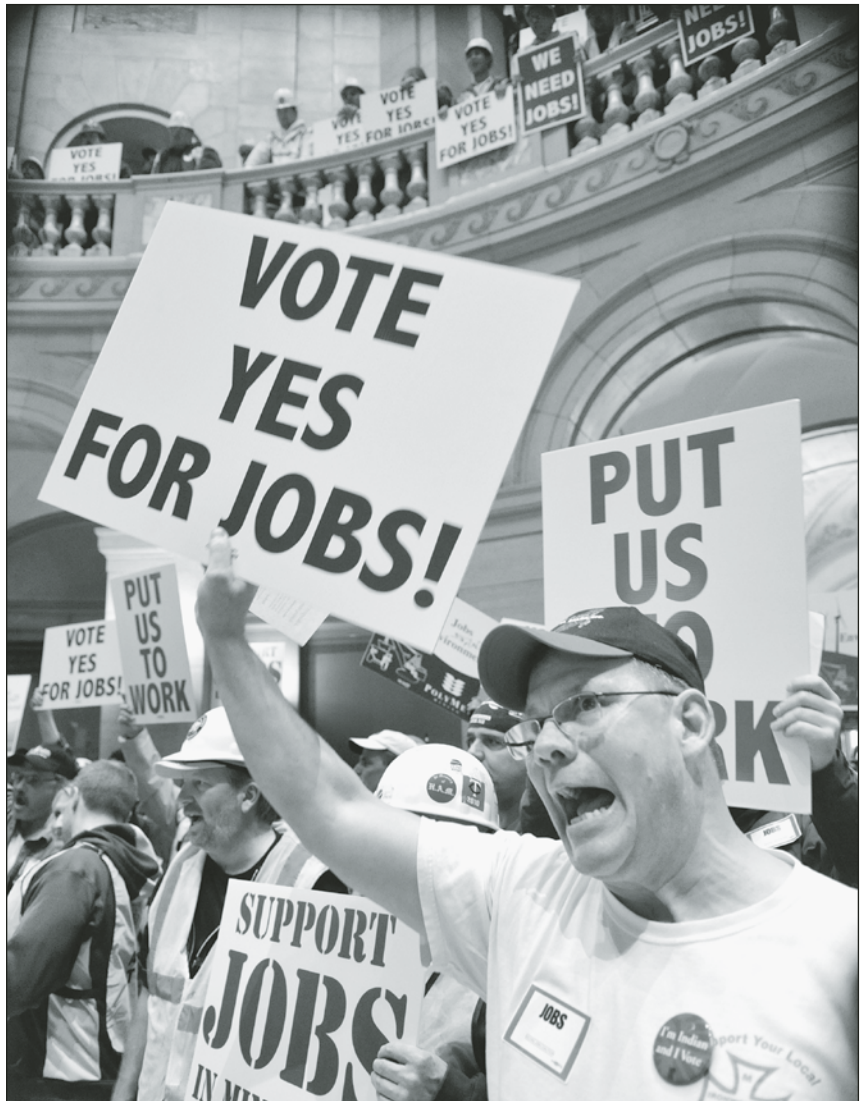


PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHEID

Terrance Roy, Jr., a member Ironworkers Union Local 512, chants "Jobs Now" during a March 10 rally of the Building Jobs Coalition in the Capitol Rotunda. One of the key components the coalition rallied for is the passage and enactment of a bonding bill.

one of three heard by the division that could become part of a capital investment policy bill, should one be created.

Jeff Freeman, deputy director with the Public Facilities Authority, raised concerns with the plan, including that it can be “a very difficult task to come up with a process to generate reliable, consistent and meaningful jobs data when you’re looking at funding infrastructure projects.”

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) gave an example of a public project where the contractor bid 1,500 hours to pull pipe down a mile-long tunnel. “By luck, the top was off the tunnel and they got to drop all the pipe in without dragging it. It took them about 150 hours vs. 1,500 hours,” he said.

A companion, SF2506, sponsored by Sen. Terri Bonoff (DFL-Minnetonka), was laid over March 10 by the Senate State Government Budget Division.

The other bills heard by the division were:

- HF2182, sponsored by Rep. Paul Gardner (DFL-Shoreview), which would require MMB to evaluate all capital project funding requests by developed criteria, and submit the evaluations with the commissioner’s capital budget requests to the Legislature; and
- HF3105, sponsored by Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina), which would require each bond request to include a return on investment analysis, based on a format developed by MMB.

Neither has a Senate companion.

— M. Cook

Going to the governor

The latest nearly billion-dollar bonding bill was approved 89-44 by the House and 49-17 by the Senate March 11, and now heads to the governor’s desk.

The revamped capital investment bill provides more money for the sex offender treatment facility in Moose Lake; but it also, in total, creeps closer to \$1 billion in general obligation bonds.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty wants \$89 million for the sex offender project; the bill calls for \$47.5 million. That is still an \$11.5 million increase from a March 4 working group offer.

The bill contains language for administration, corrections and human services commissioners to study the potential for using existing vacant or underused state facilities, including regional treatment centers, for the sex offender treatment program or for other programs or services administered by the Department of Human Services.

The bill also includes gubernatorial priorities of \$10.03 million for security upgrades at the Oak Park Heights State Prison and \$9.45 million

to expand the Minneapolis Veterans Home. It also lifts a price cap for a land purchase for a new Lake Vermilion State Park.

“The bill we’ve written still reflects the core priorities we began with, including a very strong commitment to higher education, to transportation, and to conservation and clean water infrastructure,” said Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), who sponsors HF2700*/SF2360 with Sen. Keith Langseth (DFL-Glyndon).

This bill price tag is \$999.66 million in general obligation bonding. The first conference committee report sought almost \$999.92 million. Before the House and Senate passed that bill Feb. 22, Pawlenty warned them he would veto the bill in its entirety.

While in Moorhead March 10, Pawlenty, who has repeatedly said he does not want a package larger than \$725 million, indicated that he would line-item veto this bill to a size he finds acceptable.

“While we don’t know the final outcome, we’ll be pleased,” said Rep. Larry Howes (R-Walker). “We’ve got a fine bill here.”

Hausman reiterated the urgency for this bill, noting lower construction costs, lower interest rates and the estimated 20,000 jobs to be created. “By getting projects in the pipeline now, we can take advantage of low interest rates and competitive bids, and get thousands of workers back on the job by this spring’s construction season.”

Opponents continued to question priorities, including passing this bill before fixing the budget shortfall.

Deadline time at the House

This week saw a flurry of activity in the House, as committees rushed to meet deadlines for action on policy and some finance bills. Now the action will begin to shift, as lawmakers prepare to move forward with the first of what is expected to be three bills to balance the state budget.

On March 12, the House Finance Committee is scheduled to approve a supplemental budget bill that would solve about one-third of the state’s estimated \$994 million biennial budget shortfall. According to Chairman Rep. Lyndon Carlson, Sr. (DFL-Crystal), the bill will include mostly budget cuts for state agencies, along with a few fee increases. It is expected to be taken up by the House Ways and Means Committee next week, where it could be merged with a forthcoming package of tax aids and credits from the House Taxes Committee.

After that, Carlson said there will likely be two more supplemental budget bills that deal with funding for health and human services and K-12 education, respectively. He is not sure when those bills might reach the House floor.

“Things are just kind of coming together right now,” he said.

As for the dozens of policy bills that won committee approval this week, most of them will move to the House floor, where they will await action at various points throughout the remaining session.

— N. Busse

“This is about misplaced priorities,” said Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City).

— M. Cook



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

House and Senate capital investment chairs, Rep. Alice Hausman and Sen. Keith Langseth confer during a March 4 meeting of the capital investment working group.

Bill would ban directory scams

The next time you order flowers from your local florist or call a locksmith in your area, you might want to make sure they're actually local; otherwise, you could be paying for more than what you're getting.

A new kind of scam has emerged in which people operating businesses misrepresent their locations to make customers think they're local, when in fact they're located in another city or even out of state.

Customers who place an order are overcharged by the out-of-state entity and then have their order referred to a local business. The local company does all the work, and the person running the out-of-state business makes all the profit.

Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park) argues it's a deceptive business practice, and sponsors a bill that would put a stop to it.

Simon sponsors HF3277 which would make it illegal for companies to misrepresent their locations in phone directories and/or on the Internet. The House Commerce and Labor Committee approved the bill March 9 and referred it to the House Civil Justice Committee.

Simon said such operations often take out advertisements in phone books or turn up in Internet search results with phone numbers that purport to be local, but in fact are routed to a call center somewhere else. Addresses given for such businesses often turn out to be for local post offices or other unrelated facilities.

Kym Erickson, president of the Minnesota State Florists Association, said the scam has become widespread and affected many florists in the state — including her. She related the story of a customer who paid \$98 for a \$42 order from her shop; the other \$56 went straight to the non-local company.

No one testified in opposition to the bill.

A companion, SF3102, sponsored by Sen. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action on the Senate floor.

— N. BUSSE

Payday lending restrictions

Payday loans are tightly regulated in Minnesota, but some companies have found a loophole that lets them bypass rules meant to protect consumers. Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls) intends to close that loophole.

Payday loans are short-term, high-interest consumer loans similar to cash advances on credit cards. In 1995, the Legislature enacted a law meant to protect consumers from what critics say are exorbitant interest rates often

WHOO'S THAT



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Three-year-old Augie Sturrock of Marshall gets a close look at a spectacled owl held by Bird Show Supervisor David Cruz March 9 during the annual Minnesota Zoo Day in the Capitol Rotunda.

connected to such loans.

"We set the white lines on the road and allowed businesses then to play within those lines," Davnie said.

Although most of the state's 28 licensed payday lenders operate within those lines, Davnie said three companies have found an "off-ramp." By operating as "industrial loan and thrift companies" — a different class of financial institution — they can charge much higher interest rates without technically breaking the law.

Davnie sponsors HF3170 that would close the loophole. The House Labor and Consumer Protection Division approved the bill March 5 and referred it to the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

Ron Elwood, a staff attorney with Legal Aid, said the three "loophole lenders" charge economically struggling Minnesotans roughly \$6 million a year in interest and fees beyond what is allowed under payday lending statutes.

"These are the most financially vulnerable folks," Elwood said. "So that's \$6 million that should have been in those families' pockets all along."

He added that none of the state's 16 other licensed industrial loan and thrift companies engage in payday lending.

Lobbyists representing the payday lending industry testified in opposition to the bill, arguing it would reduce consumer choice. Paul Cassidy, representing Payday America, called the bill "a solution looking for a

problem," and suggested it would merely push consumers to seek out similar loans in other states or on the Internet.

"We've made a business decision to offer our customers flexibility and choice in the products that they can access when they're in need," Cassidy said.

A companion, SF2837, sponsored by Sen. Kevin Dahle (DFL-Northfield), awaits action by the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

— N. BUSSE

Brewing in basements

Beverage producers would be able to make their products in basements, under a bill approved 133-0 by the House March 8.

Sponsored by Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), HF2918 would allow the Department of Agriculture to issue permits to businesses producing certain types of beverages in basements or other subgrade areas.

Greiling said basements are currently automatically ruled out due to the "olden days" when basements were wet and had mildew problems. The department would like to look at basements on a case-by-case basis now, she said.

Seth Couenhoven, director of operations for Thuro Bread, previously told a House committee that he wants to rent the basement of a building he owns to a company to make fermented tea, but is unable to do so under current law. The basement is updated and

approved for commercial packaging, but also needs to be approved for the bottling process, he said.

The bill now goes to the Senate where Sen. John Marty (DFL-Roseville) is the sponsor.

Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan) unsuccessfully offered an amendment that would have required the agriculture commissioner to evaluate any health concerns about products requested by the beverage permit.

— P. OSTBERG

No blocking consumer choice

Renters would be guaranteed the right to purchase telephone, cable or Internet services from a provider of their own choosing, under a bill that won division approval March 5.

HF3097 would prevent landlords from forbidding or discriminating against tenants for choosing one telecommunications provider over another. Sponsored by Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar), it was approved by the House Telecommunications Regulation and Infrastructure Division.

Juhnke said landlords sometimes try to strike deals with telecommunications companies and give renters exclusive rates or charge higher rent for tenants that opt for a different provider.

“If you want a different cable provider or a different phone provider ... you certainly should be allowed to do that and not be fenced out by an apartment owner who maybe cut a side deal to make some money with a single provider,” Juhnke said.

Cathy Clucas, representing the Minnesota Telecom Alliance, said a statute that offered similar protections for renters expired in 2004. She said the bill’s language is crafted to be identical to the old statute, except that it would offer protections to cable and Internet subscribers as well as telephone users. The old law applied only to phone customers.

The bill now goes to the House Commerce and Labor Committee. A companion, SF2616, sponsored by Sen. Kathy Sheran (DFL-Mankato), awaits action by the full Senate.

— N. BUSSE

CRIME

Doubling sex offender sentences

Carly Skarsten was sexually assaulted by a neighbor when she was between 5 and 7 years old.

Before Carly turned 10, the perpetrator was out of prison.

He was convicted of first-degree criminal sexual conduct; a plea bargain got him a four-year sentence, but he was out in two-

and-a-half years for good behavior.

Sponsored by Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center), HF3081 is the governor’s initiative to increase the presumptive sentence for those convicted of first-degree sex crimes to 25 years.

Approved March 4 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, it was sent to the House Finance Committee with a recommended re-referral to the House Public Safety Finance Division. A companion, SF2736, sponsored by Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park), was tabled Feb. 23 by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Harry Kennedy, the state sex offender policy coordinator, said current law calls for a 12-year sentence, eight of which are served in a Corrections Department facility. The remaining four years are on supervised community release.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty said the change would save the state money long-term. “Offenders who would’ve been civilly committed in the more expensive Minnesota Sex Offender Program would be kept in prison longer than under current law,” he said in a Feb. 9 press release. “Prison costs are currently \$63 per day while civil commitment costs are \$325 per day.”

As offenders reach the end of their imprisonment, the county attorney in the county of commitment can pursue civil commitment through a court if they feel the offender remains a sexually dangerous person.

Gerald Kaplan, a licensed psychologist with 35 years of experience assessing and treating criminal sex offenders, said there might be a better way to deal with such offenders.

He recommends that sentenced offenders could be released once they’ve served their guideline sentence, if they are deemed safe for society by something similar to a parole board.

Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul) has no problem with longer sentences, but agrees other options need to be looked at than expensive civil commitment.

— M. COOK

DEVELOPMENT

Keeping businesses in Minnesota

When Joseph Ward decided it was time for his Maplewood-based company to expand, the co-owner of RJA Dispersions, LLC said he wanted to stay in Minnesota. In the end, however, the State of Wisconsin offered him incentives that were simply too good to pass up.

“We heard there were some good programs in Wisconsin. They have a business development

person over there. ... The hospitality he offered was wonderful,” Ward said.

Government officials across the border offered Ward’s company options like tax increment financing to purchase land, and access to regional loan funds to help pay for new facilities. Ward said the company finally settled on moving to Hudson, Wis.

Stopping the migration of companies like Ward’s to other states is the goal of a bill that won approval from a House division March 9.

Sponsored by Rep. Sandra Masin (DFL-Eagan), HF3216 would ask the Department of Employment and Economic Development to develop a plan to identify businesses that are at risk of relocating or expanding outside of Minnesota, and define strategies to retain them.

In addition, the bill would establish a team within DEED to work directly with businesses that are considering moving. The “fast-action economic response team” would be required to contact businesses within 24 hours of learning that they’re considering leaving Minnesota.

“We need to be doing something to be more competitive,” Masin said.

Mark Lofthus, DEED business and community development director, said his agency already works with the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce to try to retain businesses in the state; however, he noted that Wisconsin offers some financial incentive programs that Minnesota doesn’t.

The House Bioscience and Workforce Development Policy and Oversight Division approved the bill and referred it to the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division.

A companion, SF2751, sponsored by Sen. Kathy Saltzman (DFL-Woodbury), awaits action by the Senate Economic Development and Housing Budget Division.

— N. BUSSE

EDUCATION

Early learning system proposed

The House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division approved a bill March 9 that contains the Education Department’s policy recommendations, including a provision to establish a statewide early learning and care system. A key goal would be to “prepare all children for kindergarten.”

Rep. Nora Slawik (DFL-Maplewood), who sponsors HF3407, noted that the statutory goal of preparing all children for school by 2020 is supported by the governor’s early childhood advisory council.

The statewide system would organize components of existing programs delivered by public and private child care, preschool, school-based programs and Head Start into a coherent structure. Components include curriculum, instructional practice, child and program assessments, family supports, professional development, engagement and outreach, accountability, financing and governance.

"It seems really big and really all-encompassing to me," said Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina). "Would any child care provider be able to exist outside the system, and would I, as a parent, be able to keep my kids outside the system?"

Slawik, the division chairwoman, said most children in the state are, in fact, cared for outside the purview of any state oversight. Children not at home with their parents are often cared for in "family, friend and neighbor" care arrangements, which are informal, unlicensed care arrangements provided, for example, by grandparents or other relatives.

"There are a bunch of kids who are totally off the radar screen," she said. "I'd like to see us doing some kind of supports to those families and those kids and talk about quality, but right now the state is not involved at all."

Other proposed changes include provisions for charter schools to conduct early childhood health and development screening, as do district schools, and a requirement that schools use school readiness aid for eligible children. It would allow school districts to accept non-income eligible children into the program but on a fee-for-service basis.

The division laid the bill over for possible inclusion in its omnibus bill. It has no Senate companion.

— K. BERGGREN

Pre-Labor Day school start possible

The House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee approved a mandate reduction bill March 9 that includes an amendment to allow schools to begin before Labor Day.

Rep. John Benson (DFL-Minnetonka) sponsors HF3478, which would give school districts some relief from state directives in a few areas. Those include reducing instructional days for some districts to 2008-2009 levels; allowing choices about whether to publish notices of certain public hearings online or in print; and allowing districts to transfer unused staff development revenue to their undesignated general fund balance.

The approval came after the committee adopted two amendments offered by Rep. Kim Norton (DFL-Rochester): one to allow schools to begin before Labor Day, and

another, successfully modified by Rep. Mike Obermueller (DFL-Eagan), to give schools more flexibility over spending the \$3 per pupil set-aside from the \$30 per pupil safe schools levy. The set-aside is designated to maintain school support services, such as counselors and school nurses at prior year levels.

Norton said one small school district in her legislative district was forced to lay off a teacher instead of a school counselor because of mandatory maintenance of effort requirements. She said the superintendent would have preferred to take the decision to the school board.

The committee did not adopt an amendment offered by Rep. Sandra Peterson (DFL-New Hope), which would have kept the requirement that some public hearing notices be published in a newspaper. They include notices of proposals to establish a district or an inter-district cooperative agreement, close a schoolhouse or impose a new student fee.

"I think school boards are very aware of the importance of various media in their districts," said Rep. Kathy Brynaert (DFL-Mankato). "I think giving control to the local district is the right way to go on these issues."

The bill now goes to the House K-12 Education Finance Division. It has no Senate companion.

— K. BERGGREN

Sex ed bill goes to House floor

The House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee revisited the hot topic of sex education in schools March 9.

Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls) sponsors

HF2986, which would require school districts to offer a responsible family life and sexuality education program for students in grades six through 12.

Schools' curriculum would encourage abstinence and include age-appropriate, medically accurate information about contraception and disease prevention. Districts could independently choose a curriculum and establish teaching policies, in consultation with parents or guardians of enrolled students. The bill goes to the House floor after the committee approved it 12-8.

Dr. Michael Resnick, a professor of pediatrics and public health at the University of Minnesota, said that a recent survey of 1,600 Minnesota parents found that most favored sex education featuring both abstinence encouragement and medically accurate information about birth control and preventing sexually transmitted disease. About 10 percent favored an abstinence-only program, while less than 1 percent did not want any sex education in schools.

Terri Cheung, the mother of a Chaska High School junior, spoke against the bill. She said her daughter's class, taught by instructors from a clinic outside the school, was promoted as comprehensive but was heavily weighted toward promoting contraceptive use over delaying or avoiding sexual activity.

Cheung said the school wouldn't make the curriculum available to her despite her requests, and that it featured a contest in which students were blindfolded to see who could put a condom on a wooden model faster.

Rep. Carol McFarlane (R-White Bear Lake) said she does believe "in having



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Robin Edmunds, left, and Terri Cheung testify against allowing for a family life and sexuality education program during a March 9 meeting of the House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee.

healthy decision-making so our kids have the facts,” but was “disturbed” by what Cheung described.

“I almost feel like that’s bullying to our children,” said McFarlane, “and we’ve had that discussion here.”

“The problem isn’t the bill; the problem is the individual program your school has got,” said Rep. Tim Faust (DFL-Mora) noting the bill would require parental involvement in choosing a curriculum.

Sen. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul) sponsors a companion, SF2645. It awaits action by the Senate Education Committee.

— K. BERGGREN

ELECTIONS

Future of judicial elections

How judges retain their seats on the bench could change, but it would first require an amendment to the state constitution.

Sponsored by Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park), HF224 if approved by voters, the state constitution would have judges initially be appointed by the governor, and upon completion of their first term in office be subject to a vote by electors. If a majority of voters vote “yes,” the judge would be retained for an eight-year term; a “no” majority would force the governor to appoint another individual.

The bill was approved by the House State and Local Government Operations Reform and Elections Committee. It stems from a U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Republican Party of Minnesota v. White* that Simon says essentially allows judges to directly raise money for campaigns, receive political endorsements and announce their positions on disputed legal issues before they come before the court.

It results in “very high-dollar, ideologically driven and, most importantly, outcome-based campaigns for a judge, and I don’t think we can have that in a democracy,” Simon said.

Minnesota Chief Justice Eric Magnuson supports the bill. “When you have a system that leads the public to believe that campaign contributions influence outcomes you are damaging the judicial system immeasurably,” he said.

The change to the law carries costs. There have been, and will probably be, more cuts to the court systems, and these types of elections are not occurring in Minnesota right now, said Rep. Gene Pelowski, Jr. (DFL-Winona), the committee chairman.

“The cost of not doing it is absolutely monumental to the citizens ... the fact that money is tight doesn’t mean that you stop addressing issues,” Magnuson responded.

Susan Miles, president of the Minnesota District Judges Association, said the organization can’t support the bill. First, it doesn’t provide a trigger mechanism that would inform judges in sufficient time whether a person has mounted an opposing campaign, nor does it require a merit selection system for all judges and courts which the governor would use in selecting a new judge, she said.

The bill now goes to the House Civil Justice Committee.

A companion, SF70, sponsored by Sen. Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— P. OSTBERG

EMPLOYMENT

Mandatory work breaks proposed

Minnesota law requires that workers be given breaks during the workday, but some say a lack of specificity in the law is leading employers to ignore it.

Bernie Hesse, director of special projects and politics for United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, said at some meatpacking plants in the state workers aren’t allowed to take time to relieve themselves. He said the situation was so dramatic in one plant that the employer actually locked the restroom doors.

“It’s not uncommon in some of these plants for workers to void in the trough because they can’t get off the line,” Hesse said.

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) sponsors HF2810 that would specify that all workers must be given at least a 15-minute break for each four consecutive hours of work, plus a 30-minute lunch break for employees who work at least eight consecutive hours.

The House Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division approved the bill March 9 and sent it to the House floor.

Currently, state law specifies that workers must be given “adequate time” for a break for each four consecutive hours worked and “sufficient time to eat a meal” when working eight or more consecutive hours. Rukavina said some employers are simply ignoring the “adequate” and “sufficient” requirements.

“I just don’t want to give any leeway anymore, because it’s the leeway in the current law that’s causing the problem,” he said.

Some members questioned whether the proposed break time requirements might be too long. Rep. Rob Eastlund (R-Isanti) said if the goal is merely to ensure that employees have sufficient time to use the restrooms, a 15-minute break requirement might be excessive.

“That’s a long period of time. I don’t think you need that long to relieve yourself,” he said.

Moreover, Eastlund argued the law as it’s currently written should be sufficient to make employers give their employees time to use the bathroom and eat lunch.

A companion, SF2408, sponsored by Sen. David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), awaits action by the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

— N. BUSSE

Maintaining unemployment benefits

When a person receiving unemployment insurance benefits goes back to work only to get laid off again, they sometimes see their benefit levels drop significantly after they go back on unemployment.

Sponsored by Rep. Mike Obermueller (DFL-Eagan), HF3274 would provide workers who return to the state’s unemployment rolls after being temporarily employed a guaranteed similar level of benefits as what they previously had.

The House Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division approved the bill March 4 and referred it to the House Finance Committee. Sen. Jim Carlson (DFL-Eagan) sponsors a companion, SF3123, which awaits action by the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

Because of the way unemployment benefits are calculated, people who return to work long enough to earn new wage credits are often forced to establish a new unemployment insurance benefit account that pays significantly less than what they were getting before.

“People are going from \$400 or \$500 in benefits down to \$30 or \$40 dollars in benefits,” Obermueller said.

The bill would “front-load” the new benefit accounts so that recipients get at least 80 percent of their old benefit level. To accomplish this, it would accelerate payments from the new account, meaning that a recipient would receive larger payments but would exhaust their total benefits in a shorter span of time.

“You don’t get any additional dollars this way, but you do get them earlier in the process,” Obermueller said.

Once the benefits from their new account are exhausted, Obermueller said a recipient could go back on their old benefit account, which may give them access to federal or state unemployment extensions as well.

If enacted, the bill’s provisions would expire on June 30, 2011. Obermueller said the bill is only meant to be a temporary measure.

Lee Nelson, director of legal affairs for the Department of Employment and Economic Development, said DEED worked with

Obermueller on the bill's language and supports the legislation.

Rep. Sarah Anderson (R-Plymouth), the division's Republican lead on workforce issues, called the bill "a great idea."

— N. BUSSE

ENERGY

Current project funding untouched

The House Energy Finance and Policy Division's biennial budget contributes \$49.7 million toward reducing the anticipated \$994 million state deficit, as proposed in HF1741.

Division Chairman Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson) said he took care not to cut funding to projects where work has already been completed and money is owed. However, grantees and funding recipients should expect to receive notices that some of their expected funding will be unencumbered, such as the E-85 cost-share grants, solar rebates and Clean Energy Resource Teams.

Several transfers to the General Fund are intended to help balance the state budget, including portions from the petroleum tank release cleanup fund, the special revenue fund and \$15 million from the worker's compensation assigned risk plan reserve.

The bill was referred to the House Finance Committee. The Senate energy supplemental budget bill was addressed by the Senate Finance Committee March 8.

— S. HEGARTY

ENVIRONMENT

DNR policy bill moves forward

From beaver dams to collector snowmobiles, the Department of Natural Resources' omnibus policy bill seeks dozens of modifications to current laws.

Sponsored by Rep. Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley), HF3094 was approved by the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee March 4. It awaits action by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division.

Its provisions include:

- enabling the DNR to bill other government units, including tribal governments, for support services and equipment costs;
- establishing a \$6 one-time fee to register all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles that are at least 25 years old;
- moving natural resource receipts going to the General Fund to a state parks working capital account;
- prohibiting leases or permits for the removal

of sunken logs due to the negative environmental impacts; and

- removing language that encourages horseback riders to ride off-trail to avoid paying for a trail pass.

A provision that would have required private landowners to pay for altering or removing beaver dams that cause flooding or problems on neighboring properties was deleted by an amendment offered by Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar). "I'm not sure that's equitable," he said.

The bill would also authorize the DNR to pay up to \$18 million to acquire land for a proposed Lake Vermilion State Park.

A companion, SF2916, sponsored by Sen. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

DNR lands bill clears hurdles

Typically each year, the Department of Natural Resources decides that it no longer needs some of its land holdings and needs legislative authority to sell them. Parcels offered for sale to the DNR may be required to have legislative authority for the purchase.

HF3051, sponsored by Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake), comprises the DNR lands bill; its passage would authorize the sale and purchase of varying sizes of property in multiple counties.

The House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee approved the bill March 9 and referred it to the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division.

A provision that would allow the DNR to sell land for less than its appraised value drew criticism. Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Wabasha) suggested the DNR hold out for a while longer until the economy improves.

Dill said the provision to sell below appraised value was included because it would apply to land that did not sell at its appraised value and needs to be liquidated. About a year remains on the statutory deadline for the sale of unsold parcels.

Sen. Dan Skogen (DFL-Hewitt) sponsors a companion, SF2864, which awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

Speedier review process proposed

Environmental review permits can take months or even years to complete, depending upon how contentious they become. Some developers may even walk away from a project if the process takes too long.

Sponsored by Rep. Melissa Hortman (DFL-Brooklyn Park), HF3079 would set a goal for the Department of Agriculture, Department

of Natural Resources and Pollution Control Agency to issue or deny environmental and resource management permits within 150 days after an application is made. The average length of time for a completed environmental review is 228 days, but that includes the Department of Transportation, which is not included in the bill.

There would be no penalty if a review took longer.

Hortman told the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee March 4 that speeding up the process would "increase faith in the system."

Rep. Andrew Falk (DFL-Murdock) unsuccessfully tried to delete a provision that would allow contested environmental assessment worksheets and environmental impact statements to bypass district court and be referred to the Court of Appeals.

The committee approved the bill, which awaits action by the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Division.

Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park) sponsors the companion, SF2761, which awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

FAMILY

After-death care changes approved

Heather Halen calls living without her husband the most difficult thing she's ever had to do.

Yet the Minneapolis woman is thankful for the way she was able to say goodbye. In the days after her husband's death, Halen kept his body at their home and invited loved ones to visit before transporting the body to the cemetery in a pine casket built by friends.

"Gary, in his life, embodied the very meaning of the word simplicity," Halen said, "and each step of this process, I felt, was so in keeping with his values and the way he had lived his life."

Halen is among the growing number of people looking for after-death processes that are interactive and natural, said Rep. Carolyn Laine (DFL-Columbia Heights). She sponsors HF3151, which clarifies the rights of next-of-kin to control a dead body, not just the disposition of remains. The bill would allow those listed in Minnesota's next-of-kin hierarchy to obtain permission to remove a body from the place of death. It would also modify rules for how bodies may be transported and prepared for public viewing.

It was approved by the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee March 9 and sent to the House



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Heather Halen, Minneapolis, testifies before the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee March 9 in support of a bill that would modify provisions regarding viewing, transporting and removal of a dead human body.

floor. A companion, SF2903, sponsored by Sen. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

Contrary to prevalent misinformation, a dead body does not represent a health risk to those around it, said Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota.

"Generally speaking, across the board, there is no risk at all of a dead body, regardless of the cause of death, actually transmitting an infectious agent to someone after the time they die," he said. Exceptions may occur when the body cavity is open during an autopsy.

Laine said her bill is intended to give families more choices, not to impede on the procedures of funeral homes or hospitals. Officials with the Department of Health and Minnesota Funeral Directors Association have had a hand in shaping the legislation.

— L. RADOMSKI

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

GAME & FISH

Stricter public water exit regulations

Just two months shy of the fishing opener, anglers may want to take note of a bill that would require more stringent rules when exiting public waters.

Sponsored by Rep. Karla Bigham (DFL-Cottage Grove), HF3355 would require people leaving public waters to drain bait buckets and all boating-related equipment that contain water, except marine toilets, before driving away. This means drain plugs, bailers, valves and other devices used to drain water from ballast tanks, bilges and livewells.

The measures are needed to help prevent the transport of invasive species, Bigham said.

The fine for failing to drain water from watercraft or equipment before driving away would increase from \$50 to \$250. Those who want to keep leftover bait minnows to use elsewhere had better bring clean, fresh water along to replace the water in their buckets, advised Bigham.

The House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee approved the bill March 9 and referred it to the House Civil Justice Committee. Sen. Julie Rosen (R-Fairmont) sponsors its companion, SF3140, which rests with the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

Access moratorium in omnibus bill

An omnibus game and fish bill approved March 9 by the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee includes a five-year moratorium on building public accesses along water bodies.

Sponsored by Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake), HF3124 was sent to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

Dill said about 10 projects would be stalled during the moratorium. The measure is needed, he said, to prevent the spread of invasive species, a major concern of shoreland residents, anglers and tourism representatives.

The bill would allow anglers to fish in open water with two lines if they purchase a \$10 endorsement stamp. Penalties for baiting deer during hunting season, a problem reported by conservation officers, would increase to include immediate license seizure. Other provisions would affect bear and coyote hunting, and the incidental trapping of muskrat and otter during beaver season.

The bill represents 42 sections of new or modified game and fish regulations. It was amended to include changes to:

- the manner in which bear hunting licenses are issued;
- specifications for quartering deer at the kill site; and
- who qualifies for turkey licenses issued under separate selection.

A companion, SF2900, sponsored by Sen. Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley), awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

HEALTH

GAMC compromise reached

The bill detailing a compromise on General Assistance Medical Care has received committee approval and could be on the House floor as soon as next week.

HF802 reflects an agreement by Gov. Tim Pawlenty and legislative leaders on how to provide basic health care services for more than 70,000 low-income adults, many of whom have chronic mental health problems. An earlier bill passed by the House and Senate was vetoed by the governor, who proposed auto-enrolling current GAMC participants into MinnesotaCare.

Sponsored by Rep. Erin Murphy (DFL-St. Paul), the compromise bill would preserve GAMC in its current form until June 1, at which time the program would operate through a "coordinated care delivery system" of 17 major hospitals partnering to serve the GAMC population. Hospitals with fewer GAMC patients would receive funding for six months as they decide whether or not to form similar systems.

The program is estimated at \$164 million for the current biennium, about \$117 million less than the original proposal.

Speaking to the House Health Care and Human Services Finance Division March 11, Murphy called the program "significantly underfunded." The compromise bill is better than no solution at all, she said, but state officials and providers will need to carefully monitor whether GAMC enrollees receive the care they need. Murphy, who has worked on a GAMC solution since last summer, was emotional as she described what the legislation means for those "living in the shadows."

"We have affirmed that they have a place in Minnesota and that we're not going to abandon them," she said.

Officials representing hospitals and clinics thanked legislators for their work, but reiterated that the proposal is far from perfect.

Murphy's bill was approved and sent to the



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Rep. Erin Murphy, right, listens as Sen. Linda Berglin explains a new proposal during an informational GAMC hearing March 4.

House Finance Committee. A companion, SF460, sponsored by Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

—L. RADOMSKI

Expansion of dental benefits

Minnesotans who receive dental coverage through Medical Assistance would see some lost benefits restored, under a bill receiving committee approval March 4.

Rep. Julie Bunn (DFL-Lake Elmo) sponsors HF3269, which would restore some of the Medical Assistance dental benefits eliminated by the Legislature last year. The bill would expand coverage to include certain procedures like root canals and denture repairs; it would also reduce the time patients must wait between full-mouth x-rays.

"The entire (dental) community is very concerned about the cuts from last year being too deep," Michael Scandrett, staff director of the Minnesota Safety Net Coalition, told the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee. "... Some of those cuts probably went further than they should have and we've had a lot of problems since then."

Bunn's bill would also have implications for the state's critical access dental program, which provides payments to practices serving a high volume of low-income patients. As part of his supplemental budget, Gov. Tim Pawlenty proposes to reduce the number of dental practices that qualify for state

payments. Bunn amended her bill to ensure that practices where at least 40 percent of patients are uninsured or on public assistance programs continue to receive funding. Under the amendment, dental programs associated with the University of Minnesota and the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system would also receive continued payments.

Patrick Lloyd, dean of the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry, said about 32 percent of the 105,000 patients served at the Twin Cities campus last year were on a public health program.

Bunn's bill was approved as amended and is scheduled to be heard by the House Health Care and Human Services Finance Division March 18. It does not have a Senate companion.

—L. RADOMSKI

Home aides ethics standards set

As a parent of two boys with special needs, Beth Bower relies on 24-hour assistance from home health aides.

While Bower and her husband have had positive experiences with many aides, the couple made a startling discovery in October 2008: an aide working the night shift had repeatedly failed to feed the two boys, both of whom use slow-drip feeding tubes. The elder son, who was recovering from surgery, may have gone up to four months without nightly feedings.

"I believe if we hadn't have figured it out, he would have died," Bower told the House Licensing Division March 4.

Bower's experience prompted HF3070, which would require home health aides to complete coursework on ethical practice prior to employment. Aides would also need to meet continuing education standards, and providers would be required to establish policies for drug and alcohol testing.

The division took no action on the bill, which does not have a Senate companion.

Rep. Kory Kath (DFL-Owatonna), who sponsors the bill, sees the legislation as a preventative measure that could deter the kind of maltreatment reported by the Bowers.

"This bill is a starting point," he said. "It's a recognition that we do need to do something with home health aides, how it is that they are promoted throughout the state and specifically, how they are trained."

The Minnesota HomeCare Association supports the concept, but has some concerns with how the bill is drafted, said Kevin Goodno, the group's government relations director. He pledged to work with policymakers and other stakeholders as the proposed legislation is refined.

Kath's bill complements ongoing work by the

Department of Health to streamline licensing for home health aides and ensure the quality of consumer care, said Susan Winkelmann, assistant division director for the Compliance Monitoring Division. The department is also looking at ways to close enforcement gaps and shorten the response time to complaints, she said. The aide terminated by the Bowers worked for another family during the several months leading up to her license revocation.

—L. RADOMSKI

Record sharing rules approved

Legislation passed as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 calls on states to monitor health information exchanges — for example, the sharing of a patient's electronic medical record among doctors at different hospitals and clinics. Minnesota health care providers stand to receive upwards of \$400 million in Medicare and Medicaid incentives if the state can show it has a system for regulating the companies that facilitate these exchanges.

In response, Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth) sponsors HF3279, which would create a state board to oversee companies that conduct health information exchanges. The companies would be required to obtain a state certificate of authority and follow nationally recognized standards, including maintaining patient privacy and security.

"It's designed to ensure that we have one comprehensive system for exchanging information across delivery settings and across providers," Huntley told the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee March 4.

The bill was approved and sent to the House Civil Justice Committee, which gave its approval March 8. It now goes to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. A companion, SF2974, sponsored by Sen. Tony Lourey (DFL-Kerrick), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Opponents cite violations of individual rights and patient safety as reasons why electronic medical records shouldn't have been allowed in the first place. Making records easier to share would only make things worse, they say.

"If it's put into law, it will further destroy and interfere with the doctor-patient relationship," said Dr. Karen Effrem, a board member with the Alliance for Human Research Protection. She believes patients will not be as forthcoming about potentially embarrassing health conditions if they're unsure who could learn about them.

"Our privacy laws are stricter in this state than in practically any other," Huntley said,

"and we already have things in law that people can refuse to have their records sent any place. ... That does not change by this bill."

— L. RADOMSKI

Tattoo regulation approved

A collaborative effort among lawmakers, state officials and tattoo artists could help keep Minnesota blood banks full.

Rep. Julie Bunn (DFL-Lake Elmo) sponsors HF677, which would license individuals and establishments offering tattoos and body piercings. The bill was requested by local blood banks, which turn down potential donors who have received a tattoo or body piercing within the past 12 months. By setting statewide standards for the body artists, Bunn's legislation could prompt blood banks to eliminate the 12-month provision and allow more people to donate.

"To make sure for the future (that) we have an adequate supply of blood, they're looking to make sure those who are of age and of a (certain) health status can be available to give..." Bunn told the House Licensing Division March 4. "And we're finding, culturally, that more and more people have tattoos and various kinds of body art."

Bunn's bill would require technicians to complete coursework on bloodborne pathogens and infection control. It would also set health and safety standards for performing procedures, including requiring the use of single-use needles and ink. Cities would be allowed to impose stricter measures if desired.

Approved by the division and the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee March 9, it now goes to the House Civil Justice Committee. A companion, SF525, sponsored by Sen. Yvonne Prettner Solon (DFL-Duluth), awaits action by the Senate Health and Human Services Budget Division.

The bill is supported by the American Red Cross and Memorial Blood Centers, as well as tattoo artists who've had a hand in shaping the legislation. Tanika Nolan, an owner of ACME Tattoo Co. Inc. in St. Paul, is among them. She said some of the language in the bill needs work, but she supports it because it would offer the industry a measure of credibility.

"I hope that we can work together to come up with a good one instead of a quick one," she said.

— L. RADOMSKI

Arena air monitors proposed

In the three years before Linda Davis was diagnosed with chronic carbon monoxide poisoning, she experienced daily memory loss, fatigue and muscle weakness. The former professional figure skater and longtime coach

had to sleep for hours during the day to muster the energy to make it to the ice arena at night. By the time of her 2008 diagnosis, Davis had realized what was making her sick: exhaust from the equipment used to maintain the ice.

"I like to talk to people and I say, 'Would you ever run a car inside a gymnasium, close the doors and ask kids to run around it?'" Davis asked the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee March 10.

The approved HF3512, which would require all Minnesota ice arenas to contain an electronic air monitoring device that would activate exhaust fans when levels of carbon monoxide or nitrogen dioxide reached certain thresholds. The bill, sponsored by Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul), would lower the acceptable thresholds of these gasses and allow the state to administer grants to help fund the devices. It was sent to the House Finance Committee without recommendation.

Minnesota is home to about 250 ice arenas, all of which would likely need to be upgraded to accommodate the monitors, said Linda Bruemmer, director of the Department of Health's Environmental Health Division. Current rules require ice arena staff to test air quality once a week on the day maintenance equipment is used most.

Department officials said they support Hansen's idea, but do not know of existing technology that would link a monitoring device with an arena's ventilation system.

"The state has not seen one in operation, so in my technical expertise ... this would be an experiment," said Dale Dorschner, manager of the Indoor Environments and Radiation Section.

Several committee members said they were alarmed by the issue. Rep. Steve Gottwalt (R-St. Cloud) echoed similar sentiments, but said he wants to make sure state standards are realistic so that the problem is addressed.

A companion, SF3175, sponsored by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

— L. RADOMSKI

HOUSING

Resolving mobile home conflicts

Residents of manufactured home parks would have a potentially faster, less expensive way to resolve disputes under a bill held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

Rep. Will Morgan (DFL-Burnsville) sponsors HF2353, which would allow park residents and owners to have their disputes heard before an administrative law judge with the Office of Administrative Hearings. Under

current law, the only outlet for resolving conflicts is a civil suit.

Such proceedings can drain people financially, park resident Paul Ruby told the House Housing Finance and Policy and Public Health Finance Division March 9. Residents could be evicted before a civil suit is resolved and may lose their home if they cannot afford the \$4,000 to \$8,000 cost of relocating the property.

"We want an inexpensive and efficient means to address these issues," Ruby said.

Morgan's bill, which does not have a Senate companion, would allow both parties to participate in mediation before a hearing is scheduled; the parties would be responsible for covering the cost of the proceedings.

Judge Bruce Johnson of the Office of Administrative Hearings said he has conducted proceedings via conference call and video conference — attractive options for people from Greater Minnesota. He called the process "more in the nature of arbitration than it is a court-type hearing." Anyone dissatisfied with a ruling could bring an appeal to a district court or to the Court of Appeals.

Mark Brunner, president of the Minnesota Manufactured Housing Association, said he would like the bill's language to filter out "frivolous complaints" that could extend the time it takes to resolve more significant conflicts. He sees conciliation as a viable solution for resolving disputes, but said he is not sure Morgan's bill addresses the issues of speed or cost.

About 180,000 Minnesotans live in manufactured home parks, according to All Parks Alliance for Change, a St. Paul-based tenants union.

— L. RADOMSKI

HUMANITIES

New cuts, 'new ideas'

Access to federal matching dollars, impact to local communities and job retention were among the guiding principles used by the House Cultural and Outdoor Resources Finance Division as it moved to cut \$2.5 million from the current biennial budget of state agencies under its financial cloak.

"Unless there is a dramatic turnaround, the challenge we face this year will only be magnified in the next biennium," said Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown), division chairwoman.

The overall budget reduction averaged about 3 percent. Murphy encouraged the various agencies to seek "opportunities for non-state revenue," such as new public/private partnerships, user fees and online merchandising agreements.

A successful delete-all amendment to HF 3015 transformed the bill that originally supported placeholder language for the Minnesota Film and TV Board into the omnibus cultural and outdoor resources supplemental budget bill. Approved by the division, it now moves to the House Finance Committee. The companion, SF2931, is sponsored by Sen. Richard Cohen (DFL-St. Paul). It awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

Although agencies, including the Minnesota Historical Society, the Minnesota State Arts Board and public broadcasting would see a decrease in General Fund appropriations in the bill, they are recipients of funds from the increase in the sales tax constitutionally dedicated for arts and culture ventures. However, there is a legal question as to whether the dedicated funds can be used to fill in any General Fund appropriation gap. Murphy said the proposed cuts do not test the concept. "Just as the constitutional amendment presented new ideas, our budget situation provides opportunity to work collaboratively, and may allow us to explore new ways to support our priorities," she said.

— L. SCHUTZ

INDUSTRY

Equipment loans for manufacturers

Manufacturers could apply for low-interest loans from the state to help pay for new equipment, under a bill approved by a House division.

Sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia), HF3037 would establish a manufacturing equipment loan program within the Department of Employment and Economic Development. The loans could cover up to 50 percent of the cost of the new equipment, and would allow for a grace period of up to two years before payments are due.

The House Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division approved the bill March 9 and referred it to the House Finance Committee, with a recommendation that it be sent to the House Capital Investment Finance Division.

The program would be administered by DEED and funded through the sale of revenue bonds. Rukavina said it would be a way to bring back some manufacturing jobs lost during the recent downturn "without bankrupting the state."

"My experience with some of the businesses in my district right now ... is they're very, very nervous about the fact that they're barely hanging on and they can't get capital anywhere," Rukavina said.

As evidence, Rukavina cited testimony from a House Jobs Task Force hearing last fall in which a small business owner said he could expand his company and hire new workers if he could get a loan for new equipment. The owner said he couldn't get a loan because tight credit markets had stifled lending by banks.

Rep. Rob Eastlund (R-Isanti) said that while the overall concept has "some merit," he is concerned businesses that would otherwise qualify for private financing from banks would use the state program just to get the lower interest rate.

"My sense here is that this is going to be issued at a rate lower than the marketplace," Eastlund said. He suggested the bill include criteria that would limit the use of the program to only those companies that can't access private capital.

The bill has no Senate companion.

— N. BUSSE

Protecting motorsports dealers

Motorsports dealers say they need protection from manufacturers who unfairly terminate their franchise agreements, and a House committee approved a bill that would do just that.

Sponsored by Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake), HF1157 would set minimum standards for franchise agreements between manufacturers and dealers of snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles and watercraft. The House Commerce and Labor Committee approved the bill March 9 and sent it to the House Civil Justice Committee.

Dealers say the manufacturers can and have canceled franchise agreements for dubious reasons, effectively eliminating their ability to sell the manufacturers' products and refusing to buy back inventory the dealers have already purchased.

The bill would protect dealerships by forbidding manufacturers from terminating agreements without good cause. Manufacturers who do terminate agreements would be required to buy back the inventory purchased by the dealer.

Steve Vandeputte, owner of Brothers Motorsports, said his dealer agreement with Polaris was terminated in 2006. He said Polaris never gave him a reason, and refused to buy back his product, leaving him with a huge financial burden.

"I said, 'If you don't want me as a dealer anymore, all I ask is that you buy my product back and make me whole.' They said under Minnesota law, they don't do that and they don't have to. End of story," Vandeputte said.

Dill argues that since dealerships in the automobile, motorcycle and farm

implement industries are afforded similar legal protections, motorsports dealers should be too; however, opponents say that's not necessarily the case.

Annamarie Daley, a lobbyist representing Arctic Cat, argued that motorsports dealerships are different because manufacturers' products are sold right next to their competitors — unlike automobile dealers, who typically sell only a single company's products. She said the bill would put manufacturers at a competitive disadvantage.

"If you decide one day you want to walk away from Arctic Cat and go sell Honda, any dealer can do that and force all of its inventory onto Arctic Cat," she said.

A companion, SF406, sponsored by Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— N. BUSSE

LAW

Domestic partner probate rights

When a gay man was hospitalized, the man's partner was unable to visit him in the same way that a heterosexual couple can.

"That really got me thinking about the inequality that many of our neighbors and constituents face on a day-to-day basis," said Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls).

He sponsors HF3134 to provide equal access to personal asset distribution in relation to the uniform probate code.

Approved March 10 by the House Civil Justice Committee on a split-voice vote, the bill goes to the House floor. Its companion, SF2765, sponsored by Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"This essentially puts into place a definition for domestic partners, and opens up the probate statute to include that definition in the places where 'spouse' is indicated," said Ann Kaner-Roth, executive director of Project 515, an nonprofit organization that aims to ensure same-sex couples have equal rights and considerations under state law. "The protections that would be allowed would allow the assets of a person who dies without a will in place to be distributed to their domestic partner."

If a spouse in a married couple dies without a will, the other spouse "is sort of the default recipient of the estate," she added.

Tom Prichard, president of the Minnesota Family Council, spoke against the bill, saying it is a way to "redefine marriage by another name under the guise of domestic partnerships. ... Married couples have a legal status and legal obligations, whereas these

individuals are getting the benefits without the responsibilities.”

He also said the bill is discriminatory because it could violate a human rights discrimination provision, and it excludes other people that might care for another person.

— M. COOK

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Four-day workweek voted down

The Mower County Board hoped a four-day workweek would help it deal with a \$1.4 million anticipated cut to local government aid without raising property taxes.

Sponsored by Rep. Jeanne Poppe (DFL-Austin), HF3358 would have permitted the county to be open for business four days a week, not five. The county would have offered extended service hours on those four days.

However, the House Local Government Division voted down the bill March 8.

County Coordinator Craig Oscarson said that the board prefers adjusting its workweek to raising taxes. He estimates the county could save \$50,000 in custodial services, paper products and energy costs by shutting down one of its buildings one extra day a week.

Rep. Rob Eastlund (R-Isanti) and Rep. Bev Scalze (DFL-Little Canada) questioned whether the anticipated savings would be worth the change, although Scalze noted that private companies are taking similar measures to curb costs.

Eastlund noted that the bulk of a county's budget, as with school districts, is for employee salaries and benefits. “It's ludicrous to think we're going to realize much savings without lowering labor costs,” he said.

Sara Lewerenz, legislative coordinator for Council 65 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, said she is concerned about the effects of the proposal on Mower County's lowest paid workers, whose hours could be reduced if they do not need to plow snow or clean buildings on the day off.

Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls) said that being forced to choose between raising taxes and laying off public workers is “not a good precedent to set.”

Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan) applauded Poppe for “thinking outside the box,” but added, “I wish we could blow up the box.”

Sen. Dan Sparks (DFL-Austin) sponsors a companion, SF2966. It awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— K. BERGGREN

Sewer fees help stagnant fund

Because housing and commercial developments in the Twin Cities metropolitan area have slowed since 2007, the Metropolitan Council's wastewater reserve capacity fund is in danger of being depleted to the last drop.

Metro area wastewater fees flow through several channels. First, when a new residential or commercial development or expansion project is built in the seven-county metropolitan area, cities and townships assess a sewer availability charge. These fees are deposited into the council's reserve capacity fund. Then, a portion of the reserve capacity fund, determined as a percentage of the total reserve balance, is transferred to the Wastewater Operating Fund to cover debt service payments.

Because of stagnant development in recent years, SAC receipts have decreased 40 percent last year and 70 percent since 2004, according to Jason Willett, director of financial management and planning for the council's Environmental Services Division. He said the council has deferred capital projects and tightened SAC credit rules to help rein in nearly \$1 billion wastewater debt, but the reserve fund remains low.

Any bond rating decline associated with the decrease in fund capacity could affect the council's bond rating, too, Willett added.

Rep. Paul Gardner (DFL-Shoreview) sponsors HF2949, which would allow the council, if it deems necessary, to temporarily change its source for debt service payments from the reserve capacity transfer to regular sewer fees. The shift would require a public hearing and “appropriate study.” The change would sunset Dec. 31, 2015.

The fee would likely be less than \$1.20 per month per household, according to Willett.

The House Local Government Division approved the bill March 8 and sent it to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. Sen. Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope) sponsors a companion, SF2925, which awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— K. BERGGREN

Peace officer probationary period

**Signed
by
the
governor**

New Hope and East Grand Forks were the only communities in the state with a six-month probationary period for their peace officers.

A new law signed March 9 by Gov. Tim Pawlenty, and effective the next day, lengthens that period to 12 months.

Rep. Sandra Peterson (DFL-New Hope), who sponsors the law with Sen. Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope), said the longer period is consistent with all other municipalities in the state and a reasonable period for mentoring new officers.

Last year, a newly hired officer in East Grand Forks had an extended medical leave; by the time he returned to work, he had missed the training requirements for probationary officers and had to be let go.

HF2713/SF2309*/CH186

— K. BERGGREN

MILITARY

Report supports new vet's cemetery

A January report confirms that, based on demographics, a new state veteran's cemetery is warranted for southern Minnesota. However, current law only directs the veterans affairs commissioner to seek possible sites in Redwood County and in the northeastern part of the state, with a \$500,000 appropriation for land acquisition.

The State Veterans Cemetery study has resulted in at least five bills this session proposing new cemeteries; however, it is unlikely that any would be built anytime soon unless the land comes to the state at little or no charge.

The House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Finance Division heard two of the bills March 9, but took no action.

Rep. Andy Welti (DFL-Plainview) and Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) represent neighboring southeastern Minnesota districts, and they each sponsor bills that address the location discrepancy.

Davids' bill, HF3057, would add Fillmore County as a location. Welti's bill, HF3180, would add southeastern Minnesota to the current law.

The National Cemetery Administration decides the need for veterans cemeteries and covers the construction costs, but the state is responsible for obtaining land and the ongoing operational costs. The state currently has one state veterans cemetery and it is located near Little Falls.

Davids acknowledges that the current appropriation is not enough to purchase needed acreage in southeastern Minnesota for a cemetery.

Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar), the division chairman, encouraged those wishing to locate a cemetery in their districts to look first for available publicly owned land. “That would be our first choice, certainly if someone wants to donate land, we'd accept it.”

The respective companions, SF2682,

sponsored by Sen. Sharon Erickson Ropes (DFL-Winona), and SF2894, sponsored by Sen. Ann Lynch (DFL-Rochester), await action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

SAFETY

Closing a weapons loophole

There is no silver bullet to stopping gun violence, but a loophole could be closed to keep a firearm away from someone who shouldn't have one.

Sponsored by Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul), HF2960 would prohibit the sale of a firearm at a gun show without conducting a background check on the buyer.

The House Crime Victims/Criminal Records Division held it over March 5 for possible inclusion in its division report. A companion, SF2659, sponsored by Sen. D. Scott Dibble (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

"The dangerous people the background check can uncover are felons, individuals who have been convicted of a domestic assault and those with serious mental health problems," Paymar said. He noted that other states, including California, Michigan and Pennsylvania, use the process specified in the bill. The bill is patterned after a Colorado statute enacted following the 1999 Columbine High School massacre. A friend purchased the guns used by the shooters from an unlicensed seller at a gun show.

Rep. Paul Kohls (R-Victoria) and Rep. Dave Olin (DFL-Thief River Falls) said nothing presented at the meeting showed a definitive connection between gun show sales and crimes with a firearm.

"There's nothing in this bill that will stop a criminal from purchasing from an individual who is not a federally licensed dealer outside a gun show," Kohls said.

Joseph Olson, president of the Gun Owners Civil Rights Alliance of Minnesota, said the bill would only "create a harassment situation for the million-and-a-half law abiding gun owners in Minnesota who wish to sell

their private property to other folks."

Paymar emphasized the bill does not infringe on the right to bear arms; it only affects gun shows by requiring a promoter to arrange for at least one federally licensed firearm dealer on the premises to obtain the background checks.

"We require background checks for teachers, and for coaches and for some people in certain jobs," said Joan Peterson, president of the Minnesota Million Mom Chapters of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. "Why then, would you not require them for dangerous people who buy guns?"

— M. COOK

Vulnerable offenders to register

A couple of years ago, a nurse's assistant in a licensed group home did what most people would consider a sickening act.

"The victim in that case was a 52-year-old woman with an adjustment disorder, depression and had what was described as borderline intellectual functioning," said Tara Patet, a senior prosecutor with the St. Paul City Attorney's Office. "During his employment at the facility, the perpetrator became acquainted

with her, and it was discovered that, on several occasions during his shifts, he would go into her room and engage in oral sex with the victim."

The worker was found guilty for his actions, but was not required to register as a predatory sex offender.

Sponsored by Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center), HF3276 would add criminal abuse of a vulnerable adult to the list of registrable offenses under the state's predatory offender registration law. It has no Senate companion.

"We should require them to register because they fit in the category of the other people we already have register," Hilstrom said.

Approved March 4 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, it was sent to the House Finance Committee with a recommended re-referral to the House Public Safety Finance Division.

Under current law, a therapist who has sex with a client, a member of the clergy or a correctional facility employee having sex with an inmate would be required to register as an offender.

"We feel this would simply fill a gap that currently exists in the registration law that is inconsistent with its intent and overall spirit of protecting the public, and in particular vulnerable adults from predatory offenders," Patet said. She said the change would recognize the "vulnerability of persons in care facilities and is a flat-out bar to sexual contact by people who work in those facilities."

A companion, SF3194, sponsored by Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee

— M. COOK

Protecting paws and claws

A person who causes bodily harm or renders a service animal unable to perform its duty could be charged with a gross misdemeanor, under a bill approved by the House Crime Victims/Criminal Records Division March 5.

Sponsored by Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), HF3312 would provide protection for the animals, and allow a person to collect expenses associated with the crime from the convicted person.

Lolly Lijewski said that last September, as she entered a store, she felt her guide dog's legs buckle underneath her. A witness told Lijewski that someone had just kicked her dog in the jaw and helped her identify the person who committed the act.

"They get us around every day, they are supremely trained ... but one incident can change that," she said. A severe incident could cause a dog to have to be retrained or replaced, she added.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Jerry Dhennin, retired sheriff's deputy, displays an assault rifle to the House Crime Victims/Criminal Records Division March 5 during his testimony supporting a bill that would require a background check for transfer of a firearm at a gun show.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

"Ryan" the service dog takes a rest during the House Crime Victims/Criminal Records Division meeting March 5, while Lolly Lijewski, left, Chris Bell, center and Rep. Mindy Greiling testify on a bill that would provide a criminal penalty for intentionally rendering a service animal unable to perform its duties.

Also approved March 9 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee, it awaits action by the full House. A companion, SF2990, sponsored by Sen. D. Scott Dibble (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— P. OSTBERG

according to Internal Revenue Service regulations. This includes contributions made by text message, check, credit card or debit card.

The expected net cost to the state for the credit is approximately \$10,000.

HF2763/SF2352*/CH187

— L. SCHUTZ

TAXES

Tax relief for Haitian help

**Signed
by
the
governor**

People donating financially to organizations providing earthquake relief in Haiti can choose to claim the charitable contribution on their 2009 itemized federal tax return, rather than the 2010 return. The same accelerated deduction is now available on state income tax returns.

Sponsored by Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington) and Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook), the state provision was signed into law March 9 by Gov. Tim Pawlenty. It is effective the next day.

The federal special tax relief provision was enacted Jan. 22, to make deductible monetary contributions to qualifying charitable organizations that are assisting with relief efforts in Haiti following the Jan. 12 earthquake.

Only cash contributions made to qualifying charities between Jan. 12, 2010, and Feb. 28, 2010, are eligible for the federal deduction,

TRANSPORTATION

Policy bill makes another try

The new Highway 23 bridge over the Mississippi River in St. Cloud could be named the "Granite City Crossing."

The name provision is in an updated version of the 2009 omnibus transportation policy bill that was vetoed by the governor. Several other provisions from last year are in round two of the bill; but lacking are the provisions that made it a veto target.

The House Finance Committee approved HF2807, sponsored by Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls), March 8 and sent it to the House Ways and Means Committee.

What's out of the bill is reference to a specific route for a proposed high-speed rail line from the Twin Cities metropolitan area to Chicago. The governor had said that it was premature to select a specific route.

The bill also clarifies language creating a Council on Transportation Access. The governor had objected to a provision last year that members would be eligible for per diem;

therefore, the new language states that members would only be reimbursed for expenses.

The 2009 bill prohibited several activities at rest areas, including sleeping overnight in vehicles or pitching a tent. An amendment successfully offered by Rep. Bobby Joe Champion (DFL-Mpls) eliminates most proposed prohibitions, but keeps one relating to improper disposal of trash and rubbish at rest areas.

The bill also designates two highway sections as memorials to veterans: the "Becker County Veterans Memorial Highway" would be along segments of Trunk Highways 34 and 87, a portion of Trunk Highway 200 from the North Dakota border to Mahanomen as the "Veterans Memorial Highway." It also clarifies the description in a 2009 law creating a Clearwater County Veterans Memorial Highway along Trunk Highway 200.

The bill's cost to the General Fund would be \$153,000 in fiscal year 2011 and \$150,000 in fiscal years 2012 and 2013.

A companion, SF2540, sponsored by Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing), awaits action by the Senate Rules and Administration Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

Foreign IDs for driver's licenses

People unable to obtain a state driver's license or identification card because they don't have the required forms of documentation might be allowed to submit a government identification card from another country as one of two forms required.

Sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls), HF1718 was approved by the House Transportation and Transit Policy and Oversight Division on an 8-5 party-line, roll call vote and sent to the House Finance Committee with a recommended referral to the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division.

Clark said four other states already allow foreign government identification as acceptable forms when obtaining a license to drive. She added that the issue of proper licensing and insurance for drivers is a separate issue from legal and illegal immigration issues.

A companion, SF1615, sponsored by Sen. Scott Dibble (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

To find out who represents you at the Capitol . . .
Call House Public Information Services
at 651-296-2146 or 800-657-3550

Monday, March 8

HF3414-Hilty (DFL) Finance

Public Utilities Commission supplemental funding authorized.

HF3415-Kalin (DFL) Finance

Public Utilities Commission decisions required to further goals of state energy efficiency and renewable energy; showings modified in certificate of need process and study required.

HF3416-Bigham (DFL) Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Legend drug definition changed.

HF3417-Smith (R) Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Persons operating a vehicle under instruction permit required to display "Student Driver" sticker or magnet.

HF3418-Mack (R) Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Minnesota health insurance sale permitted in another state under certain conditions, electronic environmental assessment worksheets authorized, definition of a small employer modified under the Small Employer Health Benefits Act and corporate franchise tax rate reduced.

HF3419-Mack (R) Taxes

Tax credit provided for increasing employment.

HF3420-Holberg (R) Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Medical examination requirements conformed for commercial driver's license to federal law.

HF3421-Mariani (DFL) K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

High school assessments established to determine college and career readiness.

HF3422-Bunn (DFL) Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

County mandate relief provided; diversionary work program and family stabilization services repealed; conforming and technical changes made; and Children and Community Services Act plan modified.

HF3423-Peterson (DFL) Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Criminal penalty increased for possessing dangerous weapons on school property.

HF3424-Dittrich (DFL) K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Online learning provided.

HF3425-Hackbarth (R) Taxes

Property required to be valued as residential homestead.

HF3426-Thissen (DFL) Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Report requested regarding the effectiveness of state programs serving people with disabilities.

HF3427-Winkler (DFL) Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management Act of 2010; and administrative, programmatic, technical changes made.

HF3428-Cornish (R) Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Retired peace officers authorized to carry a pistol without a permit and law enforcement agencies required to issue identification to former officers who qualify to carry without a permit.

HF3429-Welti (DFL) Energy Finance & Policy Division

Large solar electric generation demonstration conservation improvement project provided.

HF3430-Buesgens (R) K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Mandates reduced and temporary mandate suspensions allowed.

HF3431-Dettmer (R) Taxes

Income tax subtraction provided for purchasing an energy management system.

HF3432-Downey (R) Early Childhood Finance & Policy Division

Quality rating and improvement system modified.

HF3433-Juhnke (DFL) Environment Policy & Oversight

Subsurface sewage treatment system provisions modified.

HF3434-Scott (R) Civil Justice

Duty of care established for municipal building inspectors and local subsurface sewage treatment system inspectors.

HF3435-Scott (R) Civil Justice

Termination provided for spousal maintenance based on cohabitation.

HF3436-Loon (R) State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Zero-based budgeting provided.

HF3437-Loon (R) Commerce & Labor

Waterless urinal installation allowed.

HF3438-Juhnke (DFL) Finance

Veteran home appropriation designation removed.

HF3439-Juhnke (DFL) Finance

Commissioner of veterans affairs authority clarified to spend certain funds.

HF3440-Dittrich (DFL) Taxes

Property tax and delinquent property tax method of payment modified.

HF3441-Zellers (R) Finance

Maple Grove; bridge reconstruction funding provided.

HF3442-Hosch (DFL) Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Personal care assistance requirements modified, nursing assistant requirements modified, housing modified with service registration fees and other license fees, long-term care transitional assistance required, customized living services modified, housing with services modified and nursing facility rate changed.

HF3443-Hausman (DFL) Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Courts authorized to recognize a medical necessity defense for certain criminal, administrative and civil cases involving marijuana.

HF3444-Scalze (DFL) Environment Policy & Oversight

Public water suppliers required to establish enterprise accounts in order to be eligible for grants administered by the Public Facilities Authority.

HF3445-Scalze (DFL) Environment Policy & Oversight

Wastewater treatment facilities required to recover the costs of providing services; eligibility modified for loans and grants administered by the Public Facilities Authority.

HF3446-Doepke (R) K-12 Education Policy & Oversight

Board of Teaching authorized to amend its licensure rules to permit a tiered teacher licensure structure; and revised special education licensure requirements.

HF3447-Bigham (DFL) Public Safety Policy & Oversight

DNA collection from offenders authorized.

HF3448-Rukavina (DFL) Finance

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; pilot project established for the local deposit of certain reserves.

HF3449-Kahn (DFL) Finance

State government programs or activities money appropriated or reduced, and other provisions changed.

HF3450-Holberg (R) Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Priced highway lane governing requirements modified.

HF3451-Peppin (R) State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

State-owned buildings process of disposal designated.

HF3452-Lieder (DFL) Finance

Trunk highway bond authorization date provided.

HF3453-Eken (DFL) Commerce & Labor

Electrical requirements modified for agricultural buildings.

HF3454-Winkler (DFL) State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Independent expenditures by corporations ban repealed.

HF3455-Shimanski (R) Finance

Conservation investment program spending temporarily authorized for emergency bill payment assistance.

HF3456-Scalze (DFL) Environment Policy & Oversight

Coal tar products use and sale prohibited; civil penalties provided.

HF3457-Hilstrom (DFL) Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Indeterminate sentencing expanded for sex offenders with prior convictions for certain predatory offenses.

HF3458-Shimanski (R) Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Department of Transportation consultation required on roundabout design.

HF3459-Sailer (DFL) Environment Policy & Oversight

Local ordinance adoption requirements delayed regarding subsurface sewage treatment systems and advisory committee requirements modified.

HF3460-Hornstein (DFL) Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Definition changed to conform to International Registration Plan for commercial motor vehicles.

HF3461-Hornstein (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Skyway access requirements established for stations on the Central Corridor light rail transit line.

HF3462-Rosenthal (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Driver's license cancellation provided for failure to pay final installment of driver's license reinstatement fee and surcharges.

HF3463-Bly (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Northfield, Minneapolis; Dan Patch commuter rail line restrictions modified to allow study and planning.

HF3464-Kohls (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
State reports and documents laws modified.

HF3465-Kohls (R)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Special education director allowed to be assigned direct instructional duties.

HF3466-Atkins (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Fraternal benefit society risk-based capital regulated and adjustments made.

HF3467-Davnie (DFL)
Taxes
Tobacco control and tobacco use prevented; definitions modified of cigarette, tobacco, tobacco products and tobacco-related devices; promotional and self-service distribution rules modified; sale of tobacco related devices subject to municipal licensing; study proposed.

HF3468-Poppe (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Town meeting minutes provided.

HF3469-Mullery (DFL)
Civil Justice
Time limit provided for appealing decisions of a governing body or board of adjustment to district court.

HF3470-Slawik (DFL)
Early Childhood Finance & Policy Division
State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care membership and duties modified.

HF3471-Nornes (R)
Early Childhood Finance & Policy Division
State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care duties modified.

HF3472-Nornes (R)
Finance
Cap raised for revenue bonds authorized for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System.

HF3473-Sailer (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Small city energy efficiency grant program expanded to include commercial buildings.

HF3474-Urdahl (R)
Commerce & Labor
Incandescent light bulbs manufactured in Minnesota use and sale authorized.

HF3475-Dittrich (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Independent agency created to oversee management of Minnesota's permanent school fund lands.

HF3476-Laine (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Lodging establishments definitions modified.

HF3477-Rukavina (DFL)
Higher Education & Workforce Development Finance & Policy Division
Changes to administration of financial programs notice required and transfer authority for grant programs modified.

HF3478-Benson (DFL)
Finance
School district mandates reduced, additional flexibility allowed and certain fund transfers authorized.

HF3479-Rosenthal (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Office of Administrative Hearings authorized to review driver's license revocation or disqualification and motor vehicle plate impoundment.

HF3480-Gottwalt (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Number of members reduced of the Senate and House of Representatives.

HF3481-Hoppe (R)
Commerce & Labor
Malt liquor or spirits tastings allowed.

HF3482-Persell (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Ponto Lake Township, Cass County; aquatic management area designation provided.

HF3483-Hoppe (R)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Restitution values for trophy deer provided.

HF3484-Masin (DFL)
Civil Justice
Emergency hold provisions modified.

HF3485-Juhnke (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Real estate appraiser experience requirement modified.

HF3486-Morrow (DFL)
Finance
Financial assistance changes made for public transit, federal aid governing requirements established, local share of transit provider operating costs governing requirements modified and reporting requirements amended.

HF3487-Newton (DFL)
K-12 Education Finance Division
Conciliation conference requirements clarified and Department of Education directed to amend two special education rules.

HF3488-Severson (R)
Taxes
Sauk Rapids; tax increment duration financing district extended and expenditures authorized.

HF3489-Otremba (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Family and Consumer Sciences Leadership Council established.

HF3490-Holberg (R)
Finance
Requirements established governing capital requests and legislative reporting for projects to establish fixed guideway transit and rail lines.

HF3491-Otremba (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
One credit of family and consumer science made a requirement for high school graduation.

HF3492-Hausman (DFL)
Finance
Higher education asset preservation and replacement funding provided.

HF3493-Hilty (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Rates charged to low-income customers regulated and inverted block rates provided.

HF3494-Eken (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Wetland value replacement plans provisions modified.

HF3495-McFarlane (R)
Finance
Data matching authorized; institution eligibility modified; award procedures, scholarship priorities and powers and duties established; refunds provide; terms defined; and corrections made.

HF3496-Hilstrom (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Registration required for persons convicted or adjudicated in another

country for offenses requiring registration in Minnesota; registration time period of predatory offender restarts after conviction of new crime clarified; attempt, aiding and abetting, and conspiracy to commit crimes against persons included for purposes of registration for predatory offender registration law.

HF3497-Hansen (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Tree care and tree trimming company registration required; sale and distribution of firewood regulated.

HF3498-Knuth (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Department of Commerce directed to adopt conservation improvement program standards pertaining to appliance efficiency jurisdictions and commerce commissioner authorized to allow appliances meeting certain efficiency standards to be eligible for participation in utility conservation improvement programs.

HF3499-Johnson (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Minneapolis and St. Paul; cities authorized to expand certain residential energy conservation programs to include commercial and industrial property.

HF3500-Ward (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
No. 1 diesel fuel exempt from biodiesel requirement during cold weather months.

HF3501-Knuth (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Pollution Control Agency directed to draft a proposed rule enabling Minnesota to participate in a regional cap-and-trade system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

HF3502-Wagenius (DFL)
Finance
Metropolitan area groundwater monitoring account and fee established.

HF3503-Newton (DFL)
Finance
School districts authorized to levy pay costs attributable to increase in employer contribution rates for pension plans.

HF3504-Falk (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Beaver control provided by road authorities.

HF3505-Westrom (R)
Finance
Bronze Star veteran's special license plate authorized.

HF3506-Swails (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Washington County; portion of fines and civil penalties imposed for excessive weight violations in Washington County allocated to Washington County.

HF3507-Severson (R)
Taxes
Homestead market value exemption program eligibility period extended for the surviving spouse of an eligible disabled veteran.

HF3508-Juhnke (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Veterans Preference Act provisions clarified and amended.

HF3509-Juhnke (DFL)
Finance
Department of Veterans Affairs report requirement repealed on the status of a construction project priority listing.

HF3510-Peterson (DFL)
Finance
Department of Early Childhood Care and Education created.

HF3511-Hilty (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Sex offender program definitions modified.

HF3512-Hansen (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Indoor ice arenas required to have electronic air monitoring devices; grants to construct and renovate indoor ice arenas.

HF3513-Anderson, S. (R)
Commerce & Labor
Accelerated plumbing reviews and fees eliminated.

HF3514-Mack (R)
Commerce & Labor
Deferral provided of payment of fees under certain conditions.

HF3515-Winkler (DFL)
Finance
Name of state accounting and procurement system specified.

HF3516-Westrom (R)
Commerce & Labor
Licenses, certificates and registrations temporarily extended.

HF3517-Clark (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Cosmetology licensing provisions modified, fees imposed and rulemaking required.

HF3518-Seifert (R)
Commerce & Labor
Liquor license fees amended for manufacturers.

HF3519-Clark (DFL)
Finance
Prairie Island; workgroup established to design a plan to monitor air and groundwater emissions from the Prairie Island nuclear plant, design of a monitoring network.

HF3520-Fritz (DFL)
Finance
Commissioner of human services required to seek federal match for specified grant expenditures; report required.

HF3521-Scalze (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Human exposure to arsenic reduced, and sale and purchase prohibited of certain products containing arsenic.

Tuesday, March 9

HF3522-McFarlane (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Campaign finance and public disclosure law definition changed.

HF3523-Masin (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Sex trafficking definition modified and commercial sex act defined.

HF3524-Lieder (DFL)
Finance
Authorization and discontinuance of special plates governing provisions modified.

HF3525-Otremba (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Todd County; named highway established and trunk highway segments in Todd County identified as the Veterans Memorial Scenic Loop.

HF3526-Paymar (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Parole board established and membership duties and powers prescribed; eligibility of individual to be considered for parole prescribed.

HF3527-Simon (DFL)
Civil Justice
Jury trials provided and removal of cases to district court procedures modified.

HF3528-McFarlane (R)
Civil Justice
Higher education data regulated.

HF3529-Abeler (R)
Finance
Information provided in fiscal notes and revenue estimates modified.

HF3530-Davids (R)
Commerce & Labor
Annuity contracts prohibited from penalizing death as a forfeiture or surrender of the contract.

HF3531-Haws (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Minnesota Silver Alert System established for adults living with dementia or other cognitive impairment.

HF3532-Peterson (DFL)
Finance
School district not required to provide educational services to students without disabilities from other states.

HF3533-Rukavina (DFL)
Higher Education & Workforce Development Finance & Policy Division
Joint powers agreements may not circumvent or impinge upon the rights of employees covered by certain collective bargaining agreements.

HF3534-Laine (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Commissioner of commerce required to hold a public hearing before approval of certain rate increases.

HF3535-Hornstein (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Statewide telework requirements established.

HF3536-Champion (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Exclusion required of persons incarcerated in state or federal correctional facilities from population counts used for state and local redistricting.

HF3537-Mullery (DFL)
Taxes
Research credit extended to individual income tax.

HF3538-Scalze (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Electronic prescribing requirements effective date extended for certain providers.

HF3539-Benson (DFL)
Finance
Charter schools revised evaluation requirements and changes in sponsorship fees postponed.

HF3540-Morrow (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
St. Peter; conveyance of certain surplus state land authorized.

HF3541-Mariani (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Legislative authority required for developing shared common assessments.

HF3542-Mariani (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Open-ended items included on statewide high school assessments.

HF3543-Scalze (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association assessment replaced with health care provider tax revenues.

HF3544-Huntley (DFL)
Finance
State health care program payment rates reduced to managed care plans and state health care program fee-for-service payment rates increased.

HF3545-Anderson, B. (R)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Certificate of need issuance for new nuclear power plant sunsetted.

HF3546-Beard (R)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Impact of energy-related requirements report required.

HF3547-Anderson, B. (R)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Smaller facilities exempt from requirement to report greenhouse gas emissions.

HF3548-Beard (R)
Taxes
Airflight property levy related.

HF3549-Eken (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Landowner notification required of traps and snares in certain circumstances.

HF3550-Atkins (DFL)
Civil Justice
State and political subdivisions exempt from increased interest rates on certain judgments and awards.

HF3551-Falk (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Wind easements-related provisions modified.

HF3552-Hosch (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
License fees for manufacturers amended.

HF3553-Haws (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Stearns, Benton and Sherburne counties; charter commission provided to report on a form of county government.

HF3554-Simon (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Gambling device and video game of chance definitions changed.

HF3555-Drazkowski (R)
Taxes
Green Acres treatment continuation provided after certain transfers.

HF3556-Hortman (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Fluorescent and high-intensity discharge lamp information requirements modified.

HF3557-Loon (R)
Commerce & Labor
Equipment and apparel requirements repealed.

HF3558-Downey (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
State workforce reduction required and early retirement program created.

HF3559-Kohls (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Corporations allowed to make independent expenditures.

HF3560-Kohls (R)
Civil Justice
Violations of unlawful business practice statutes private remedies limited.

HF3561-Drazkowski (R)
Taxes
Credit for taxes paid to another state modified; permitted terms of income tax reciprocity modified with the state of Wisconsin.

HF3562-Welti (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Energy efficiency definition modified to include ways to decrease consumption of delivered fuels.

HF3563-Hackbarth (R)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Agricultural contracts required for services performed on lands administered by the commissioner of natural resources.

HF3564-Abeler (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Three Rivers Park District abolished.

HF3565-Anderson, S. (R)
Higher Education & Workforce Development Finance & Policy Division
Textbook price information provided to students.

HF3566-Scott (R)
Taxes
General fund contribution check-off provided.

HF3567-Newton (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
BB gun definition broadened to include certain realistic appearing airsoft guns.

HF3568-Newton (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Health care providers required to participate in the federal TRICARE program as a condition of participating in state and public health care programs.

HF3569-Newton (DFL)
Finance
School districts authorized to transfer money among funds and accounts.

HF3570-Newton (DFL)
Finance
Loan program expanded to veteran-owned small businesses.

HF3571-Koenen (DFL)
Finance
Publicly owned nursing facilities rate increase authorized.

HF3572-Davnie (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Dependent definition modified for purposes of group benefits for local government officers and employees.

HF3573-Koenen (DFL)
Taxes
Retailers held harmless for failing to collect sales tax on grain bins.

HF3574-Rukavina (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Town boards authorized to require sewer and water connections on certain property.

HF3575-Atkins (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Broadcast of siren sound used by an emergency vehicle prohibited by licensed commercial radio stations.

HF3576-Lieder (DFL)
Finance
Transportation economic development assistance program established, accounts and appropriating funds established, petroleum tank release cleanup fee amended and legislative reporting required.

HF3577-Beard (R)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Pedestrian bypassing railroad signal provided to be unlawful.

HF3578-Beard (R)
Finance
Transportation, Metropolitan Council and public safety activities or program money appropriated or appropriations reduced; transportation projects, contracts and highway emergency relief account provisions modified; and transportation of hazardous materials regulating provisions repealed.

HF3579-Kelly (R)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Sentinel to service program guidelines established for administration and funding.

HF3580-Morrow (DFL)
Finance
Fort Ridgely State Park campground road funding provided.

HF3581-Faust (DFL)
Finance
Alternative teacher compensation program funding transferred to the general education revenue basic formula allowance.

HF3582-Seifert (R)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
2025 renewable energy standards abolished and clarifying changes made.

HF3583-Kalin (DFL)
Finance
County veteran service officer intern grant funding provided.

HF3584-Sterner (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
State contracts prohibited with vendors convicted of crimes involving fraud; legislative report required.

HF3585-Davnie (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Charter school teacher facing discipline or discharge due process established, and charter school prohibited from punishing a teacher who reports violations of law or school policy.

HF3586-Champion (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Highway construction contracting and disadvantaged business enterprise provisions modified.

HF3587-Hortman (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Department of Transportation authorized to tow vehicles within metropolitan districts.

HF3588-Hortman (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Transportation contract provisions modified.

HF3589-Kath (DFL)
Finance
Contracts for professional or technical services reporting threshold reduced.

HF3590-Hornstein (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Park trailer provisions technical corrections made; federal law and regulation references updated.

HF3591-Hornstein (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Minneapolis authorized to restrict the duration of operation of mobile food units.

HF3592-Sterner (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Employment discrimination based on credit history prohibited.

Thursday, March 11

HF3593-Gunther (R)
Finance
Minnesota business development public infrastructure merged with bioscience business development public infrastructure grant programs; licensing provisions modified; license fees imposed and modified; appropriations reduced.

HF3594-Hackbarth (R)
Environment Policy & Oversight
State trail designation moratorium established until existing designated trails are complete; future additions to the state trail system required to have necessary funding.

HF3595-Magnus (R)
Finance
Agriculture and veterans affairs appropriations changed, tree care and tree trimming company registration required.

HF3596-Bly (DFL)
Finance
Targeted service included as an alternative learning program, and department required to convene a workgroup and report to the Legislature.

HF3597-Severson (R)
Finance
State government uses and fees clarified.

HF3598-Zellers (R)
Finance
Veteran plates authorized for recipient of Silver Star or Bronze Star.

HF3599-Howes (R)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Experimental and special management waters designated for northern pike limited.

HF3600-Simon (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Wine coolers grandfathered for credit purposes.

HF3601-Persell (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Invasive species training required for commercial dock and boat lift installers.

HF3602-Hackbarth (R)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Fireworks authorized personal use limited and criminal penalties provided.

HF3603-Eken (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Plaque placement authorized in the Court of Honor on the Capitol grounds to honor American Indian veterans from Minnesota.

HF3604-Severson (R)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Veterans Preference Act effective date amended.

HF3605-Zellers (R)**Taxes**

Income tax, corporate franchise and interest netting overpayment provisions modified.

HF3606-Sertich (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

State government streamlined; Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Department of Labor and Industry abolished; Department of Commerce downsized; task force established; and employee participation committee establishment required before agency restructuring.

HF3607-Kohls (R)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Public safety, judiciary, private detective board, human rights and corrections funding changes provided; Office of Administrative Hearings authorized to review driver's license revocation or disqualification and motor vehicle plate impoundment resulting from implied consent violations.

HF3608-Mack (R)**Taxes**

Autism-related medical expense subtraction allowed.

HF3609-Mack (R)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Law enforcement agency role clarified to accept a missing person report.

HF3610-Hortman (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Legislative Commission on Minnesota Water Governance and Policy established.

HF3611-Abeler (R)**Finance**

Flexible benefit plans regulated; primary care provider tiering provided.

HF3612-Dill (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Youth hunting requirements modified.

HF3613-Davids (R)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Disability level modified for veterans receiving licenses without a fee.

HF3614-Severson (R)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Vehicle-mounted digital signs regulated and technical changes made.

HF3615-Doty (DFL)**Finance**

Morrison County; ICF/MR rate increase provided.

HF3616-Newton (DFL)**Finance**

Waiver of overdue payments provided.

HF3617-Clark (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Transit shelters and stops design, accessibility and maintenance regulated; access required in special transportation service buses.

HF3618-Bly (DFL)**Finance**

Rate schedules established for certain renewable energy projects, surcharge established on electricity consumption and reports required.

HF3619-Lesch (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Disclosure required of the results of a preliminary screening test to the driver who took the test and making the results inadmissible if not disclosed.

HF3620-Newton (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Flag folding guidance provided.

HF3621-Emmer (R)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

Public utilities, energy conservation, renewable energy and nuclear power provisions modified.

HF3622-Brown (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Highway weight restrictions eased on vehicle hauling manure to or from a farm.

HF3623-Atkins (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Debit cards required to be issued as PIN-based cards and transactions made with those cards to be processed as PIN-based transactions.

HF3624-Hortman (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Commercial buildings required to recycle.

HF3625-Ruud (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Approved accrediting organization definition modified.

HF3626-Kiffmeyer (R)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

State Canvassing Board membership authorized to be provided by law and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3627-Sterner (DFL)**Taxes**

Corporate franchise tax rate reduced and the JOBZ program repealed.

HF3628-Sterner (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

County offices authorized to be open on Saturdays, and modification

prohibited of certain collective bargaining agreements.

HF3629-Poppe (DFL)**Finance**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system reorganized, salaries adjusted, central office established and age increased for free classes.

HF3630-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Commissioner of health required to develop new categories for collecting granular data that accurately captures race, ethnicity, primary language and socioeconomic status.

HF3631-Sailer (DFL)**Finance**

Clearwater County; daily rate increased for an intermediate care facility.

HF3632-Scalze (DFL)**Taxes**

Residential market homestead credit adjusted.

HF3633-Scalze (DFL)**Finance**

Water pollution prevention from polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons appropriations modified.

HF3634-Jackson (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Chiropractor license revocation required for chiropractors convicted of a felony-level criminal sexual conduct offense.

HF3635-Hayden (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Minnesota Family Investment Program provisions modified.

HF3636-Eken (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Managed care plan required to accept a housing with services facility as a provider of customized living.

HF3637-Anderson, B. (R)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Persons prohibited from allowing underage drinking under certain circumstances.

HF3638-Loon (R)**Taxes**

Commissioner of revenue required to conduct a study of the metropolitan fiscal disparities program, and money transferred from the fiscal disparities levy to pay for the study.

HF3639-Marquart (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

State contracts valued at more than \$100,000 requirements established.

HF3640-Eken (DFL)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

Advance determination allowed for prudence determination by Public Utilities Commission for certain environmental projects of a public utility.

HF3641-Welti (DFL)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

Community-based energy development program modified.

HF3642-Hosch (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Property acquisition from petroleum tank fund proceeds provided.

HF3643-Simon (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Merit selection required for all justices and judges.

HF3644-Mack (R)**Finance**

School districts authorized to waive certain fees for children whose parents are serving in the military.

HF3645-Anderson, S. (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Chiropractic licensing sanctions imposed.

HF3646-Morrow (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Job order contracts and construction manager at-risk contracts for transportation projects provided, and design-build contracts provisions modified.

HF3647-Kohls (R)**Higher Education & Workforce Development Finance & Policy Division**

Economic development grant program expanded to certain small cities in the metropolitan area.

HF3648-Drazkowski (R)**Civil Justice**

Surplus funds from law library fees authorized to be allotted for court facility costs, mandatory appointment of counsel eliminated in parentage actions and harassment restraining orders repealed.

HF3649-Knuth (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Sexual equality under the law provided and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF3650-Rosenthal (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Government and peace officer unit authority granted to take into custody and impound vehicles in certain circumstances.

HF3651-Lesch (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Data received from law enforcement agencies in other states classified.

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MINNESOTA INDEX

The XX Factor: Minnesota women's earning power

Percent of Minnesota women in workforce, 2008.....	67.1
National rank, women in workforce.....	4
Percent of working women who have children under age 18.....	79.1
Minnesota top 100 companies with at least one woman executive officer in 2009.....	68
In 2008.....	75
Minnesota's 100 largest publicly held companies with only one woman director.....	41
Number with no women directors.....	27
Highest annual compensation of a female CEO in Minnesota in 2006.....	\$1,861,369
Median annual wage for full-time, year-round female workers in 2006.....	\$33,024
For women of color.....	\$28,073
For men.....	\$41,858
Elementary/secondary schools' rank among industries employing the most women.....	1
Number of women employed.....	105,520
Their average monthly pay.....	\$3,304
Number of men employed in schools; average monthly pay.....	36,893; \$3,691
Management of companies and enterprises' rank among industries employing men.....	1
Number of women employed.....	39,554
Their average monthly wage.....	\$5,015
Number of men employed; average monthly wage.....	40,926; \$8,946
Average annual retired Social Security income received by women in 2006.....	\$10,860
Received by men.....	\$14,136
Median annual private pension or annuity income for women 55 and older.....	\$4,488
Received by men.....	\$9,600
Percentage of family households headed by single women, 2006.....	20.3
Percentage of those in poverty.....	30.3
Percentage headed by single men, percent in poverty.....	7.7; 20.4
Percentage of married-couple households with children in poverty.....	3.7

— K. BERGGREN

Sources: The 2009 Minnesota Census of Women in Corporate Leadership (St. Catherine University and the MN Women's Roundtable); Office on the Economic Status of Women; Minneapolis St Paul Business Journal; US Census Bureau, 2002 Economic Survey

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