

# SESSION WEEKLY



**BILLS MOVE IN, BILLS MOVE ON**  
**STATE COMPANIES MAKE THE FORTUNE LIST**  
**A LOOK BACK TO 'GRACE'**  
**LEGACY BILL PUT ON HOLD**

HF2085 - HF2343

A NONPARTISAN PUBLICATION  
MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES  
VOLUME 29, NUMBER 3 • FEBRUARY 17, 2012

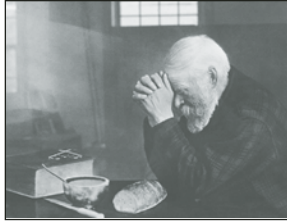


# Flashback 1992 to 2002

## Amazing 'Grace'

A proposal to make Eric Enstrom's "Grace" the state photograph was approved by a House committee.

Rep. Loren Solberg (DFL-Bovey) successfully put forward a resolution asking the U.S. Post Office to create a postage stamp reproduction of the photograph.



Brina Carlson, an Itasca County resident who served on a committee that supports the designation, said the picture is known throughout the world.

"It's a piece of Americana and it's a piece of Minnesota," he said. "It has worldwide renown yet so few people recognize that it came from Minnesota."

— Session Weekly, Feb. 15, 2002

## Cut staff to increase salaries to those who remain

A \$2.3 million cut in the University of Minnesota budget translated to putting 25 Minnesota Extension Service agents out of work. The cut reflects fewer federal and state funds and a salary and benefit increase proposed for all university staff.

The House Agriculture Committee learned that new county agriculture agents earn \$20,000 a year, while graduates of the University's College of Agriculture earn an average annual salary of \$27,000. The decision was made to pay "those who remain a decent kind of salary," rather than employ more people at a lower wage, said Pat Borich, extension director.

— Session Weekly, Jan. 17, 1992

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## SESSION WEEKLY

Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services. Produced during session, it covers the previous week's news from the House. No fee.

Session Weekly (ISSN 1049-8176) is published weekly during the legislative session by Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Services, 175 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298. Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, Minn., and additional offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Session Weekly, House Public Information Services, 175 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298.

Printed on recycled paper which is 50% recycled, 50% post-consumer content.

# HIGHLIGHTS

FEBRUARY 2 - 16, 2012

**Editor's note:** It has been a very active stretch of time for proposed legislation. Many bills received hearings in House committees or divisions, several were acted on by the full House and even the governor weighed in on four bills. Because of last week's precinct caucus break and no Session Weekly, we are foregoing our tradition of a "First Reading" page 3 story, in order to give readers a more comprehensive look at this week's legislation with our "Highlight" coverage.

**Editor's note:** The following Highlights are coverage of select bills heard in House committees and other House activities held Feb. 2-16. 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 acted on by the governor.

## Agriculture

### Extending the bovine TB tax credit

A bovine tuberculosis outbreak in cattle near Roseau several years ago forced ranchers to stop using their pastures and destroy the animals to stop the spread of the disease.

They were given a property tax credit to alleviate some of their financial losses and because the pastures are not suitable for other uses. In 2010, the Board of Animal Health certified that a large portion of the affected zone was free of bovine TB, which automatically turned off the property tax credit.

However, 22 of the previous 276 restricted herds are still subject to another year of bovine TB testing. These ranchers would continue to receive the property tax credit under HF1890, sponsored by Rep. Dan Fabian (R-Roseau).

The House Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Finance Committee approved the bill Feb. 9 and referred it to the House Taxes Committee, with the understanding that it would come back to the committee if funding for the tax credits comes from the Department of Agriculture's budget.

"I appreciate the concern, but this was supposed to be a temporary program. This is a good example of when a program becomes an

entitlement," said Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul).

Rep. Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley) supports the bill because the restrictions for the 22 herds are still in place. "This is something the whole state benefits from," Eken said. "I don't think the whole burden should be borne by those directly impacted."

Preliminary cost estimates project \$100,000 in tax credits could be awarded to affected ranchers. It was unclear whether the money would come from the General Fund or from the Department of Agriculture's budget.

Rep. John Ward (DFL-Brainerd) asked whether the \$100,000 cost would be shifted onto other county property owners. Fabian said the funding details would be worked out in the House Taxes Committee.

A companion, SF1555, sponsored by Sen. LeRoy Stumpf (DFL-Plummer), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

### Horse livestock bill laid over

Horses are considered livestock for agricultural purposes, but equine operations may mean something entirely different when it comes to assessing property taxes.

A bill laid over Feb. 9 by the House Agriculture and Rural Development Policy and Finance Committee aims to fix a discrepancy between the agriculture and property tax laws for horse breeders.

St. Michael horse breeder David Dayon was notified that he was being assessed at a higher commercial tax rate, rather than the lower agricultural rate, when he sought clarification from legislators.

HF539, sponsored by Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township), would modify the agriculture classification law so these operations may qualify for a property tax rate reduction.

To be classified as agricultural, the operation must meet minimum criteria, such as 10 acres or more, turn a profit and be an agricultural pursuit.

There are about 13,000 horse farms in the state. The typical horse farm is 20 acres, according to Krishona Martinson, assistant professor and equine extension specialist at the University of Minnesota.

However, a provision in the bill that would

allow for more intensive horse operations on fewer acres raised objections from committee members.

Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul) said the bill needs to be amended so that urban residents can't put a "pony in the backyard" and declare agricultural status and receive lower property tax rates, which could cause increased taxes for neighboring properties.

Sen. Doug Magnus (R-Slayton) sponsors a companion bill, SF396, which awaits action by the Senate Agriculture and Rural Economics Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

## Bonding

### Red Lake School seeks bonds

The Red Lake School District faces a unique problem.

Because it lies completely within a reservation, the land isn't available for property taxes that fund schools. That leaves the district in need of state funding for projects like renovations.

This was explained to the House Education Finance Committee Feb. 14 when Rep. David Hancock (R-Bemidji) offered two bonding bills that would benefit the district.

HF2109 would provide nearly \$8 million to demolish the district's original elementary school. The money would also fund building a district and student services area, media center and technology labs, locker rooms and support areas.

HF1264 would appropriate \$5.78 million to renovate the high school and middle school kitchen and cafeteria. Hancock said the facilities, which were built in the early 1960s, are too small to accommodate students.

Superintendent Steve Wymore said the district faces "overwhelming" challenges in raising funds on its own. In addition to its lack of taxable land, its free and reduced meal rate for students is at 90 percent. Because of its financial challenges, the district is unlikely to be able to pay back the state funding proposed in the bill, which is in the form of a loan. This means the money would effectively amount to a grant for the school

district. Since 1992, the district has received four capital loans from the state for school construction projects.

Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) spoke in support of the bill, saying, "It should be our top priority in this committee."

Both bills were laid over for possible recommendation for bonding bill inclusion.

Sen. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook) sponsors the companion bills, SF1697 and SF825. Both await action by the Senate Capital Investment Committee.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

### Public safety bonding requests

Seven of the 10 bonding requests, totaling more than \$85 million, heard by the House Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee, received favorable recommendations.

They were forwarded Feb. 9 to the House Capital Investment Committee for further consideration.

The largest request, \$29.9 million, would be to remodel existing space for the intake unit and construct a new health services unit and loading dock at the St. Cloud prison. Department of Corrections officials testified that the projects would increase staff and offender safety, and would reduce the crowded intake and health services areas that are inadequate for the current prison population.

Also making the cut is \$15 million in department asset preservation and \$3.39 million to install a new well, replace piping and add a building to house water treatment equipment at the Stillwater prison. Officials said the changes would reduce water treatment costs and energy consumption.

Other projects forwarded are:

- \$26 million requested by the Department of Public Safety for construction of a new state emergency operations center in Arden Hills to replace the facility in downtown St. Paul;
- \$10.3 million to construct a regional 911 communications facility in Hennepin County to replace the current facility that opened in 1948;
- \$750,000 for asset preservation and other improvements at the Northeast Regional Corrections Center; and
- \$164,000 for improvements to the Annandale Tactical Training Center.

The Hennepin County facility comes from HF2038, sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls); Rep. Carly Melin (DFL-Hibbing) sponsors HF1933, the corrections

center funding; and Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City) sponsors HF293 for the Annandale facility.

Not making the cut are:

- \$5.4 million for a fence at the Shakopee women's prison that was requested by the Corrections Department;
- \$3 million for a new emergency operations center in Ortonville, that came from HF788, sponsored by Rep. Andrew Falk (DFL-Murdock); and
- \$2.5 million to equip an expansion to the Minnesota Emergency Response and Industrial Training Center in Marshall, that came from HF2016, sponsored by Rep. Chris Swedzinski (R-Ghent).

Committee members previously said they want local funding sources secured before the state helps with the Ortonville and Marshall projects.

— M. COOK

## Civil Law

### Proposed Ski Safety Act put on hold

When you clamp on your skis at your favorite downhill ski area, how much of the sport's risk are you taking on?

Rep. Tara Mack (R-Apple Valley) sponsors HF1865, tagged as the Minnesota Ski Safety Act. It would clearly lay out the duties and responsibilities of ski area operators and skiers regarding limits of liability.

The intent of House Civil Law Committee Chairman Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake) on Feb. 13 was to move the bill to the House floor. However, after attorneys on both sides of the issue laid out their cases, Westrom asked to lay the bill over to see if both sides could find agreement.

Skiing has changed over the years, and civil immunity laws regarding it need updating, Mack said. The bill would model standards after those of the American National Standards Institute.

Leigh Nelson, who owns Welch Village, said that in 1965 there were 34 ski areas in Minnesota, now there are about half that number. He said that capital costs and lawsuits have contributed to their demise.

Attorney Jeff Lindquist of Minneapolis said that currently the discretion in lawsuits is left to the judge.

"What this does is bring much needed consistency and objectivity to the law," he said. It lays out the inherent risks to skiing.

There are four public ski areas operating in

the state, and committee members said the bill doesn't address the differences in how immunity laws apply to them.

Joel Carlson, representing the Minnesota Association for Justice, said the bill does not allow for any operator negligence. He noted that, as a lobbyist, he has seen this bill in some form nearly every session since 1999.

The companion, SF1509, sponsored by Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

### Dayton pens session's first vetoes

Vetoed  
by  
the  
governor

Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed a series of bills Feb. 10 that Republicans say are designed to reform civil litigation.

Dayton said the four bills "appear to be another political ploy as they (Republicans) cater to their rich and powerful friends at the expense of most Minnesotans. ... The real impact would be to reduce the rights of law-abiding citizens and businesses that seek justice from the wrongdoing of others."

He noted in his veto letters his willingness to consider changes to the state's civil laws that would help businesses and residents obtain justice and fair recovery.

Bill sponsors said the package addressed lawsuit abuse and proposed reform designed to improve the business and job climate in Minnesota.

Rep. Pat Mazorol (R-Bloomington) and Sen. Julianne Ortman (R-Chanhassen) sponsor HF770/SF530\*/CH121 that would change how interest rates are computed before and after judgments. It would have lowered the awards from the current 10 percent flat rate to a market-driven rate with a floor of 4 percent.

In his veto letter, Dayton said he found it "objectionable that the Legislature allowed prejudgment interest for businesses with commercial insurance policy claims at 10 percent, but lowered similar claims for average citizens to 4 percent."

In addition to increasing the threshold for filing a civil action in conciliation court from \$7,500 to \$10,000, HF211/SF149\*/CH118, sponsored by Rep. Doug Wardlow (R-Eagan) and Ortman, would have addressed the right of appeal in class action suits. Wardlow said this would expedite the process, saving the state approximately \$41,000 annually.

Dayton said the provisions are not consistent with the court's recommendations



for effectively addressing small claims. He called it “legislative meddling with court procedures.”

He and Ortman also sponsor HF654/SF373\*/CH119 that would have shortened the state’s statute of limitations from six years to four years.

Dayton said the legislation would eliminate “important protections for citizens and businesses, when they are harmed by the wrongful actions of others.”

Sponsored by Mazorol and Sen. Scott Newman (R-Hutchinson), HF747/SF429\*/CH120 would have provided that when making an award, a judge must take into consideration the reasonableness of the attorney fees sought in relation to the amount of damages awarded to the prevailing party.

Dayton’s concern is that the legislation would make “it more difficult for average citizens to defend themselves against powerful interest.”

— L. SCHUTZ

## Consumers

### No shutdowns for lottery, racing

If the state ever experiences another government shutdown like the one last summer, the Minnesota State Lottery and the Racing Commission might be immune from its impact.

That’s the premise of HF2003, sponsored by Rep. Kelby Woodard (R-Belle Plaine). The House Government Operations and Elections Committee approved the bill Feb. 14 and sent it to the House State Government Finance Committee. There is no Senate companion.

Woodard argues there’s no sense in shutting down operations that make money for the state — especially when they’re funded through special revenue streams that have no real bearing on the Legislature’s political disagreements over the budget.

“These horse tracks and the related industries to them employ thousands of Minnesotans and provide revenue to the state, even when the state is in a government shutdown,” Woodard said.

Opponents asked whether it was fair to single out specific agencies for protection against a shutdown — or conversely, why the Legislature shouldn’t simply let all agencies and programs continue in the event of a shutdown.

## LEND A HAND



PHOTO BY PAUL BATTAGLIA

**Gov. Mark Dayton shakes hands as he leaves the House Chamber Feb. 15 after delivering his State of the State address to a joint session of the Legislature. The governor called for cooperation between he and the Legislature, and said putting unemployed Minnesotans back to work must be a top priority. Dayton also urged legislators to pass a bonding bill this month, to vote on a new stadium for the Minnesota Vikings this session and to kick himself and the Legislature out of the State Capitol so much-needed renovations to the 107-year-old building can take place.**

“How many more bills are we going to have that carve out different parts of government and put them on continuing resolutions, putting them on autopilot?” said Rep. Mike Nelson (DFL-Brooklyn Park).

Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls) asked whether Woodard thinks the same should be done for all of state government.

“It’s an important question,” Woodard replied. “In some circumstances — this being one — the Legislature needs to take a proactive approach.”

Another state entity — the Gambling Control Board — might be added to the bill at its next committee stop. Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee) said that much like the other two agencies, the board operates autonomously and would like to be included in the bill.

— N. BUSSE

## Education

### Education bonding proposals

Building, preserving and demolishing facilities was the topic of the day for the House Education Finance Committee on Feb. 8 when education administrators and elected officials brought forward more than \$60 million in bonding proposals.

Each described the need for repairs and renovations at various schools and libraries across the state. All proposals were held over for possible bonding bill inclusion.

Pam Paulson, senior policy director at the Perpich Center for Arts Education, was one of many testifiers. She said, “We are charged to be innovative. We are charged to be on the cutting edge. ... And we are now behind.”

The committee heard arguments supporting the following six bills:

- HF1778 seeks a \$20 million cooperative facilities grant for the United South Central district. Administrators say their current

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building is aging and inadequate for the student population. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Vernon Center). Sen. Julie Rosen (R-Fairmont) sponsored its Senate companion, SF1693, which awaits action by the Senate Capital Investment Committee.

- HF1794, sponsored by Rep. Patti Fritz (DFL-Faribault), seeks \$10.5 million for asset preservation, building demolition, parking lot creation, student housing and a technology center at the Minnesota State Academies for the Deaf and Blind. Its companion bill SF1640, sponsored by Sen. Mike Parry (R-Waseca), awaits action by the Senate Capital Investment Committee. Gov. Mark Dayton recommended \$7.6 million for this project in his bonding request.
- HF1851 seeks \$2 million to fund library accessibility and improvement grants that would aid in renovation projects for various community libraries throughout the state. The bill's, sponsored by Rep. Carol McFarlane (R-White Bear Lake). Its Senate companion, SF1867, is sponsored by Sen. John Carlson (R-Bemidji).
- HF1997, sponsored by Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston), seeks \$20 million to build a prekindergarten-12 facility in the Rushford-Peterson school district. A 2007 flood extensively damaged the current century-old building. The companion, SF1602, is sponsored by Sen. Jeremy Miller (R-Winona).
- HF2001 seeks \$7 million for Northeast Metro No. 916, an intermediate district that serves metro area school districts. The grant would help build a kindergarten-8 school designed to serve the district's Level IV special education students. McFarlane sponsors this bill. Its Senate companion, SF1666, is sponsored by Sen. Pam Wolf (R-Spring Lake Park).
- HF2106, sponsored by Rep. Ryan Winkler (DFL-Golden Valley), seeks \$1.4 million in capital improvements at the Perpich Center for Arts Education in Golden Valley. This is another project Dayton has recommended, who supported the \$263,000 outlined in the original version of the bill. The companion, SF1827, is sponsored by Sen. Ron Latz (DFL-St. Louis Park). All Senate companions await action in the Senate Capitol Investment Committee.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

## Charters allowed referendum revenue

Charter schools are currently financed in the same way as public schools, with the exception of referendum revenue, which charter schools do not receive.

HF1860, sponsored by Rep. Kelby Woodard (R-Belle Plaine), proposes that referendum revenue be transferred in an equal amount for each student that attends a charter school in his or her resident school district. This increase for charter schools' general education aid would be offset by a corresponding decrease in the resident school districts' general education aid. This would affect Minnesota schools beginning in fiscal year 2014.

Initially heard Jan. 24 by the House Education Finance Committee, members of the committee again discussed the bill Feb. 15, including adopting an amendment that would only apply this bill to future levies that fund schools, not standing levies. No action was taken on the bill. It has no Senate companion.

During previous meetings, charter school officials spoke in favor of the bill, arguing that their students are being punished for exercising their right to choose which school they attend.

Testifiers from public schools disagreed, saying that the bill would take away much-needed funds that pay for services only public schools provide.

Woodard explained that his bill would create a more equal approach to education funding.

"When we say we're doing this per pupil for education purposes, for public school students, that really isn't a fair statement," he said.

Other committee members expressed hesitancy to support the bill. Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) said she was concerned that special education services public schools provide will lose funding.

"I haven't had an e-mail that I can recall, honestly, that says 'Please support this,'" said Rep. John Ward (DFL-Brainerd).

— E. SCHMIDTKE

## Digital learning requirement

Adding to language arts, math, physical education and social studies, districts may soon find they must include a digital class as a required course for students.

The House Education Reform Committee approved HF2127 on Feb. 14, sponsored by Rep. Pam Myhra (R-Burnsville), which would make it mandatory that high school students receive at least one digital course credit before graduation. Schools would need to engage students with a "blended learning" approach, which uses technology to teach a subject. Requirements for students would be effective for those starting ninth grade in 2012.

## LOGO REVEALED



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Rep. Dean Urdahl, right, unveils the Civil War Commemoration Task Force logo contest winning design during a Feb. 14 press conference. The logo, created by Michael Campbell, of Chanhassen, left, will serve as the official symbol of the war's 150th anniversary.

Bill backers believe it lends innovation to traditional brick-and-mortar education. Christy Hovanetz, senior policy fellow at the Foundation for Excellence in Education, explained that technology makes education customizable for both students and teachers.

“When students can learn in their style — at their own pace — all students will achieve,” she said.

Rep. Bob Barrett (R-Shafer) said he has seen the positive effects of online classes, which are currently intended to be a second option for students who have trouble succeeding in a more mainstream setting.

Critics of the bill worry that not all districts have the resources to add and manage digital courses. They argued that those that have the staff and funds are already taking steps to make digital learning a part of their curriculums.

Rep. Kim Norton (DFL-Rochester) said, “We always talk about letting the market do its thing. I think this is an example where you’re trying to force something that’s already happening and create an additional mandate.”

The bill next goes to the House Education Finance Committee.

The Senate companion, SF1528, is sponsored by Sen. Carla Nelson (R-Rochester). It awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

### Childhood eye screenings

School districts are required to hold early childhood development screenings for children who are nearing school age. This helps the schools identify children who could benefit from district or community resources.

Rep. Sondra Erickson (R-Princeton) intends to take the current screening a step further with HF300. It would require districts to share information about vision screenings with parents. The bill explains the benefits that stem from vision testing and states that the testing is not a substitute for a comprehensive eye exam.

The measure was passed 133-0 by the House Feb. 13 and now goes to the Senate where Sen. David Hann (R-Eden Prairie) is the sponsor.

During a Jan. 26 meeting of the House Education Reform Committee, Erickson said, “We have to be in the business of letting parents know what is available out there. ... If it helps one child, we must do so.”

— E. SCHMIDTKE

### Floods impact school calendar

Neighborhoods turn into islands during the annual flooding of the Red River in northwestern Minnesota.

The flooding can impact the school calendar, forcing teachers to keep students in the classroom into the summer to ensure they stay on schedule.

Sponsored by Rep. Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley), HF1542 would allow districts to begin classes prior to Labor Day, as a countermeasure to the days they lose in the spring, due to flooding.

It was approved Feb. 9 by the House Education Reform Committee and sent to the House floor. It has no Senate companion.

Current statute does not permit schools to begin the academic year before Labor Day unless they meet specific requirements.

In a letter to legislators, Norman County West Superintendent Ollen Church wrote, “Our problem in the spring is, we simply can’t get our kids into school.” Through this bill, he hopes to start school a week before Labor Day, so the district has days in reserve to cancel school during the year due to flooding.

Before the vote, Rep. Kim Norton (DFL-Rochester) added, “At some point, this policy committee needs to acknowledge that local control is needed for every dang school district in this state to decide when they want to start their schools, before or after Labor Day.”

— E. SCHMIDTKE

### Teacher layoff debate continues

Minnesota teachers could see seniority-only based layoffs end.

HF1870, sponsored by Rep. Branden Petersen (R-Andover), proposes that school administrators examine teacher evaluations when making a decision to demote or discharge a teacher, or place him or her on an unrequested leave of absence.

Approved Feb. 9 by the House Education Reform Committee, the bill awaits action by the full House. Its companion, SF1690, sponsored by Sen. Pam Wolf (R-Spring Lake Park), awaits action by the Senate Education Committee.

Supporters argue that HF1870 will add fairness to layoff practices and increase the quality of teachers in the classroom. Opponents claim that legislators are addressing the issue without considering current layoff policies. They urged the committee to value the experience that more seasoned teachers offer.

Committee members debated a variety of amendments to the bill, including six

successfully offered by Petersen. Changes to the bill include pushing back the bill’s effective date and a requiring that teacher evaluations be designated as private, individual information.

Rep. Kory Kath (DFL-Owatonna) proposed, then withdrew, an amendment that would mandate negotiations between teachers and local school boards in special cases, creating an exception to the bill. Kath highlighted language immersion and Montessori teachers as examples, whom he said need to be considered differently for layoffs because they meet a unique need in schools.

Rep. John Benson (DFL-Minnetonka) was one of several members who argued for a compromise, saying, “There’s a constant notion, it seems, that the Legislature knows all and that local committees, local school boards and citizens-elect somehow can’t quite be trusted.”

“Quality-blind layoffs, seniority-based layoffs are incompatible with a system that places student achievement first,” Petersen countered.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

### League rules could ease

High schools around the state depend on the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). The organization provides opportunities for schools’ fine arts and athletic teams to compete in conferences, or designated groups, with other schools.

Sometimes, it’s not always easy for high schools to have access to the resources that MSHSL provides. That may change.

Currently, if a high school needs to join a conference, it must spend 180 days on its own as part of a “good faith” effort to become part of one before MSHSL steps in to assist it. Educators and league officials say that’s too long.

Rep. Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck) sponsored a bill that intends to ease the process. HF1585 would shorten the waiting period to 90 days. Anderson said that difference might seem simple, but to schools, those 90 days matter.

During a Jan. 26 meeting of the House Education Reform Committee, where members reviewed the bill, Anderson said, “The reason the length of time is significant is because a lot of conferences will schedule tournaments up to a year in advance.” He cited a school in Melrose, which is part of his district, as an example. The high school missed a registration deadline and was forced



to travel to Wisconsin and International Falls so their football team could find competitors.

The bill came with the support of MSHSL and passed easily on the House floor with a vote of 133-0. Its companion bill, SF1322, is sponsored by Sen. Joe Gimse (R-Willmar). It awaits action in the Senate Education Committee.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

### **Schools could get own grading system**

Minnesota school districts could soon find themselves receiving a grade from the commissioner of education.

The House Education Finance Committee discussed a bill Feb. 15 that would establish a grading system, from A to F, which would evaluate schools based on student achievement. Rep. Pam Myhra (R-Burnsville) sponsors the bill, HF638, which was laid over for further review.

Students' proficiency and improvement on standardized tests, as well as growth in reading and math assessments would determine a school's grade. For high schools, the grade would also account for SAT and ACT scores and participation in advanced programs like postsecondary enrollment options or AP courses. Evaluations would begin this school year.

These grades would have consequences. Schools that receive a D or F must develop and implement a process for improvement. Schools that receive an A, improve one letter grade or improve two in the previous two school years are eligible for a school recognition award of \$100 per enrollee. That money could be used to pay for staff or educational materials.

Christy Hovanetz, a senior policy fellow at the Foundation for Excellence in Education, testified in support of the bill. She cited a similar grading system in Florida as an example of successful school evaluations.

Hovanetz said, "If we believe all students can learn, we should hold schools accountable for their academic success."

Some committee members voiced concerns. Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) said, "I'm very much of the mind that just labeling schools, labeling teachers, labeling students, and if you don't do anything about it, it doesn't amount to a hill of beans."

Myhra emphasized the urgency for the bill, comparing problems in schools to cancer.

"Cancer, left undiagnosed and untreated, leads to death. And failure leads to death of opportunity and hope and the future of our

children," she said.

Sen. Dave Thompson (R-Lakeville) sponsors the companion, SF1302. It awaits action by the Senate Education Committee.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

### **Teachers-to-be need the basic skills**

State law currently allows those who have completed a teacher preparation program to receive up to three one-year licenses without passing a basic skills exam. On Feb. 13, the House passed a bill that would require teaching candidates to produce a passing score on the exam before obtaining a license in Minnesota. The vote was 132-0.

Rep. Andrea Kieffer (R-Woodbury), the sponsor of HF1770, is concerned that teachers are instructing children while being potentially unable to pass the basic skills test themselves. She believes the bill will increase the quality and rigor of teachers in Minnesota.

Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Savage) unsuccessfully offered an amendment that would require teacher candidates to pass the exam before entering a teacher training program in college.

Buesgens worries that unqualified students are allowed admittance to these training programs. He explained that, if they fail the skills test after graduating, they will not have the opportunity to work as teachers, which will hamper their ability to pay off massive student loans.

Buesgens said, "What we are doing to the young men and young women of this country is the next great financial crisis, after the mortgage crisis, to hit this country. ... Shame on us for allowing a system like that."

Supporters of the bill disagreed, saying that teacher candidates still have much to learn before they enter their degree programs. They believe it would be too difficult for students to pass the test without the education a teacher program provides.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) compared teacher degree programs to another profession. "A good analogy here would be requiring aspiring doctors to pass their medical boards in order to get into medical school. Why would we do that?"

The bill now awaits action on the Senate floor. Sen. Ted Daley (R-Eagan) is the sponsor.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

### **Unions, employers debate contracts**

Public employees would be unable to receive any automatic pay or health benefit increases in between union contracts, under a bill that won committee approval.

Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa) sponsors HF1974 that would change the way public-sector contracts continue in effect after they've expired. It provides that while unions are negotiating new contracts, their members would be ineligible for pay or benefit increases, regardless of the terms of the previous contracts.

In addition, public employers would be unable to enter into a contract that provides any retroactive pay or benefit increases. So, too, would arbiters be unable to award any retroactive increases, under the bill's provisions.

The House Government Operations and Elections Committee approved the bill on a 8-5 party-line vote Feb. 15. It now goes to the House State Government Finance Committee.

Supporters include Grace Keliher, director of governmental relations for the Minnesota School Boards Association. She said school districts have been told by arbitrators on at least 12 occasions that school employees are entitled to automatic "step" and "lane" increases even though no contract is currently in effect.

"School boards are left with a very unbalanced table when we're negotiating contracts," Keliher said.

League of Minnesota Cities Human Resources Director Laura Kushner said this situation puts public employers at a disadvantage during lengthy contract negotiations.

"There is no incentive for a union to bargain on issues when the contract just keeps moving forward," Kushner said.

Representatives from the unions said the bill would tilt contract negotiations against them.

Brian Rice, a lobbyist representing the Minneapolis police and firefighter unions, said the bill would "create chaos" by letting employers stall out contract negotiations knowing that the unions have no recourse. He described the bill as "very, very radical."

Eliot Seide, executive director of AFSCME Council 5, said the bill's proponents are being misleading. If employers want to write into contracts that pay and benefit increases won't continue after expiration, he said they already have the ability to do that.

"What they're trying to do here is change

If you have Internet access, visit the Legislature's  
Web page at: [www.leg.mn](http://www.leg.mn)



## LEADERS MEET

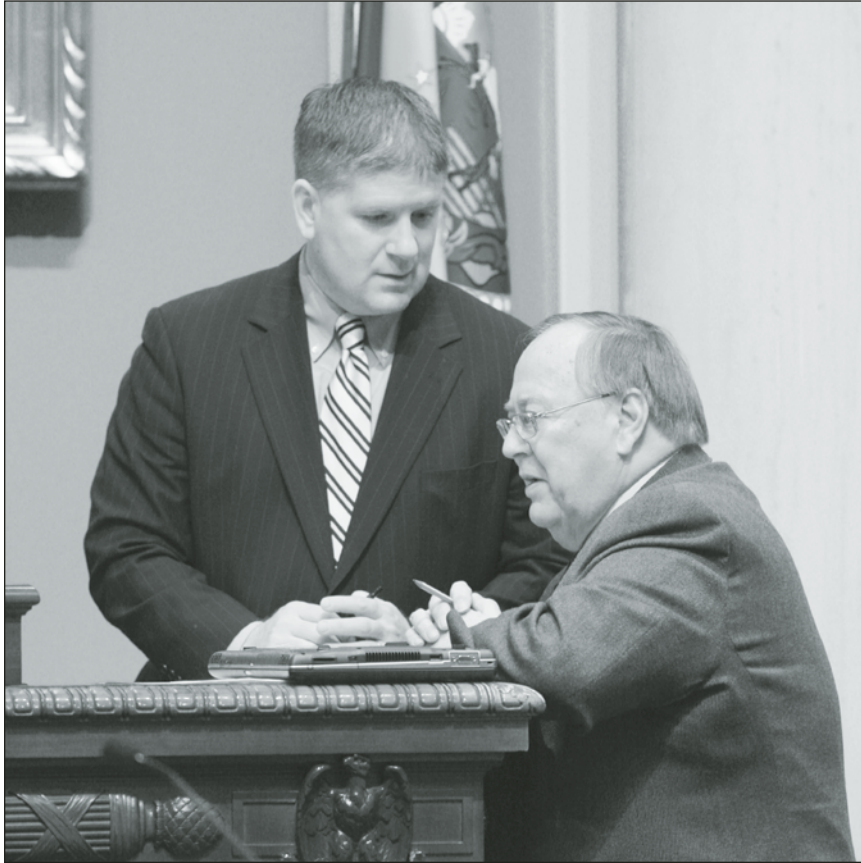


PHOTO BY PAUL BATTAGLIA

House Speaker Kurt Zellers and Senate Majority Leader David Senjem confer at the Speaker's Desk during the Feb. 13 floor session.

the balance of power from an equal playing field to a field that is no longer equal," Seide said.

— N. BUSSE

## Energy

### Buying energy futures

The University of Minnesota has saved millions of dollars by pre-purchasing its natural gas and other energy needs by way of futures contracts. Soon, state agencies and local governments might be doing the same.

That's the idea behind HF560, sponsored by Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina). The bill would expand the use of so-called "forward pricing mechanisms" for fuel and other energy purchases to all government entities in the state.

The House State Government Finance Committee approved the bill Feb. 9 and referred it to the House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Policy and

Finance Committee. A companion, SF1918, sponsored by Sen. Roger Chamberlain (R-Lino Lakes), awaits action by the Senate State Government Innovation and Veterans Committee.

Under current law, the ability to buy or sell future quantities of energy at a fixed price is granted specifically to the University of Minnesota and the Metropolitan Council. Although nothing technically prevents other governments and agencies from doing it, Downey said many are reluctant to do so without explicit permission.

Mike Berthelsen, the university's associate vice president of facilities management, said buying energy contracts mitigates the impact of marketplace volatility on the university's budget. In addition, he said the university saved roughly \$27.6 million on its natural gas purchases alone from 2002 to 2009.

"You're paying for price certainty, and you hope over the long term, like any good investment strategy that ... you will win financially as well," Berthelsen said.

In addition, the bill would establish an oversight process to provide for reviews of each government agency's use of forward pricing mechanisms.

Some committee members expressed concern about the review process, and about whether the bill would encourage small governmental units to try their hand at a process they don't fully comprehend.

"I'm just worried a little bit that we're going to end up with a proliferation of these programs out there with people who aren't really good at doing it," said Rep. Ryan Winkler (DFL-Golden Valley).

At Winkler's suggestion, Downey successfully amended the bill to specify that the Office of the State Auditor is responsible for developing the review process. Downey said he is open to other suggestions on tightening the bill's oversight provisions.

— N. BUSSE

## Env. & Natural Resources

### Options to combat invasive species

State spending to combat aquatic invasive species in fiscal year 2013 is expected to increase 18.5 percent to \$8.6 million.

Sponsored by Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings), HF2153 includes a 21-day waiting period before placing a boat lift, dock or swim raft from one body of water into another; doubling civil penalties for continued violations of invasive species laws; and establishing a certification program to train inspectors to prevent the spread of aquatic species by July 1, 2015.

The House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee heard the long-term options for fighting aquatic invasive species from the Department of Natural Resources. No action was taken on the bill.

A companion, SF1839, sponsored by Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria), awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

DNR estimates to combat invasive species as zebra mussels and Eurasian milfoil range from \$8 million to \$11 million annually for boat self-inspection, to a \$550 million to \$600 million program for required boat inspections at all public and private accesses.

"These numbers are staggering," said Rep. Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck). Costs would largely be recouped by per-boat surcharges ranging from \$40 for the least expensive

solutions to \$2,300 for required inspections.

"With invasive species there are no silver bullets – you just don't stop them in their tracks," said Steve Hirsch, DNR director of ecological and water resources.

— B. GEIGER

### **Permit professionals bill advances**

Permit applicant professionals could become part of the environmental project review process after the House Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Policy and Finance Committee approved HF2095 on Feb. 15.

Sponsored by Rep. Dan Fabian (R-Roseau), the bill also would allow companies to hire independent permit applicant professionals to help oversee projects and require state officials to identify permit deficiencies within 30 days.

DFLers objected to the bill because it could dramatically increase the amount of work for state officials. If passed, Pollution Control Agency officials would have to identify all faults in a permit application in 30 days – even if it is a complicated application that took years to develop.

Permit applicant professions would need to be licensed as an engineer by the state and have at least 10 years of experience in the type of permit that he or she is helping draft.

Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings), said legislators are "naïve" if they think state agencies can't use help from the private sector.

Rep. Kate Knuth (DFL-New Brighton) noted that applications could be incomplete and that state employees would then have to spend time and money pointing out the shortcomings.

"Is the permit applicant professional's duty to the people of Minnesota or making sure the business that hired them doesn't get sued?" she said.

The bill now advances to the House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee. A companion, SF1567, sponsored by Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— B. GEIGER

### **Outdoor Heritage bill laid over**

Questions over the structure of a \$14 million land acquisition near Brainerd has delayed the potential approval of almost \$100 million in Outdoor Heritage funding.

The House Legacy Funding Division voted to lay the bill over for further consideration. Division Chairman Rep. Dean Urdahl

(R-Grove City) said the bill is expected to be heard later in session.

Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings) sponsors HF2086, which contains \$99.7 million in funding, including \$31.1 million for wetlands; \$24.6 million for prairie preservation; \$24.1 million for habitats; \$17.3 million for forests; and funding to fight aquatic invasive species.

"This is really an important bill," McNamara said.

Legislators were concerned about the structure of a proposed \$14 million Mississippi River Northwoods Habitat Complex Protection land purchase from Crow Wing County.

The deal, which avoids payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT), raised questions from several legislators because the land would be donated back to Crow Wing County after the purchase.

Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake) said, "It seems we're getting more and more creative on how to avoid paying PILT."

The companion, SF1632, is sponsored by Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria). It awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee.

— B. GEIGER

## **Health & Human Services**

### **Childcare payment for dues passes**

The House passed a bill Feb. 9 that would prevent union deductions from state child care assistance payments.

HF1766, sponsored by Rep. Kathy Lohmer (R-Lake Elmo), was passed 74-55 after a brief debate over when potential union dues would be paid by child care providers who may want to join a union. Child care providers support the bill, saying they could opt for direct payment of dues from their business checking accounts rather than garnishing their state reimbursement checks.

"No one testified against the bill," Lohmer said. "This money belongs to providers and they should do with it what they want."

Minnesota does not currently have a child care union, but Gov. Mark Dayton signed an executive order last November calling for an election. However, the vote was stalled when a Ramsey County judge issued a temporary restraining order.

DFL lawmakers said the bill is a solution to a problem that doesn't yet exist.

"This is about union power and union financing," said Rep. Steve Gottwalt (R-St.

Cloud), chairman of the House Health and Human Services Reform Committee. Child care providers said in committee that if such dues eventually become compulsory, some providers would stop taking subsidized low-income families.

The bill now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Ted Lillie (R-Lake Elmo) is the sponsor.

— S. HEGARTY

### **Essential health benefits criticized**

With less than two years before individuals and employers choose new coverage plans as directed by the federal Affordable Care Act, legislators are trying to wade through how new required services will impact health care costs.

One step along the process is creating packages that include a list of 10 essential health benefits. These EHBs must include: ambulatory patient services; emergency services; hospitalization; maternity and newborn care; mental health and substance abuse treatment; prescription drugs; habilitative and rehabilitative services and devices; laboratory services; preventive and wellness services, including chronic disease management; and pediatric care that includes oral and vision care. Many current coverage policies don't include pediatric oral and vision care services.

Dr. James Golden, Department of Human Services' deputy assistant commissioner, told the House Health and Human Services Reform Committee Feb. 8 that Minnesota will be expected to adopt a "benchmark plan" that would serve as a floor for health care coverage. If a state chooses not to select one of four federal benchmark health plans, the state's benchmark plan will become the largest plan by enrollment in the largest product within the state's small group market.

Amy Monahan, a University of Minnesota Law School associate professor, said the benchmark package should cover the 10 categories, but not every service available within each category is required coverage. Monahan was one of 18 people nationally who studied and developed policy, criteria and methods for defining and updating the EHB.

The initial package should be developed with cost targets, such as a national average premium, she said. Think of grocery shopping. Rather than going down the aisles and putting products in your cart, only to find out you can't afford to pay the total amount at checkout, "It would be better to shop with a budget," and selectively make tradeoffs, as difficult as those choices might be, she said.

Republican committee members were



critical of the federal EHB process, which is proposed in a Dec. 16, 2011, Essential Health Benefits Bulletin published by the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight.

"This is an unproven experiment with no guarantee of medical results," said Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen (R-Glencoe).

Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL-Rochester) said although she is not "totally sold," the federal Affordable Care Act is the future of health care; a lot of other countries successfully offer government-run health care.

Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake) replied, "Be careful about other countries as role models. Many of them are going bankrupt."

— S. HEGARTY

### Sex offender discharge reviewed

Clarence Opheim, a convicted sex offender who was civilly committed to the Minnesota Sex Offender Program, has been granted a provisional discharge by the courts.

Why decision-makers supported Opheim's provisional discharge was the topic of a House Health and Human Services Reform Committee hearing Feb. 15.

Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson explained the difference between being "released" and a "provisional discharge," which will require Opheim to move to a halfway house where he'll have round-the-clock GPS monitoring; require an escort if he leaves the house; and be required to submit to urinalysis, polygraphs and outpatient treatment. In all, there are 32 conditions he must follow. He likely will remain under these provisions for his lifetime, unless he seeks and receives another hearing and is subsequently awarded a full release by the courts. That's not likely, according to Hennepin County Prosecutor George Widseth.

Jesson supported Opheim's provisional discharge after extensive consultation and review of the facts, she said. Some committee members asked whether Jesson's support was politically motivated, in light of a complaint filed in federal district court by clients at the Moose Lake sex offender treatment facility. The plaintiffs allege that conditions of their confinement are a disincentive to participating in treatment. Jesson denied any political motivation.

"For now, the law on the books must be followed," Gov. Mark Dayton wrote in a Feb. 8 letter to House Republican leaders. "The previous administration was able to keep all of these individuals confined indefinitely and avoid these extremely



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

**From left, Dennis Benson, executive director of the Minnesota Sex Offender Program; Human Services Commissioner Lucinda Jesson; and George Widseth, a prosecutor in the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, provide a provisional discharge process review before the House Health and Human Services Reform Committee Feb. 15.**

difficult decisions. In light of the aforementioned litigation, my administration does not have that option."

However, committee members shared a concern that a provisional release "outside the razor wire" does not require residents in the community where the offender will live to be notified. That's a policy issue the committee should consider, said Rep. Duane Quam (R-Byron).

Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen (R-Glencoe) said stronger laws are necessary to stop "feeding people into this program." He suggested locking the worst sex offenders behind bars with no chance of parole or instituting the death penalty.

— S. HEGARTY

### Health care transparency focus

Amid allegations of fraud within the Department of Human Services in 2010 and the resulting demand for more transparency in public health care costs and payments, the House Health and Human Services Finance and Reform committees held a joint hearing Feb. 14. No action was taken. Public healthcare is nearly a \$7 billion biennial cost to state taxpayers.

Dave Feinwach, former general counsel for the Minnesota Hospital Association who was fired after raising DHS impropriety allegations, showed a series of emails, depositions and other handouts to support his theory that a DHS employee improperly

leveraged federal funds to pay for state health care costs. He also alleges that a \$30 million "donation" from UCare, a non-profit health care provider for contracted state programs, was used to help balance the state budget. The donation was essentially a refund for overpayment of Medical Assistance payments and should have been split with the federal government, he said.

DHS Commissioner Lucinda Jesson defended UCare's "donation."

"To be a repayment, you'd have to ask for it."

She said she could not find anything in the contracts to warrant HMOs legal obligation to refund DHS for excess revenues.

A federal investigation of DHS resulted. Jesson has implemented several changes to previous practices in question. Legislators are also planning to introduce bills that would address issues raised by Feinwach.

"There is legislation already jacketed. I think we will see substance coming away from this session," promised Rep. Steve Gottwalt (R-St. Cloud), chairman of the reform committee.

Some of the issues that legislators want to address include:

- setting limits on HMO's risk management reserves;
- providing better analytic tools to drive down administrative costs; and
- determining why overpayment occurs.

"Let's think not just where we are, where

we've been, but where we want to go," Jesson said. She didn't believe there was fraud but did think there was room to better negotiate contracted rates and to leverage more federal healthcare dollars. She added a department of inspector general, negotiated caps on 2011 HMO contracts and made them enter into a competitive bid process with public healthcare providers.

"We've made a fundamental shift in the way we do business with health plans, but we're not done," Jesson said.

Geoff Bartsh, vice president of public policy and government relations at Medica, said HMOs are required to provide data at both the state and federal levels and are routinely audited, but there is room for more efficiency among the reporting agencies.

— S. HEGARTY

## Housing

### Subsidized renters fees

Those renting under a federally subsidized program would see their interest rate on late fees come down from the current 8 percent to correspond with the federal standard, under a bill approved 133-0 by the House Feb. 13.

HF1515 would take care of an "inadvertent oversight when state statutes were updated in 2010," according to the bill's sponsor, Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville).

The bill would allow landlords operating a lease under a federally subsidized tenancy program to charge late fees, but on a schedule consistent with that of federal guidelines.

It would also delay the effective dates on provisions related to tenant evictions in a foreclosed property from Jan. 1, 2013, to Jan. 1, 2015.

The bill now goes to the Senate where Sen. Scott Newman (R-Hutchinson) is the sponsor.

— L. SCHUTZ

## Local Government

### Making budgets less confusing

If you were to ask your city or county for an explanation of how they spend your tax dollars, they might hand you a 300- or 400-page budget document. Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina) thinks that's too much information for the average citizen.

Downey sponsors HF1954 that would require counties and cities with

### DAY ON THE HILL




PHOTO BY PAUL BATTAGLIA

**Keith Christofferson of Brooklyn Center and Pam Thomas of Minneapolis have front-row seats during the Mental Health Day on the Hill rally in the Capitol Rotunda Feb. 14. The rally, sponsored by the Mental Health Legislative Network, a coalition of about 20 Minnesota mental health organizations, was part of the day's activity where supporters spoke to legislators about the importance of mental health funding.**

populations of more than 2,500 to publish a concise breakdown of their revenues and expenditures. He envisions a one- or two-page document that embodies a "citizen-centric" view of budgeting.

"Citizens, I think, really struggle to understand what is driving their property tax increases," Downey said. "Budget documents that are produced by local governments tend to be ... largely unintelligible to the average citizen."

The House Government Operations and Elections Committee approved the bill Feb. 14.

Under the bill's provisions, the affected local governments would have to publish four years' worth of budget information broken down by "function" (i.e. public works, public safety, general administration) and "object code" (i.e. salaries, benefits, capital costs, debt service, etc.).

Supporters include Paul Reinke, a real estate developer and Oakdale city councilman who said the bill would help citizens engage in a more meaningful way with their local governments.

"This data is already in the city financial systems, and this is about organizing it in a different manner," Reinke said.

Opponents said the bill would create a new unfunded mandate at a time when

lawmakers are trying to reduce them. They also said having a single set of reporting requirements ignored the fact that different communities have different needs and unique ways of doing things.

"It's not a proper comparison; it's not going to tell the whole story," said Susan Iverson, finance and administrative services director for the City of Arden Hills.

Scott County Auditor-Treasurer Cindy Geis said the information required by the bill wouldn't provide enough context for residents to understand where their tax dollars are going and what they're getting for them.

Approved on an 8-6 party-line vote, the bill now moves to the House State Government Finance Committee. Sen. Ted Daley (R-Eagan) sponsors the companion, SF1741, which awaits action by the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee.

— N. BUSSE

## Military & Vet. Affairs

### Expanded program approved

A broader spectrum of veteran-owned construction firms would be able to bid on state road projects and receive up to a 6 percent bid preference under a bill approved Feb. 13 by the House Veterans Services Division.



Sponsored by Rep. Bob Dettmer (R-Forest Lake), HF1821 would allow veteran-owned professional and technical firms to participate in the program, in addition to construction laborers. The bill, as amended, now moves to the House Transportation Policy and Finance Committee.

Representatives of the Association of the United Veterans Legislative Caucus and the Department of Transportation spoke in favor of the bill.

"We've been working on this bill for several years," said Ralph Donais, UVLC chairman. "The current bill, in the format that we have it in now ... opens the whole job to the veterans. It used to say the veteran gets to put gravel down and concrete over it. Now it opens it up to design, drafting, all the different phases of a job."

A report to the Legislature would be due by Feb. 1 every other year regarding the biennial number and amount of contracts offered under the program. Counties also would have the ability to offer the program.

Sen. Al DeKruif (R-Madison Lake) sponsors SF1597, a companion bill which was also approved Feb. 13 as amended by the Senate State Government Innovation and Veterans Committee and sent to the Senate Transportation Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

### **Division approves more tax credits**

The number of military retirees eligible to receive individual income tax credits would expand under a bill approved by the House Veterans Services Division Feb. 13.

Current law grants military retirees with at least 20 years of service or who are 100 percent totally and permanently disabled up to a \$750 individual income tax credit. Sponsored by Rep. Bob Dettmer (R-Forest Lake), HF1452 would also allow veterans to qualify if they are medically discharged with fewer than 20 years of service and if they qualify for a military pension.

Due to the downsizing of the U.S. military, some veterans are forced to retire prior to 20 years of service. So, those who receive a pension under the operative military reduction order would also qualify for the tax credit. Spouses of deceased veterans who receive a military pension under the Survivor Benefit Payment program would also be eligible. The credit would be effective beginning with the 2012 tax year.

About 1,100 of the 14,000 military retirees may qualify for the credit, according to Ralph Donais, chairman of the United

Veterans Legislative Council of Minnesota.

The bill was referred to the House Taxes Committee. Sen. John Carlson (R-Bemidji) sponsors SF1643, a companion bill awaiting action by the Senate State Government Innovation and Veterans Committee.

The division also approved and sent to the tax committee HF1820, sponsored by Dettmer, which would raise the income tax credit eligibility from those who earn less than \$37,500 to \$45,000. However, the credit would be incrementally reduced, adjusting for the rise in gross income level until the maximum was met. Sen. Jeremy Miller (R-Winona) sponsors SF1794, a companion bill awaiting action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

## **Public Safety**

### **Motor vehicle tampering penalty**

For offenders who repeatedly tamper with motor vehicles or commit related offenses, the penalty is worth the risk.

That was the message Duluth Police Chief Gordon Ramsay shared Feb. 9 with the House Judiciary Policy and Finance Committee.

He spoke in support of HF1043, which would establish a gross misdemeanor penalty for those who have been previously convicted or adjudicated delinquent at least two other times for motor vehicle tampering, vehicle theft, receiving stolen property, possession of burglary or theft tools or criminal damage to property.

Sponsored by Rep. Kerry Gauthier (DFL-Duluth), the committee approved the bill and sent it to the House floor. A companion, SF948, sponsored by Sen. John Harrington (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee.

Under current law, unless there is an aggravating factor — such as damage or theft over a certain amount — it's only a misdemeanor to break into someone's vehicle. Ramsay said that means the cops write a ticket for motor vehicle tampering and the offender is released.

"We have had individuals do auto burglaries up to 40 times and face the same misdemeanor consequence," Ramsay said. "This is probably the most common property crime of residences throughout the state."

"Merely pulling on the door handle is not enough to be tampering, so it really is taking an additional step to get into the vehicle,"

said Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center).

— M. COOK

### **Reporting benefit card fraud**

Electronic benefit transfer cards are designed to help people in financial distress meet their everyday needs, but there is concern abuse could be happening.

Sponsored by Rep. Sarah Anderson (R-Plymouth), HF1956 would require a peace officer to report to their department every time they arrest someone who possesses multiple EBT cards. The Department of Human Services must then be notified and can use the information when assessing the person's continued benefit eligibility.

"It's about making sure that we maintain the program integrity," Anderson said. "This is just an attempt to make sure that we are not operating in silos, but instead communicating with one another so we make sure that fraud is not being committed and that the precious resources that we have can be dedicated to those individuals that need the help."

The bill was approved by the House Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee on a split-voice vote and sent to the House Health and Human Services Reform Committee.

We don't really know how much this occurs, but we want to work more collaboratively with local law enforcement and attorneys' offices, said Jerry Kerber, head of the department's Office of Inspector General.

Rep. Kurt Daudt (R-Crown) said a jailer told him this is a problem. "He indicated that almost everybody that comes into the jail has multiple EBT cards. He's been experiencing a problem where he reports it to his superiors and nothing ever happens."

Rep. Rena Moran (DFL-St. Paul) expressed concern about how this could affect a recipient who, for example, gives their card to someone else who happens to be going to the supermarket and asks them to pick up a few things. "There could be many reasons why a person could possess more than one card," she said.

A companion, SF1598, sponsored by Sen. Scott Newman (R-Hutchinson), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee.

— M. COOK

## Seeking to demonstrate silencers

Chris Stafford has a problem. The federally licensed firearm dealer in Stewartville can sell silencers; however, state law prohibits him from having the item on hand to demonstrate its capability.

"For us, as manufacturers, to sell a product in the state of Minnesota we have to be really good salespeople because they have to take our word on that product," he said. "It handicaps me in my trade."

Sponsored by Rep. Mike Benson (R-Rochester), HF1816 would allow federally licensed dealers, manufacturers or importers to possess firearm silencers for the purpose of selling them for authorized activities. Under current state statute, the possession and use of firearm silencers is prohibited, although an exception is made for certain law enforcement and wildlife control activities.

The bill was approved Feb. 9 by the House Public Safety and Crime Prevention Policy and Finance Committee — on a voice vote that appeared to be along party lines — and sent to the House floor. It has no Senate companion.

"The origin is actually coming from the manufacturers, dealers and importers to make sure that they have a level playing field to legally sell to entities that are able to purchase them: law enforcement and the DNR," Benson said.

Committee Chairman Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Vernon Center) said the bill has neither been officially supported nor opposed by law enforcement associations.

"I don't see anyone here, a law enforcement officer, saying that there is a need," said Rep. Rena Moran (DFL-St. Paul).

The bill explicitly states that the proposed change is not intended to allow personal use of silencers. Thirty-four states allow citizens to own suppressors.

Stafford said if he were to sell a silencer to someone for personal use he could face prison time, a hefty fine and the loss of his license to sell.

Also approved by the committee and sent to the House floor was HF1984. Sponsored by Rep. Peggy Scott (R-Andover), it would authorize a federally licensed firearms manufacturer to possess and use silencers "exclusively for the purposes of testing firearms manufactured" for law enforcement and military agencies. Its companion, SF1798, sponsored by Sen. Gretchen Hoffman (R-Vergas), awaits action the the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee.

— M. COOK

## State Government

### Auditor: fiscal notes not perfect

The fiscal notes on which lawmakers rely for estimating the cost of proposed legislation aren't always transparent and reliable, a new report finds.

Fiscal notes are documents produced by state agencies to estimate the financial impact of bills before the Legislature. Since 1974, they have played a key role in the legislative process.

In its new report, the Office of the Legislative Auditor finds that while most fiscal notes are based on "plausible assumptions," many lack transparency. A minority have also been found to contain "debatable assumptions" or outright errors. For example, in one case a simple omission resulted in a fiscal note understating the cost of a bill by as much as \$25 million.

"Fiscal notes — at least some of them — have gotten a bad reputation," said Legislative Auditor James Nobles. He and his staff presented the report to the House Ways and Means Committee Feb. 13. No action was taken.

Last year, some lawmakers accused agencies of producing biased or inaccurate fiscal notes in an attempt to thwart the passage of certain bills. OLA found no evidence of this in any of the fiscal notes they examined; however, they said the fiscal note process has other problems.

Joel Alter, a program evaluation coordinator with the office, said agencies have admitted putting minimal effort into calculating fiscal notes for legislation they believe is unlikely to be passed. He said they have also had difficulty estimating the proposed cost savings of bills designed specifically to cut costs.

"We observe that agencies have struggled to estimate savings for bills that propose large-scale reforms or proposals that have little or no precedent," Alter said.

The report makes several recommendations, including:

- ensuring that agencies clearly explain the assumptions and calculations in their fiscal notes;
- more effective communication between legislators and agencies regarding the intent and language of bills; and
- a greater effort to include the likely impact on local entities in fiscal notes.

Nobles emphasized that the fiscal note process is important and should be improved, not abandoned.

"Fiscal notes are only advisory, and you can disregard them," Nobles said. "But I would hope that's not the road we go down."

— N. BUSSE

### Trash debate raises stink

An argument over who should collect garbage in the Capitol Complex opened up a much bigger debate over whether state agencies should be allowed to outsource state jobs.

House Government Operations and Elections Committee members took up HF1812, a bill that would allow the Department of Administration to outsource trash and recycling collection duties in the State Capitol area. The committee approved the bill Feb. 9 and sent it to the House floor.

That work is currently performed by two department employees using a rented garbage truck. Rep. Kirk Stensrud (R-Eden Prairie), the bill's sponsor, said he doesn't think it makes sense for the state to have employees dedicated to picking up trash at a handful of state buildings.

He said it would make more sense to let the agency outsource that work to a professional waste-hauling company; however, he noted that the bill's language was permissive, so that layoffs would not necessarily be required.

"It's not my intention to get rid of employees, but I think this bill will allow the Department of Administration to have freedom and flexibility in future years," Stensrud said.

Opponents said the bill would set a dangerous precedent.

Under current law, the department cannot contract out work if there are state employees capable of performing it. Julie Bleyhl, a lobbyist representing AFSCME Council 5, said the bill would chip away at that statute, which she said protects state workers.

She also suggested it might not be a good idea to have a private company handling "potentially sensitive material" discarded by state agencies. She said the bill amounted to micromanaging.

Stensrud disagreed, saying it was the statute itself that was micromanaging the department's work.

"I think this is an option we would like to give the Department of Administration," he said.

A companion, SF1846, sponsored by Sen. Paul Gazelka (R-Bainard), awaits action by the Senate State Government and Innovation Committee.

— N. BUSSE



## MORRIS THE LORIS

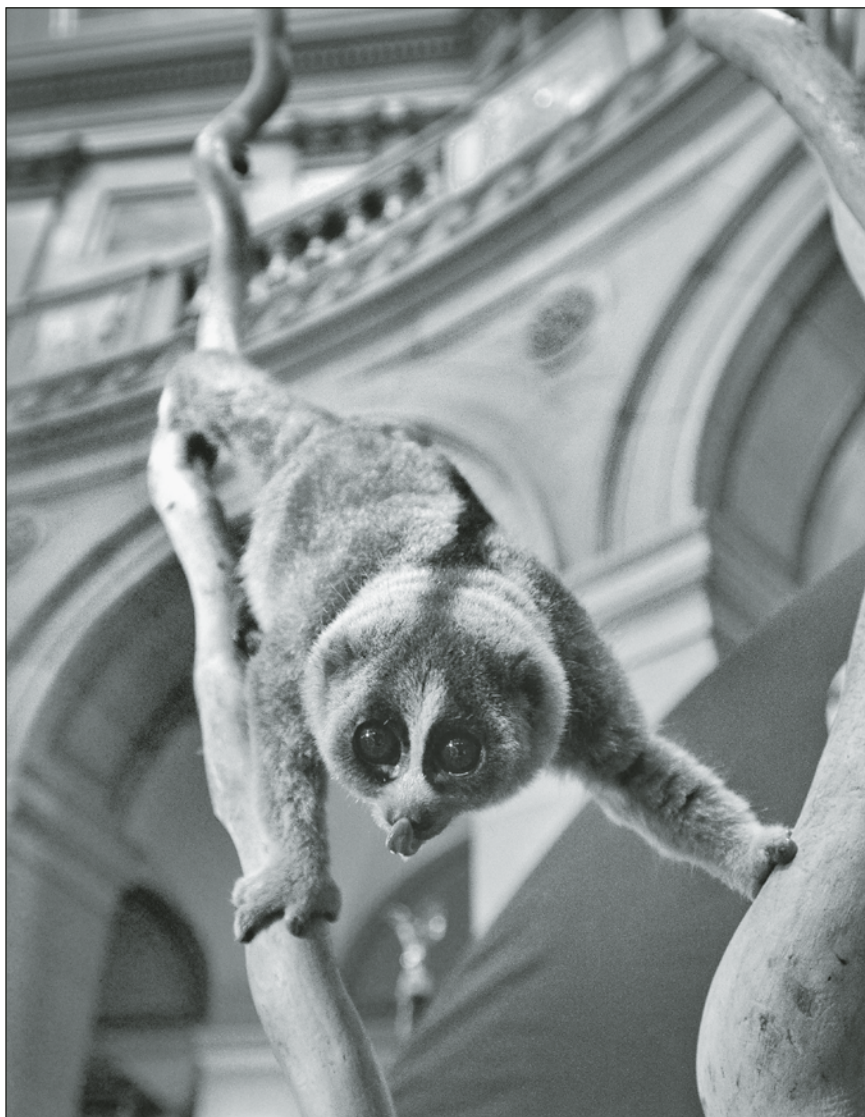


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

A slow loris performs slow acrobatics in the Capitol Rotunda Feb. 8. The primate was on display, along with other animals, as part of Minnesota Zoo Day at the Capitol.

The bill was held over Feb. 9 for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

According to a Department of Revenue fiscal analysis, staffing costs and per diem for the one-year commission would range anywhere from \$141,000 to \$889,000 depending on office space, number and type of staff and outside consulting services.

Rep. Melissa Hortman (DFL-Brooklyn Park) said the responsibility for studying tax policy belongs with the tax committee and this could be a duplication of effort.

Rep. Diane Loeffler (DFL-Mpls) agreed, adding that many times legislative reports end up sitting on a library shelf and are not acted upon.

Representatives from the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce and the Minnesota Business Partnership spoke in favor of the bill.

The companion, SF1712, sponsored by Sen. Gretchen Hoffman (R-Vergas), awaits action by the Senate State Government Innovation and Veterans Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

### Credits for venture capital

Early-stage, high-risk startup companies in Minnesota might have access to a larger pool of venture capital, under a bill that won House committee approval.

Sponsored by Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina), HF1823 would establish a "Minnesota Business Investment Company" (MBIC) credit program. It proposes up to \$100 million of tax credits to incentivize insurance companies to invest part of their reserves in venture capital firms that fund Minnesota-based startups.

The House Jobs and Economic Development Finance Committee approved the bill Feb. 9 and referred it to the House Taxes Committee.

Similar programs already exist in 12 states, where they are commonly known as CAPCO (Certified Capital Companies) programs. Downey said the bill would help level the playing field with these other states.

"This would incentivize investment to the small business world," Downey said. "It would do so not just through a credit to the investors, but by incentivizing insurance companies to allocate a portion of their reserves in their investment strategy to small businesses in Minnesota."

In addition, the bill would expand the state's current angel investment credit program by increasing the annual limit from \$12 million to \$20 million; repealing

## Taxes

### Tax reform could go to commission

Minnesota's complicated tax structure lacks transparency and is in need of reform, according to Rep. Jenifer Loon (R-Eden Prairie), who proposes a commission with the goal of simplifying the code and making it more fair and equitable to all Minnesotans.

While there have been several attempts to overhaul the tax system, Loon thinks her approach would actually spur change because the commission would be directly accountable to the Legislature.

HF1822, which Loon sponsors, calls for a

15-member commission with three members appointed by the governor and six each from the House and Senate. It would include legislators, executive branch members and private citizens. The commission would be charged with evaluating the state's tax system and presenting recommendations to the Legislature by March 1, 2013. A draft bill implementing changes would then be ready for introduction in the 2014 session.

"Our tax structure is very discouraging to businesses," Loon told the House Taxes Committee, noting many studies point to the state not being competitive with its tax structure. The need for change is clear, she said.



minimum wage requirements for recipients; improving public disclosure; and tightening eligibility requirements.

Jeff Nelson, who coordinates the angel investor credit program for the Department of Employment and Economic Development, said that in just a year and a half, the program has spurred \$92 million of investment. In 2011 alone, 113 businesses were funded by investors utilizing the credit.

"There are a number of types of companies that are receiving the money, but the most common industry types are medical devices, software, biotech and clean tech," Nelson said.

Rep. Tim Mahoney (DFL-St. Paul) questioned why the state was giving tax breaks to insurance companies. If venture capital investing is such a good idea, he asked why the state doesn't just invest in its own pension funds and keep the potential profits.

Downey replied that he did not necessarily oppose that idea, but said he thought it was a separate issue. He noted that Wisconsin's public pension fund includes more high-risk investments than Minnesota's.

Sen. Geoff Michel (R-Edina) sponsors the companion, SF1774, which awaits action by the Senate Jobs and Economic Growth Committee.

— N. BUSSE

### **Pitting renters against businesses**

Renters may be called upon to pay for the phase out of the state commercial-industrial property tax, according to opponents of a bill that would make several changes to the state's tax code.

Minnesota is only one of 10 states that provides an unqualified renters credit, according to House Taxes Committee Chairman Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston). The credit should be reduced, he said, to more adequately reflect the actual amount reflective of property taxes paid by the property owner.

He brought his proposal (HF1914) before the committee Feb. 14 for discussion purposes only. The bill's companion, SF1596, sponsored by Sen. Julianne Ortman (R-Chanhassen), awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

The bill would reduce the renters' refund from 17 percent to 15 percent starting with tax year 2011. Additionally, it would create a separate refund table for senior and/or disabled renters and modify the maximum income eligibility requirements.

Last year's tax law lowered the renters credit refund percentage from 19 percent.

The proposed change would help fund the phase out of the state's General Levy (the commercial-industrial property tax), Davids said. This would "lower the cost of doing business in the state, so that it becomes more competitive."

However, testifiers, including Steve Peterson representing the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, are concerned that, while in this biennium, the move would be paid by changes to the renters refund, the bill does not specify how the "hole" to the state's revenue would be filled in later years.

Several DFL members said renters should not bear the burden of reducing property taxes for businesses.

"It's a sad commentary on what's happening in this state," said Rep. Michael Paymar (DFL-St. Paul). "When we take it from the poor; when we take it from the disabled, there's something about our priorities here

that are really getting screwed up."

The bill would also conform the state to the federal increase in the standard deduction for married filers in tax year 2012 and retain it at the state level regardless of federal changes in the future.

It would also increase the homeowner property tax refund maximums and freeze city local government aid payments at 100 percent of pay 2012 amounts.

— L. SCHUTZ

## **Transportation**

### **Creating the 'Black and Yellow Trail'**

A southern Minnesota highway that extends from South Dakota to Wisconsin could get its old designation back.

Sponsored by Rep. Kim Norton (DFL-

### **SNOW DAY**

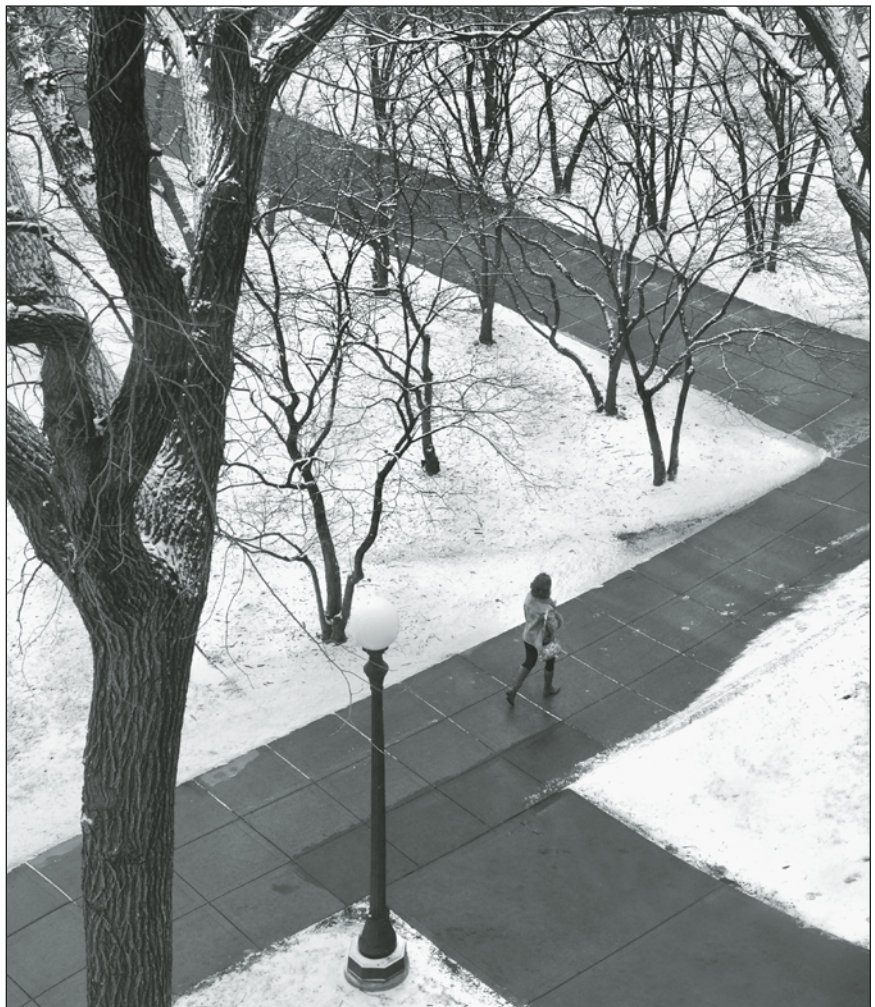


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

**The grounds around the State Office Building are covered with a rare, and short-lived, dusting of snow Feb. 14.**



Rochester), HF39 would again designate Trunk Highway 14 as the “Black and Yellow Trail.”

“Back in 1917 it was designated as such, and somewhere along the line ... it had fallen by the wayside,” Norton said.

The bill was held over Feb. 13 by the House Transportation Policy and Finance Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion. A companion, SF1063, sponsored by Senate Majority Leader Dave Senjem (R-Rochester), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Committee.

Historian Ray Ricketts said the stretch is part of an early highway between Chicago and Yellowstone Park, called the “Black and Yellow Trail.”

“This is a piece of our state’s history that still closely follows its original alignment,” he said.

The Department of Transportation would be directed to design and erect signs signifying the designation; however, the signs must be paid for through non-state funding sources. Ricketts envisions signage near the respective state borders and where Highway 14 and Interstate 35 meet in Owatonna. Norton said South Dakota already designates this roadway.

Rep. Terry Morrow (DFL-St. Peter) isn’t concerned about what the road is called; rather its safety, especially where there has been talk of expanding the highway from two to four lanes.

“Given the fatality record of Highway 14 in Nicollet County, my constituents want to know not what am I doing about signage, but what am I doing about safety,” he said, adding that 220 crashes have occurred on the road in the past five years in his district, seven of them fatal. “I find it very difficult to vote for a bill putting signs on a road where we need to improve the safety of the road.”

— M. Cook

### **Omnibus policy bill proffered**

Speed limit violations, online driver’s education training and dollars for organ donation are part of a proposed omnibus transportation policy bill.

Sponsored by Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee), HF1284 is mostly what was proposed in last session’s omnibus bill (HF1068) that was awaiting floor action when session concluded.

Approved Feb. 8 by the House Transportation Policy and Finance Committee, the latest version was sent to

the House Government Operations and Elections Committee.

Potentially the most controversial part would prohibit speed limit violations of up to 10 mph over the limit in 55 mph and 60 mph zones from going on a driver’s record. Currently, a ticket does not appear on someone’s driving record if the person was driving up to 10 mph over the speed limit in a 55 mph zone, or 5 mph over the limit in a 60 mph zone.

“This is not good public safety policy,” said Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls). “Any kind of inference that it’s OK to go over the speed limit is problematic.”

Representatives from the state patrol and the Department of Transportation also spoke against the provision, saying, in part, the idea sends the wrong message about traffic safety laws.

“The ability to write tickets and enforce traffic laws is not impeded in the least,” Beard said, adding he’s only trying to help keep people’s insurance costs down. “I’m in favor of cutting people a little slack there.”

Sponsored by Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City), a standalone bill for this (HF537) was passed 111-20 by the House last session, but didn’t go anywhere in the Senate.

Other provisions in the bill include:

- allowing a person under age 18 to complete the classroom portion of driver’s education online through a program approved by the Department of Public Safety;
- allowing payment of driver’s license and identification card fees by credit or debit card, and authorizing driver’s license agents to impose a convenience fee;
- expanding the authority for buses to operate on freeway or expressway shoulders so that counties and towns having jurisdiction over the road can authorize the buses; and
- requiring the Driver and Vehicle Services Division of the Department of Public Safety to include a mechanism for vehicle owners to donate \$2 for organ donation educational programs as part of an in-person payment of vehicle registration taxes.

— M. Cook

### **Ensuring funding in a shutdown**

A remedy could be established in the event legislators cannot agree on a plan to fund state roads maintenance and construction.

The House Transportation Policy and Finance Committee is expected to vote on HF1971 at its Feb. 20 meeting.

The bill would appropriate money from the Trunk Highway Fund to the Department of Transportation to cover contract costs and essential employees needed for contract administration for state road construction; road maintenance and operations; and program planning and delivery, such as preliminary engineering or project management.

The constitutionally dedicated funds come primarily from three highway user taxes: motor fuels, vehicle registration and the sale of motor vehicles.

“Because of the unusual situation last summer, we had work actually suspended, and one of the reasons given was there as no authority to expend funds on contracts that had already been signed, had already been vetted and had already been awarded,” Committee Chairman Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee), the bill sponsor, said at the Feb. 13 meeting.

“The bill basically allows contracts that have already been let to continue operation and authorize the commissioner from (Minnesota) Management & Budget to have access to money to continue the contracts that are already in force.”

Tim Worke, director of the Transportation and Highway/Heavy Division for the Associated General Contractors of Minnesota, spoke in support of the bill.

“Construction is inherently schedule-driven and in this state we have a severely climate-shortened construction season,” Worke said. “When you disrupt that sequencing, there is significant repercussion downstream and throughout the schedule of the project.”

A combination of sequencing and the state government shutdown cost O’Malley Construction about 45 percent of its business in 2011, said Lori O’Malley, the company president. They subsequently had to lay off five employees \_ about 23 percent of their workforce.

“The courts don’t understand what is essential in Minnesota,” said Rep. Mark Murdock (R-Ottertail).

A companion, SF1530, sponsored by Sen. Joe Gimse (R-Willmar), was scheduled to be heard Feb. 16 by the Senate Transportation Committee.

— M. Cook

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# BILL INTRODUCTIONS

FEBRUARY 8 - 16, 2011

HOUSE FILES 2085 - 2343

## Wednesday, Feb. 8

### HF2085-Beard (R)

#### Transportation Policy & Finance

Publicly owned airports capital improvements funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2086-McNamara (R)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Outdoor Heritage fund money appropriated and requirements modified.

### HF2087-LeMieur (R)

**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
State Building Code changes made.

### HF2088-Winkler (DFL)

**Redistricting**  
Legislature; various reforms enacted.

### HF2089-Bills (R)

**Taxes**  
Apple Valley; creation of tax increment financing district authorized.

### HF2090-Mack (R)

**Taxes**  
Apple Valley; tax increment financing use authorized and authority extended.

### HF2091-Anzelc (DFL)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Itasca County; private sale of tax-forfeited lands provided.

### HF2092-Anzelc (DFL)

**Agriculture & Rural Development Policy & Finance**  
Cellulosic biofuel facilities environmental review requirements modified.

### HF2093-Sanders (R)

**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Independent contractor employee classification clarified and contractor registration pilot project provided.

### HF2094-Norton (DFL)

**Health & Human Services Finance**  
Minnesota health care program provider requirements modified for critical access dental provider clinics.

### HF2095-Fabian (R)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Environmental permitting efficiency provided, and environmental review requirements modified.

### HF2096-Anderson, P. (R)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Glenwood; flood hazard mitigation grant funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2097-Peppin (R)

**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Child care accreditation provisions modified.

### HF2098-Dill (DFL)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Public lands expedited exchange restrictions modified.

### HF2099-Peppin (R)

**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Maple Grove transit station, phase 2 parking expansion funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2100-Kriesel (R)

**Veterans Services Division**  
Veterans and spouses of a disabled or deceased veteran hiring and promotion preference by private employer permitted.

### HF2101-Kath (DFL)

**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Steele County highway operations complex funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2102-Benson, M. (R)

**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Farm trucks USDOT number requirements changed.

### HF2103-Lohmer (R)

**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Abortions prohibited when fetal heartbeat is detected.

### HF2104-Champion (DFL)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Minneapolis; 26th Avenue North Parkway funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2105-Anzelc (DFL)

**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Wetland replacement requirements modified.

### HF2106-Winkler (DFL)

**Education Finance**  
Perpich Center for Arts Education funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2107-Laine (DFL)

**Government Operations & Elections**  
City charter commission expenses payment provided.

### HF2108-Hancock (R)

**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Northland Regional Sports Center funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2109-Hancock (R)

**Education Finance**  
Independent School District No. 38, Red Lake; facility construction and renovation funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2110-McDonald (R)

**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Long-term care consultation requirements modified for prospective housing with services residents.

### HF2111-Melin (DFL)

**Judiciary Policy & Finance**  
Court of Appeals judges' residential eligibility requirements amended, and chief judge of the Court of Appeals directed to redesignate judges consistent with new eligibility requirements.

### HF2112-Melin (DFL)

**Judiciary Policy & Finance**  
Court of Appeals housing and mileage expense reimbursement allowed for judges living more than 50 miles from their permanent chambers.

### HF2113-Abeler (R)

**State Government Finance**  
Legislature; fiscal notes and revenue estimates information provisions modified.

### HF2114-Abeler (R)

**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Pedestrian bridges and overpasses over trunk highways temporary signage provided.

### HF2115-Abeler (R)

**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Trunk Highway 47 county maintenance authorized.

### HF2116-Abeler (R)

**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Patient health records copy fee prohibition provision removed, hospital safety survey information public report required, Department of Health's economics program transferred to the Department of Commerce, commissioner of health required to study possible effects of allowing for-profit HMOs to operate in the state, and patient health information release requirements modified.

### HF2117-Abeler (R)

**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Health occupation complaint processes modified, and licenses prohibited to individuals with felony-level sexual conduct convictions.

### HF2118-Abeler (R)

**Education Reform**  
K-12 education income subtraction and credit modified to apply to fees charged for extracurricular activities.

### HF2119-Quam (R)

**Government Operations & Elections**  
City's power of eminent domain outside of the city limited.

### HF2120-Quam (R)

**Civil Law**  
Personnel data sharing required by government entities except where otherwise restricted.

### HF2121-Cornish (R)

**Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**  
Right of individuals to keep and bear arms for defense of life and liberty and for all other legitimate purposes protected as fundamental; constitutional amendment proposed.

### HF2122-Carlson (DFL)

**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Bottineau Boulevard Transit Way corridor funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2123-LeMieur (R)

**Taxes**  
Property tax late payment penalties modified.

### HF2124-Nelson (DFL)

**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
North Hennepin Community College; Bioscience and Allied Health Careers addition funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2125-Melin (DFL)

**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Renewable solar energy systems funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

### HF2126-Mariani (DFL)

**Education Reform**  
State regulation exemption provided for schools.

### HF2127-Myhra (R)

**Education Reform**  
Online learning parameters modified and digital learning provided.



**HF2128-Quam (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Emergency medical personnel licensed.

**HF2129-Torkelson (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Minnesota River Trail funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2130-Knuth (DFL)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
University of Minnesota Board of Regents or Board of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system; membership of certain officials prohibited for a limited time.

**HF2131-Davnie (DFL)**  
**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Minneapolis; Franklin Avenue Bridge rehabilitation funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2132-Lohmer (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority; jurisdiction clarified.

**HF2133-Kriesel (R)**  
**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Gateway Corridor (Interstate 94 East) funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2134-Dettmer (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Browns Creek Trail funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2135-Greene (DFL)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
Minneapolis Community and Technical College workforce program renovation funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2136-Sanders (R)**  
**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Motor vehicle salvage titles regulated, and motor vehicle damage disclosure modified.

**HF2137-Atkins (DFL)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Bisphenol-A prohibition expanded in products for young children.

**HF2138-Westrom (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Douglas County; Lake Oscar drainage outlet funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2139-Bills (R)**  
**Veterans Services Division**  
Tax credit provided to employers who employ qualified veterans.

**HF2140-Drazkowski (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Freedom of employment established; constitutional amendment proposed.

**HF2141-Norton (DFL)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
State health care program participation requirement modified for volunteer dental service providers.

**HF2142-Drazkowski (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Public employment paid time off conditions specified.

**HF2143-Quam (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Athletic Trainers Practice Act provisions modified, licensure provided and licensure fees established.

**HF2144-Scott (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Black bear designated as the state mammal.

**HF2145-Mullery (DFL)**  
**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Insurance requirement amended for limited driver's license and ignition interlock device program.

**HF2146-Scott (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Metropolitan Council building plan, specification and drawing data classified; and government agency requests classified for bids and proposal data.

**HF2147-Scott (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Metropolitan Area Water Supply Advisory Committee sunset date extended.

**HF2148-Scott (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Water resources statute miscellaneous technical corrections made and obsolete language removed and modified.

**HF2149-Simon (DFL)**  
**Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**  
Domestic violence-related offense qualifying definition expanded.

**HF2150-Anderson, S. (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Minnesota Management & Budget; public employee insurance program changes made, and temporary moratorium established to preclude employees from joining the public employee insurance program if their employer is not in the program as of the date of enactment.

**HF2151-Persell (DFL)**  
**State Government Finance**  
Cass Lake sanitary and storm water sewer system funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2152-Vogel (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Real estate licensees' responsibility specified for property management activities on real property owned by the licensee or by an entity in which the licensee has an ownership interest.

**HF2153-McNamara (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Agency prepayments authorized; apprentice riders provided; provisions modified relating to aquatic invasive species, local government trail authority, enforcement, bait, prior appropriations, La Salle Lake State Recreation Area administration, easements, lands withdrawn from sale and lease provisions; reporting, plan and meeting requirements eliminated; loan program eliminated; state parks, state recreation areas and state forests added to and deleted from; private sale of state lands authorized; and civil penalties provided.

**HF2154-Moran (DFL)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Minnesota Sunset Act council provisions modified.

**HF2155-Moran (DFL)**  
**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Central Corridor light rail line property valuation increases limited.

**HF2156-Swedzinski (R)**  
**Taxes**  
Vesta; local government aid decertified.

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## Thursday, Feb. 9

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**HF2157-Persell (DFL)**  
**State Government Finance**  
Bemidji; veterans facility establishment funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2158-Kiel (R)**  
**Agriculture & Rural Development Policy & Finance**  
Biodiesel minimum content requirement exceptions extended.

**HF2159-Swedzinski (R)**  
**Agriculture & Rural Development Policy & Finance**  
Immigrant and minority microloan program established, and Rural Finance Authority provisions modified.

**HF2160-Cornish (R)**  
**Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**  
Fingerprints permitted to be taken by law enforcement for any offender interacting with the criminal justice system for any offense to eliminate a suspense record.

**HF2161-Nornes (R)**  
**Taxes**  
Otter Tail County; City of Vergas aggregate tax imposition authorized.

**HF2162-Murray (R)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Greater Minnesota business development infrastructure grant program funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2163-McNamara (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Pollutant spill regulation provided.

**HF2164-McNamara (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Water reporting and assessment requirements, waste management provisions, toxic pollution prevention requirements, stationary source standards, acid deposition control requirements and sewage sludge management modified; environmental review clarified, fees eliminated and new open air swine basin prohibition extended.

**HF2165-Kieffer (R)**  
**Taxes**  
Woodbury; youth athletic facility public debt issuance without a referendum authorized.

**HF2166-Nornes (R)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
University of Minnesota; spending to acquire and better public land and buildings and other improvements of a capital nature authorized, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2167-Nornes (R)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; spending to acquire and better public land and buildings and other improvements of a capital nature authorized, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2168-Lanning (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Minnesota statewide and major local benefit retirement plan actuarial reporting interest, salary scale, and payroll growth assumptions revised.

**HF2169-Beard (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
State agency rule review and reporting methods provided.

**HF2170-LeMieur (R)**  
**State Government Finance**  
Camp Ripley education center funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2171-Hackbarth (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Game and fish license, and taking and transporting of wild animals requirements modified; wolf taking provided; department authority and dues, firearm and bow discharge restrictions, predator control program, deer baiting restrictions, receipt disposition and beaver removal authority modified, and fishing regulation executive order authority eliminated.

**HF2172-McElfatrick (R)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Construction code fund transfer to the General Fund eliminated.

**HF2173-Kieffer (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Home solicitation sale definition clarified.

**HF2174-O'Driscoll (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Interest-bearing deposit investments authorized and designated depositories provided.

**HF2175-Kahn (DFL)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Constitutional amendment process modified requiring a two-thirds vote of each house of the Legislature to submit a constitutional amendment to the people, and constitutional amendment proposed.

**HF2176-Paymar (DFL)**  
**Health & Human Services Finance**  
Medical Assistance employed persons with disabilities program modified, asset limitation provisions changed and money appropriated.

**HF2177-Peterson, S. (DFL)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
Minnesota opportunity training grants created and money appropriated.

**HF2178-Lanning (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Moorhead; Bluestem Center for the Arts on-sale license allowed.

**HF2179-Kiffmeyer (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Statewide and major local defined benefit retirement plan coverage for overtime salary required for unclassified state employees.

**HF2180-Garofalo (R)**  
**Education Reform**  
Federal adequate yearly progress measurements specified, and lowest performing elementary and high schools required to submit to a turnaround strategy.

**HF2181-Brynaert (DFL)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
FastTRAC adult career pathway program created and money appropriated.

**HF2182-Melin (DFL)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
State procurement policies amended and Buy Minnesota Act established.

**HF2183-Koenen (DFL)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Urban initiative loan program and Greater Minnesota business development funding provided and money appropriated.

**HF2184-Mahoney (DFL)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Bridge to Work Minnesota program created and job-training incentives provided.

**HF2185-Scalze (DFL)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Economic development funding provided, transportation economic development program established, bonds authorized and money appropriated.

**HF2186-Fritz (DFL)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Minnesota investment fund money appropriated.

## Monday, Feb. 13

**HF2187-Vogel (R)**  
**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Vehicle title bond and title issuance requirements clarified.

**HF2188-Kiffmeyer (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Voter eligibility provisions for individuals under guardianship conformed to constitutional requirements and other related procedures modified.

**HF2189-Davids (R)**  
**Taxes**  
Rochester local sales tax revenue sharing list of cities modified.

**HF2190-Beard (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Hydropower sources that may satisfy the renewable energy standard size limitation eliminated.

**HF2191-Carlson (DFL)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
Graduate family medicine education programs money appropriated.

**HF2192-Drazkowski (R)**  
**Education Finance**  
Independent School District No. 857 Lewiston-Altura authorized to exercise remaining disability access project levy authority.

**HF2193-Nelson (DFL)**  
**Civil Law**  
Utility disconnection notice requirements expanded, energy service providers' notice of sale service required and utility payment by the holder of a sheriff's certificate provided.

**HF2194-Gauthier (DFL)**  
**State Government Finance**  
Spirit Mountain Recreation Authority water facility construction funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2195-McElfatrick (R)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
Itasca Community College capital improvement funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2196-Fabian (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Flood hazard mitigation grants funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2197-Eken (DFL)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Lottery gaming machine operation and non-lottery game conduction authorized at a gaming facility, gaming facility licensed and regulated, gaming transaction fee imposed on gaming facility and money appropriated.

**HF2198-Hosch (DFL)**  
**Health & Human Services Finance**  
Aliveness Project of Minneapolis money appropriated.

**HF2199-Lanning (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Correctional state employees retirement plan of the Minnesota State Retirement System coverage changes implemented as recommended by the commissioner of human services.

**HF2200-Ward (DFL)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Cuyuna Lakes State Trail funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2201-Scott (R)**  
**Civil Law**  
Data practice provisions changed.

**HF2202-Beard (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Public Utilities Commission regulatory burden study required.

**HF2203-Bills (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Public employee fair share fee modified, and dues check-offs prohibited.

**HF2204-Bills (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Public employee fair share fee modified.

**HF2205-Howes (R)**  
**Capital Investment**  
Spending authorized to acquire better public land and buildings and for other improvements of a capital nature, programs established, Cook County water facility construction district formation authorized, commissioner of natural resources authorized to make acquisitions of land or interests in land, bonds issued, previous appropriations modified and money appropriated.

**HF2206-Rukavina (DFL)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Trespass provisions modified relating to hunting.

**HF2207-McFarlane (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness state land expedited exchange, condemnation and private sale provided.

**HF2208-Kiel (R)**  
**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Trunk highway interchange funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2209-Banaian (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Former legislators' health insurance coverage modified, and legislator salary calculation changed for the Minnesota State Retirement System.

**HF2210-Banaian (R)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
Greater Minnesota internship program established, tax credit allowed and money appropriated.

**HF2211-Swedzinski (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
State agency rulemaking temporary moratorium imposed.

**HF2212-Franson (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Works of art in state buildings appropriation provisions repealed.



**HF2213-Banaian (R)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities course material and information disclosure required, and MnSCU textbook task force established.

**HF2214-Hancock (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Beltrami County; tax-forfeited land bordering public water public sale authorized.

**HF2215-Eken (DFL)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Flood hazard mitigation grant funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2216-Hoppe (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association; premium rate-setting process flexibility permitted, enrollment closing in two plans permitted and benefit flexibility permitted.

**HF2217-Kahn (DFL)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Pregnancy leave required and employment accommodations required for pregnant women.

**HF2218-Kahn (DFL)**  
**Higher Education Policy & Finance**  
Hennepin County Medical Center graduate family medicine education program funding provided and money appropriated.

**HF2219-Slawik (DFL)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Child Care Affordability Act established, child care assistance programs modified and money appropriated.

**HF2220-Poppe (DFL)**  
**Judiciary Policy & Finance**  
Unreasonable restraint of children level of demonstrable harm changed.

**HF2221-Murphy, M. (DFL)**  
**Redistricting**  
Congressional districting plan adopted for use in 2012 and thereafter, and districting principles adopted for congressional districts.

**HF2222-Murphy, M. (DFL)**  
**Redistricting**  
Legislative districting plan adopted for use in 2012 and thereafter, and districting principles adopted for legislative districts.

**HF2223-Abeler (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Alcohol and drug counselor and licensed counselor licensing provisions changed.

**HF2224-Banaian (R)**  
**Taxes**  
Taxpayers authorized to file and pay use tax with the income tax return.

**HF2225-Allen (DFL)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Advocating Change Together appropriation transferred.

**HF2226-Vogel (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Wind easement effective date elimination delayed.

**HF2227-Anderson, D. (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
State bank closures for holidays clarified, state bank lending limits changed to comply with federal law, and obsolete language repealed relating to deposits payable on demand.

**HF2228-Wagenius (DFL)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Natural resources commissioner prohibited from purchasing land at more than 20 percent above estimated market value.

**HF2229-Torkelson (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Reinvest in Minnesota reserve program funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2230-Abeler (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Pediatric care coordination services provided, demonstration providers required to include in provider networks all providers that agree to standard contract terms, patient-centered decision making required under all Medical Assistance, managed care and county-based purchasing plans required to reduce the incidence of low birth weight, competitive bidding program established for the metro area and draft methodology report required.

**HF2231-Abeler (R)**  
**Government Operations & Elections**  
Federal fund statutory appropriations repealed, and federal funds received for emergency management purposes money appropriated.

**HF2232-Drazkowski (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Welfare fraud prevented, driver's license photo access allowed in welfare fraud investigations, driver's license authentic verification required prior to granting welfare benefits, drug conviction search required to determine welfare benefit eligibility and drug offenders excluded from welfare eligibility.

**HF2233-Simon (DFL)**  
**Civil Law**  
False claims provisions modified.

**HF2234-Erickson (R)**  
**Taxes**  
Homestead market value exclusion repealed.

**HF2235-Davids (R)**  
**Taxes**  
Minneapolis; termination date provided for local taxes.

**HF2236-Westrom (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Finance**  
Dental provider payment critical access modified.

**HF2237-Gottwalt (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Hospital community benefit programs and health maintenance organization collaboration plans; evidence-based strategy requirements removed.

**HF2238-Benson, M. (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Service cooperatives permitted to provide group health coverage to private employers.

**HF2239-Benson, M. (R)**  
**Transportation Policy & Finance**  
Motor vehicle titling and license plate requirements amended and clarified for pioneer vehicles.

**HF2240-Daudt (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Minnesota Health Care Purchasing Authority established and state health care purchasing consolidated through the authority.

**HF2241-Laine (DFL)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Managed care plan financial reporting changes required and annual independent third-party audit required.

**HF2242-Ward (DFL)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Aquatic invasive species provisions modified.

**HF2243-Ward (DFL)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Furbearer trap restrictions made.

**HF2244-O'Driscoll (R)**  
**Education Finance**  
Permanent School Fund Advisory Committee changed into a legislative commission; commission authority granted to employ a director to oversee, manage and administer school trust lands.

## Wednesday, Feb. 15

**HF2245-Kriesel (R)**  
**Jobs & Economic Development Finance**  
Cottage Grove; former city hall conversion to business incubator funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2246-Daudt (R)**  
**Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**  
Convictions under the original criminal vehicular operation law allowed to enhance DWI offenses, and legislative oversight corrected.

**HF2247-Daudt (R)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Night vision equipment use allowed while taking coyotes.

**HF2248-Anzels (DFL)**  
**Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**  
Scram mining operations rules directed to be amended by the commissioner of natural resources and the Environmental Quality Board.

**HF2249-Daudt (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Electronic benefit card transactions limited.

**HF2250-Daudt (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Residency requirements for general assistance eligibility modified.

**HF2251-Anderson, D. (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Health maintenance organizations regulatory authority shifted from the commissioner of health to the commissioner of commerce.

**HF2252-Lohmer (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Reform**  
Residential campus for individuals with autism plan development by the commissioner of human services instructed.

**HF2253-Lohmer (R)**  
**Health & Human Services Finance**  
Out-of-state residential mental health treatment allowed for children who are deaf, deafblind or hard of hearing and who use American Sign Language as their first language.

**HF2254-Shimanski (R)**  
**Commerce & Regulatory Reform**  
Life insurance policy accelerated benefits permitted to include long-term care coverage, and life insurance cash value use permitted to pay premiums on long-term care insurance.

**HF2255-Downey (R)****Taxes**

Capital equipment exemption allowed at time of purchase.

**HF2256-Anzelc (DFL)****Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

County intermediate auction sales of timber allowed.

**HF2257-Bills (R)****State Government Finance**

Minnesota Zoological Garden continued operation provided for when biennial appropriations have not been acted upon and money appropriated.

**HF2258-Abeler (R)****Health & Human Services Reform**

Chemical health navigation program created and residential chemical dependency treatment limited.

**HF2259-Dettmer (R)****State Government Finance**

Lawful gambling net profits for military marching, color guard or honor guard units allowable per diem reimbursement increased.

**HF2260-Dettmer (R)****Veterans Services Division**

Congress and the President of the United States memorialized to amend federal veterans cemetery law to expand eligibility for burial in state veterans cemeteries developed with federal funding to include allied Hmong-American and Lao-American veterans of America's Secret War in Laos.

**HF2261-Dettmer (R)****State Government Finance**

Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery burial eligibility expanded to include deceased allied Hmong-American or Lao-American veterans of the American Secret War in Laos.

**HF2262-Greiling (DFL)****Health & Human Services Reform**

Background checks required on hotel, motel and lodging establishment employees and volunteers of shelters serving battered women and the homeless.

**HF2263-Stensrud (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Window cleaning safety measures implemented.

**HF2264-Banaian (R)****Government Operations & Elections**

Minnesota Management & Budget Department adequacy of budgeted and forecasted defined benefit retirement plan contributions report required.

**HF2265-Lanning (R)****Government Operations & Elections**

Minnesota State Retirement System health care savings plan distributions specified to go to living persons and other changes of an administrative nature made.

**HF2266-Lanning (R)****Government Operations & Elections**

Public Employees Retirement Association administrative changes made by cross-reference revision, annual employer supplemental contributions for the MERF division timing specified and compensating limit provision revised to comply with federal law.

**HF2267-Abeler (R)****Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Metropolitan Council required to reduce regional parks and open space funding allocation to the Three Rivers Park District.

**HF2268-Abeler (R)****Higher Education Policy & Finance**

Board of Trustees of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system policy on awarding college credit for tech-prep programs implementation required.

**HF2269-Lanning (R)****State Government Finance**

Help America Vote Act funds determined and money appropriated.

**HF2270-Torkelson (R)****Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Parks and trails grant program provisions modified.

**HF2271-Gauthier (DFL)****Transportation Policy & Finance**

Minneapolis to Duluth high-speed passenger rail funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2272-Hornstein (DFL)****Transportation Policy & Finance**

Passenger rail commissioner's duties modified.

**HF2273-Torkelson (R)****Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Minor permits and minor permit amendments automatic approval provided if timely action is not taken, adoption of water standards more restrictive than federal standards prohibited, deposit of monetary penalties from environmental violations required to be redirected to General Fund, citizen's board created and environmental review content requirements modified.

**HF2274-Rukavina (DFL)****Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**

Original ignition interlock device program participants allowed to drive non-interlock equipped employer-owned vehicles while in the normal course and scope of employment duties and with the employer's written consent.

**HF2275-Rukavina (DFL)****Higher Education Policy & Finance**

Mesabi Range Community and Technical College windmill installation money appropriated.

**HF2276-Kiffmeyer (R)****Health & Human Services Finance**

Advanced diagnostic imaging services operator accreditation required.

**HF2277-Mahoney (DFL)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

New jobs tax credit established, corporate franchise and sales and use taxes changes made and money appropriated.

**HF2278-Slocum (DFL)****Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Lead shot use prohibited to take wolves.

**HF2279-Slocum (DFL)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Limitation on the use of credit information for motor vehicle insurance modified.

**HF2280-Loon (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Qualified brewer definition modified for tax credit purposes.

**HF2281-Laine (DFL)****Health & Human Services Reform**

Patient record copying charge by providers decreased.

**HF2282-Laine (DFL)****Public Safety & Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**

Violent felons' right to petition the court to have their firearm possession ability restored eliminated.

**HF2283-McElfatrick (R)****Taxes**

Local government aid payment to cities modified.

**HF2284-Winkler (DFL)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Middle Class Jobs Act designated, early warning provided, sick leave modified, business subsidy disclosure requirements amended, workplace communications clarified, minimum wage requirements modified and penalties created.

**HF2285-Kahn (DFL)****Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

University of Minnesota renewable development account expenditure required.

**HF2286-Loon (R)****Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Metropolitan area grant funding provided to address inflow and infiltration in the sewer system, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2287-Slocum (DFL)****Government Operations & Elections**

Charitable organization salary public disclosure regulated.

**HF2288-McElfatrick (R)****Health & Human Services Reform**

Safe haven law expanded.

**HF2289-Anderson, P. (R)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Construction code transfer of funds to the General Fund eliminated, and funding provided to electrical inspections in the event of a government shutdown, and money appropriated.

**HF2290-Atkins (DFL)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Minnesota Insurance Marketplace Act established, powers and duties prescribed and money appropriated.

**HF2291-Mariani (DFL)****Education Finance**

Adult basic education; process created for contact hours lost due to a service disruption.

**HF2292-Loon (R)****Health & Human Services Reform**

Adoption records and original birth certificate access provisions modified.

**HF2293-Davnie (DFL)****Education Reform**

School districts; ability to use prone restraints extended to one additional year, and data collection and reporting required.

**HF2294-Abeler (R)****Health & Human Services Finance**

Group residential housing provider supplementary rate provided, general assistance program modified, and early childhood learning and child protection facilities modified.

**HF2295-Drazkowski (R)****Government Operations & Elections**

Annual state expenditure report created.

**HF2296-Dill (DFL)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Biodiesel minimum content requirement permanent exceptions made.



**HF2297-Dill (DFL)****Taxes**

Cook-Orr Hospital District levy authority modified.

**HF2298-Dill (DFL)****Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

St. Louis County; tax forfeited leased land sale authorized.

**HF2299-McFarlane (R)****Education Finance**

Safeschools program revenue increased.

**HF2300-Greiling (DFL)****Education Finance**

School districts authorized to replace special education revenue lost to the statewide special education appropriations cap.

**HF2301-Greiling (DFL)****Education Finance**

School districts authorized to levy for changes to employer contribution for teacher retirement.

**HF2302-Kriesel (R)****Public Safety &****Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**

Predatory offenders prohibited from serving as hotel or motel employees, and background check required.

**HF2303-Murdock (R)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Wadena; street and utility improvement funding provided for infrastructure damaged by the 2010 tornado, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2304-Murdock (R)****Higher Education Policy & Finance**

Central Lakes College, Staples; agriculture reconfiguration and main building renovation funding provided, bonds issued and money appropriated.

**HF2305-Gunther (R)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Barber licenses and fees changed, penalties created and money appropriated.

**HF2306-Drazkowski (R)****Government Operations & Elections**

Labor organization membership information access provided, fair share fee challenges clarified and independent review of grievances modified.

**HF2307-Daudt (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Guaranty association coverage written disclosure permitted when a policy is delivered and access expanded to accident reports to include all parties involved.

**HF2308-Kieffer (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Foreclosure consultant provisions modified.

**HF2309-Beard (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Biodiesel fuel provisions modified.

**HF2310-Erickson (R)****Education Reform**

Education; obsolete statutes repealed.

**HF2311-Paymar (DFL)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Ford Motor Company; state funds appropriated.

**HF2312-Rukavina (DFL)****Environment, Energy &****Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Renewable solar energy; state appropriation use authorized.

**HF2313-Rukavina (DFL)****Taxes**

Delinquent property tax interest rate changed.

**HF2314-Howes (R)****Environment, Energy &****Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Subsurface sewage treatment systems ordinance delayed.

**HF2315-Beard (R)****Transportation Policy & Finance**

Electric vehicle registration tax increased by \$100.

**HF2316-Sanders (R)****Transportation Policy & Finance**

Concrete diamond grinding and saw slurry disposal provision required in highway construction, improvement or repair contracts.

**HF2317-Knuth (DFL)****Environment, Energy &****Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Public building payment incentives established for installation of solar photovoltaic devices and money appropriated.

**HF2318-Downey (R)****Taxes**

Business property taxes reduced.

**HF2319-Downey (R)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Small business regulatory review board created and legislative appointments provided.

**HF2320-Hilty (DFL)****Government Operations & Elections**

Carlton County; tax levy authorized for cemetery purposes.

**HF2321-Scalze (DFL)****Transportation Policy & Finance**

Metropolitan transit service opt-outs authorized.

**HF2322-Anderson, S. (R)****Higher Education Policy & Finance**

Mandatory health care coverage expansion waiver required.

**HF2323-Hortman (DFL)****Transportation Policy & Finance**

Child passenger restraint systems provisions modified to qualify for federal money and commissioner of public safety authorized to accept federal money.

## Thursday, Feb. 16

**HF2324-Westrom (R)****Civil Law**

Real estate title actions limitations period reduced.

**HF2325-Doepke (R)****Education Reform**

School districts prohibited from holding school on the Thursday and Friday before Labor Day.

**HF2326-Downey (R)****Government Operations & Elections**

Longer public notice period provided for zoning ordinance or amendment for large projects.

**HF2327-Benson, M. (R)****Government Operations & Elections**

Election administration procedures for individuals who have been convicted of a felony modified.

**HF2328-Beard (R)****Transportation Policy & Finance**

Air flight property tax levies, aircraft fuel taxes and aircraft registration taxes and filing fees provisions modified.

**HF2329-Holberg (R)****Education Reform**

CPR training and instruction requirements clarified.

**HF2330-Westrom (R)****Environment, Energy &****Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

University of Minnesota renewable energy research funding allocation date extended.

**HF2331-Slawik (DFL)****Health & Human Services Finance**

Children absent days limit exception provided.

**HF2332-Murray (R)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Small business investment credit higher percentage provided for qualified Greater Minnesota businesses.

**HF2333-Swedzinski (R)****Public Safety &****Crime Prevention Policy & Finance**

Motor fuel theft specifically included in the theft crime and permissive inference created.

**HF2334-Laine (DFL)****Government Operations & Elections**

Local government employees authorized to participate in group long-term care insurance program.

**HF2335-Sanders (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Debt collection agency and registration of individual debt collector procedures amended.

**HF2336-Downey (R)****Jobs & Economic Development Finance**

Business property taxes reduced, small business regulatory review board created and moratorium on rulemaking imposed by state agencies except in specified instances.

**HF2337-Davids (R)****Taxes**

State general levy reduced and eliminated, additional property tax refund modified and money appropriated.

**HF2338-Garofalo (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

State lottery director authorized to establish gaming machines at a licensed racetrack, gaming machine revenue fee imposed, powers and duties provided to the director and money dedicated for education.

**HF2339-Gottwalt (R)****Health & Human Services Reform**

Health care compact created.

**HF2340-Holberg (R)****Health & Human Services Reform**

Abortion facility licensure required.

**HF2341-Peppin (R)****Health & Human Services Reform**

Abortion; prescribing physicians required to be physically present when abortion-inducing drugs are administered and criminal penalty provided.

**HF2342-Davids (R)****Commerce & Regulatory Reform**

Township mutual fire insurance company combination policies regulated.

**HF2343-Howes (R)****Environment, Energy &****Natural Resources Policy & Finance**

Freedom to Hunt and Fish Act of 2012 enacted, availability of game and fish licenses required by electronic transaction and money appropriated.

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# MINNESOTA INDEX

## Doing business in Minnesota

Number of Fortune 500 companies in Minnesota in 2011 .....	20
State rank.....	8
Minnesota companies among Forbes largest private companies by revenue in 2011 .....	7
State rank.....	8
Estimated revenues in 2011 for Minnesota-based Cargill, the largest private firm in the country, in billions .....	\$110
Billions spent in 2010 in research and development by public companies in Minnesota .....	\$6.5
State rank.....	10
Billions spent by Medtronic .....	\$1.7
Billions spent by 3M.....	\$1.2
Percent, in fiscal year 2010, of Minnesota's effective business tax rate — calculated as business taxes as a proportion of private gross state product .....	4.4
National average, as percent.....	5
Minnesota's corporate income tax share as a proportion of total state taxes, as percent .....	7
Average national share, as percent .....	7.1
Percent of Minnesota manufacturers that experienced increased profits in 2011 .....	30
Percent who experienced profit declines.....	40
Manufacturers that increased investment in their plant and equipment in 2011, as percent .....	33
Percent that decreased investment in 2011 .....	25
Percent increase in Minnesota's agricultural, mining and manufactured exports in the third quarter of 2011 compared to one year prior.....	4
Value of exports in third quarter of 2011, in billions .....	\$5.1
Jobs added in the state, as estimate, between the third quarters of 2010 and 2011 .....	38,000
Percent increase.....	1.4
Year the JOBZ program was introduced to promote development in Greater Minnesota by, in part, offering tax incentives to companies that start up or expand in targeted zones.....	2003
Estimated number of jobs that JOBZ has directly or indirectly created since its inception .....	19,600
Average annual wage of those jobs.....	\$35,743
For every job created by a JOBZ recipient, estimated number of jobs created elsewhere by suppliers and people spending more money in the local economy .....	2.1

— M. Cook

Sources: Department of Employment and Economic Development, including Positively Minnesota, Minnesota Manufacturing Business Conditions Survey and JOBZ 2010 Annual Report.