

SESSION WEEKLY

A Nonpartisan Publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives ♦ April 30, 1999 ♦ Volume 16, Number 17



SESSION WEEKLY

Minnesota House of Representatives • April 30, 1999 • Volume 16, Number 17

Session Weekly is a nonpartisan publication of the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office. During the 1999-2000 Legislative Session, each issue reports daily House action between Thursdays of each week, lists bill introductions and upcoming committee meeting schedules, and provides other information. The publication is a service of the Minnesota House. No fee.

To subscribe, contact:
Minnesota House of Representatives
Public Information Office
175 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155-1298
(651) 296-2146 or
1-800-657-3550
TTY (651) 296-9896

Director
LeClair G. Lambert

Acting Assistant Director/Editor
Nick Healy

Acting Assistant Editor
Sandy Donovan

Art & Production Coordinator
Paul Battaglia

Writers
Jon Fure, Sarah Hallonquist,
Grant Martin, Paul Wahl

Chief Photographer
Tom Olmscheid

Photographers
Gina Dabrowski, Laura Phillips,
Andrew Von Bank

Office Manager
Nicole Wood

Staff Assistants
Christy Novak, Jennifer Ridgeway

Session Weekly (ISSN 1049-8176) is published weekly during the legislative session by the Minnesota House of Representatives Public Information Office, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298. Periodicals postage paid at St. Paul, MN, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to **Session Weekly**, Public Information Office, Minnesota House of Representatives, 175 State Office Building, 100 Constitution Ave., St. Paul, MN 55155-1298.

Printed on recycled paper which is 50% recycled, 20% post-consumer content.



Reflections

One hundred years ago in April, the Minnesota Legislature passed bills similar to ones the 201 lawmakers are working on today. In 1899, 182 House and Senate members completed their duties after heated debates, then compromising on some bills that included agriculture, transportation, public safety, education, jobs, and health. This Legislature of the 19th century ended on April 18, with funds and policies to share with farmers, railroad workers, homesteaders and urban dwellers alike.

Today's 201 legislators have three weeks to go before session ends on May 17. Eleven major omnibus bills encompassing all funding requests are completed, and appointed members from the House and Senate are now meeting in conference to compromise and form identical bills for agreement upon by both legislative bodies before they are signed into law or vetoed by the governor.

Over 100 years, a few changes in legislative and public policy issues have been made, thus it is worthwhile to highlight some similarities that made major historical impacts.

In 1899, for example, Gov. John Lind was elected as the first successful candidate to win with a fusion of state political parties.

At the end of the 19th century, women won the right to vote for school board and library board members, then 20 years later, in 1919, they were the first in the country to be able to vote for a U.S. president.

Minnesotans were not among the first reservists called to support NATO efforts in Kosovo during the week of April 26, 1999, but 99 years ago, in the same week, on April 29, 1898, Minnesota soldiers were the first Americans to be mustered into service for the Spanish American War. On the exact same day, April 29, Minnesota's 1st Regiment also was the first to volunteer for the Union Army at the start of the U.S. Civil War, in 1861.

Unlike 100 years ago, war was not as prevalent an issue as it is today. And whether or not war is violence, justified as a means to end "man's inhumanity to man," or even if nonviolence can be legislated, are unanswered questions. But violence is prevalent today and more work or compromise must transpire so that violence is no longer a major issue in society, in Minnesota, or elsewhere.

This week of April 26, the idea of arbitrarily annihilating peers, as in the tragic school incident in Littleton, Colorado, or creating false bomb threats in schools in Minnesota is violence.

These and other 1999 issues are being discussed, but maybe there is a simple solution for survival into the year 2099. One suggestion is, everyone — all people worldwide — should be diligent in exercising compassion and tolerance for issues we disagree with.

"Imagine all the people living life in peace . . . Imagine all the people, sharing all the world."

— LeClair Grier Lambert

INSIDE

Highlights	5
A Closer Look: Omnibus tax bill	13
Feature: Rights of crime victims	15
Feature: Researching legislative history	16
Governor's Desk (CH87 - CH112)	22
Bill Introductions (HF2418 - HF2432)	23
Committee Schedule (May 3 - 7)	23

On the cover: One family spends a sunny Saturday afternoon at a rally for education issues on the Capitol steps April 24.

—Photo by Gina Dabrowski

First Reading

K-12 finance bill . . .

House moves to increase funding, cut class sizes

By Sandy Donovan

Funding for schools would be increased and spread more evenly among Minnesota's school districts, under a \$7.8 billion K-12 spending bill passed on the House floor April 20. The vote was 90-40.

The bill represents a \$911 million hike in overall spending, which is about \$100 million less than proposed in the omnibus bill advancing in the Senate but \$90 million more than recommended by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

The House measure would boost the general formula — through which districts receive the bulk of their funding — by 3.6 percent for the 1999-2000 school year. Other initiatives include reducing class sizes, helping charter schools, and closing the funding gap between the state's wealthiest districts and poorest ones.

The Senate is expected to vote on its version of the bill soon and a House-Senate conference committee will likely meet next week to iron out differences between the two proposals. Here's a look at highlights from the bill (HF2333), sponsored by Rep. Alice Seagren (R-Bloomington).

Formula boost

School districts would get an extra \$127 per pupil unit next year, under the plan. That 3.6-percent increase would be followed with a 3-percent formula boost for the 2000-01 school year, bringing the annual per-pupil funding from \$3,530 this year to \$3,875 in 2001. [That increase also includes a shift of \$43 per pupil that used to be in a separate component called graduation standards funding].

General formula funding is figured on weighted per-pupil units, with secondary students receiving more revenue than elementary students. The proposed hike would cost the state \$204 million, which would be part of the \$6 billion sent to districts in general formula funding during the biennium.

A failed amendment proposed by Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls) would have raised the formula by another \$200 per pupil for the 1999-2000 school year. And Rep. Alice Johnson (DFL-Spring Lake Park) offered another amendment, also unsuccessful, that would have increased the formula by \$100 per pupil for the next school year. Johnson said many districts will still have to cut staff under the



An omnibus K-12 spending bill passed by the House would target more school funding to rural and suburban districts, as well as provide extra money for reducing class sizes in all schools.

House proposal, with factors such as declining enrollment negating the effects of the proposed \$127 per pupil increase.

Class-size reduction

The measure would also spend about \$107 million over the next two years for class-size reduction initiatives. That's about \$43 million less than the governor proposed.

But the House plan closely resembles Ventura's plan in other details. The funds would be targeted to kindergarten through third grade, with the goal of reducing class sizes, primarily in reading and math, to 17 children per one teacher.

Districts would have to submit a plan to the commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning, and upon approval they would receive \$125 per kindergartner and \$250 per first- through third-grader. Districts that have already met that 17-to-1 goal in those grades could use the funding for reducing class sizes in higher grades, providing all-day kindergarten, increasing staff, or improving technology and other programs.

School breakfasts

The bill would also establish a grant program aimed at ensuring that all children eat breakfast each school day. Almost \$6 million over two years would go to districts that have

high percentages of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches.

The grants would expand the current Fast Break to Learning program, which provides money for in-school breakfast to 41 districts. Ventura also recommended expanding the program with the same amount of funding, but Seagren said the House proposal allows the districts more flexibility.

Under both plans, districts would have to match every \$3 of state money with \$1 of local funding. But while Ventura's proposal would require schools to make the local match by charging non-eligible students for breakfast, the House plan would also allow districts to solicit money from non-public sources.

"Some of the pilot schools have had local business support, and if they already have a sponsor who picks up that tab, that's okay," Seagren said.

A successful amendment sponsored by Rep. Tony Kielkucki (R-Lester Prairie) would redirect a portion of the funding originally targeted to the breakfast program to a hot lunch program. Kielkucki said the number of lunches served statewide is rising, federal requirements are increasing the price per meal, and 80 percent of the state's hot lunch programs are operating at a deficit.

Safety at school

Two amendments dealing with school safety were discussed during the House floor debate on the omnibus bill.

One plan, offered by Rep. George Cassell (R-Alexander) and accepted by lawmakers on the floor, would make it easier for teachers to remove disruptive students from classrooms. It would lower the current standard for student behavior that constitutes grounds for expulsion, suspension, or removal from the classroom.

The provision is identical to a bill, sponsored by House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan), that the House passed April 21. Cassell said he wanted to ensure that the measure didn't get lost in the shuffle by incorporating it into the omnibus bill.

But an amendment that would have provided money for districts to implement safety plans was rejected by lawmakers. Rep. Betty Folliard (DFL-Hopkins), who offered the amendment, said that the recent tragedy in a Colorado high school emphasized the need for schools to have effective safety plans in place. And although most districts have already initiated some sort of safety plan, Folliard said that lack of money is holding most districts back from fully implementing those plans.

Folliard's proposal would have taken \$100 million slated for projects in individual districts under the omnibus bill and used the money instead to provide school safety grants. Districts would have been able to use the grants to provide hallway monitors, police department liaisons, or to initiate other safety programs.

Blocking pornography

The omnibus measure would also require all computers at public school libraries to be equipped with content-screening software to prevent minors from seeing "obscene and harmful" material on the Internet. A successful amendment by Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley) limits the provision to apply only to public school libraries, while an unsuccessful amendment by Rep. Joe Opatz (DFL-St. Cloud) would have extended the requirement to all libraries.

Opatz argued that the blocking software should be required especially at state college libraries because so many high school students attend those schools under the state's post-secondary enrollment options.

But Leppik disagreed.

"We cannot be guardians for our children throughout their lives," she said. "I think the cord is cut when they make that decision, along with their parents, to go to a post-secondary institution."

Continued on page 18

Foresight of early leader shaped schools



The first Superintendent of Public Instruction, in his original report to the Territorial Legislature in 1852, focused on familiar themes in education — including adequate facilities, teacher salaries, and graduation standards.

But he never once used the term "pupil unit," a loathsome bit of government-speak that is now commonplace.

The Rev. Dr. Edward Duffield Neill had been appointed superintendent by the Territorial Legislature in 1851. He later served as the chancellor of the University of Minnesota and founded Macalester College in St. Paul.

In his book, *The History of Minnesota*, Neill includes an excerpt of his speech to the Legislature because, as he wrote, "a portion of it may be interesting to future educators of the state."

Under the school code established by the Territorial Legislature in 1849, school districts could be organized in townships consisting of five or more families. And townships with ten or more families could organize more than one district.

Districts were funded mainly by an annual property tax and were governed by a board of three trustees, elected for one-year terms by the taxpayers of the district.

In the 1852 report, Neill noted that there were 12 districts organized in the Minnesota Territory at the time — four in Washington County and eight in Ramsey County. And the territory had only five school buildings. The largest building — 24 feet by 34 feet — was built in St. Anthony at a cost of \$600. The smallest building was 16 feet by 18 feet.

Like many education officials today, Neill advocated improvements in school facilities. But where the current debate focuses on issues like replacing outdated computers with new computers, Neill argued that log cabin schools should be replaced with actual school buildings.

"The buildings that have been erected for school purposes are far in advance of the log huts that were formerly erected by pioneer settlers . . . which even the cows of the

farmer might blush to own as their resting place," he said.

But he said these facilities did need improvements because well-maintained schools were "so necessary to cultivate neat and modest habits in youth."

"Unless some care is shown, it will not be long before the schoolhouses will look as dilapidated as the drunkard's dwelling," he said.

And he called for schools to be centered in the land set aside within each township

to provide enough space for students to play. This, he believed, would promote the new territory to visitors and newcomers.

"Nothing raises a population so much in the estimation of a traveler or emigrant, as to see a crowd of boys issuing from a pleasant schoolhouse, to play during the recess upon a capacious lawn," he said.

Neill also led an early

fight to provide decent pay for the "noble" profession of teachers. At that time, good pay meant wages higher than a servant's pay.

Neill reported that Minnesota was already a leader in paying teachers.

"Immediately after the organization of our school districts, the ground was taken by the friends of education, that so valuable a member of society as the faithful teacher should receive at least the wages of an ordinary day laborer," he said.

Long before the Profile of Learning debate, Neill tackled the subject of graduation standards.

He disagreed that local districts should establish these standards and suggested that the local standards would "burlesque" the state's education system. And he argued that those provisions in the territorial school code giving local trustees the power to grant degrees should be repealed.

In Neill's view, that power should belong solely to the regents of the University of Minnesota.

"To grant such high powers to the trustees of a common school district, who are elected annually, not by those who feel a lively interest in education, but [by the taxpayers of the district] is to degrade education," he said.



The Rev. Dr. Edward Duffield Neill

Highlights



AGRICULTURE

Financial relief for farmers



A proposal to spend \$70 million to help Minnesota's farmers became law April 23 without Gov. Jesse Ventura's signature. The new law took effect April 24.

In a letter filed with the new law, Ventura said he knows "there is hurt" among the state's farmers.

"However, I also know that there are many farms, especially large corporate farms, that are posting profits," Ventura wrote. "My objections to this farm relief package remain threefold: There is no means-testing to ensure that relief is targeted; the money is spent in one lump sum, leaving no funds for future problems; and the farm package was split away from the original rebate when it was entirely unnecessary to do so."

The governor also suggested that something ought to be done to address the conditions that created the current farm crisis.

"The economics of the agricultural industry are such that no reasonable person believes that next year will be dramatically better," Ventura wrote. "A long-term commitment to market and innovative product development will do more than any cash relief."

The new law will provide payments to farmers under one of two plans.

Crop farmers will receive a payment equal to \$4 per acre with a \$5,600 maximum per farm. Livestock producers on operations less than 160 acres will receive a payment equal to the first half of their 1999 property taxes.

Payments will be made to farmers who rent farmland, as well as owner-operators. Payments will be prorated among partners — according to the percentage of risk — when multiple parties are involved in the operation of the farm.

Most farmers will receive between \$2,000 and \$3,000 in aid. The money should be in the hands of farmers by June or July.

Under the plan, the Department of Revenue will send forms and instructions to the county Farm Service Administrations offices, which will be charged with contacting farmers.

Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka) and Sen. Doug Johnson (DFL-Tower) sponsored the measure.

HF1*/SF106/CH112

Feedlot exemption approved

The House passed a bill April 28 that would give farmers more leeway in handling feedlot waste. The vote was 100-29.

Rep. Howard Swenson (R-Nicollet), the bill's sponsor, said it is a common-sense measure that would assure farmers won't be punished for actions they cannot avoid. The bill would exempt operators from standards for ambient hydrogen sulfide emission levels on days manure is being removed from barns or storage facilities and handled for application on land or other disposal.

Although the manure-containing basins found at most feedlots are covered with a thick odor-reducing crust most of the time, that crust occasionally must be removed so the manure solids can be extracted. The byproduct is often spread on nearby land as a natural fertilizer.

The air can get rather pungent during those times, and hydrogen sulfide levels can rise above what is allowed by regulators.

The bill (HF1235) would exempt operators from the hydrogen sulfide restrictions for up to 14 days per year. Operators would have to notify those living within 5,000 feet of the facility about expected high levels of the pollutant within five days of the stirring process, which usually takes place twice a year.

In floor action, Rep. Ted Winter (DFL-Fulda) offered a successful amendment that would also mandate notification to the Pollution Control Agency or the appropriate county agency.

Swenson argued the amendment would simply add another burden to already overburdened farmers.

Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) sided with Winter.

"One more phone call is not going to cause this farmer to go broke," Tuma said.

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) questioned whether the bill would be constitutional since it would allow essentially a "taking" of a neighbors property, albeit only for a short time, without just compensation.

An unsuccessful amendment proposed when the bill was before the House Agriculture Policy Committee would have required feedlot operators to pay for lodging and meals for neighbors during the semi-annual stirring process.

The bill now goes to the Senate.

Crops as collateral



A new law signed by the governor April 27 changes the way the state regards security interests in agricultural crops.

Under existing law, when a crop is used as security for a loan, the legal description of the field where the crop is grown has to be included in the filing statement.

The new law, effective Aug. 1, will remove that provision and make other small changes in how crops used for security interest are handled.

Historically, the security derived from an agricultural crop was linked to the field so a creditor could determine the location of the crop in which the creditor had an interest. Critics of that practice argued that the crop must be in the bin before it can be sold and that the value of the crop is what matters, not the value of the parcel of land.

Rep. Carol Molnau (R-Chaska) and Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) sponsored the measure.

HF1052/SF451*/CH105



BUSINESS

New warehouse regulations



A new law signed April 27 updates Minnesota statutes dealing with warehouses, which were written originally in 1915.

Effective Aug. 1, warehouse operators will no longer be required to provide paper receipts for items in storage. Many warehouses deal with multi-national companies and conduct business electronically, making it impossible to fulfill the letter of the old law.

Warehouse operators will also be able to choose which accounting practices they wish to use in running their business, rather than having them mandated by the state.

Also, the new law separates household goods warehouse owners, who usually deal with the public, from general operators, who usually deal only with companies and corporations. That provision also changes bonding practice, making it less onerous for certain warehouse operators.

Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea) and Sen. Paula Hanson (DFL-Ham Lake) sponsored the measure.

HF893/SF1041*/CH110

Stock sale changes



A new law signed April 27 makes it easier for companies to issue and sell small stocks to investors.

The law, effective April 28, makes technical changes in state law regarding stock holdings of smaller companies. Of those changes, the required value for such stocks is lowered from \$5 to \$1 per share.

Another change requires the commissioner of commerce to approve the sale of stock no more than 20 days after the securities registration form is filed. Under the old law, there was no such deadline.

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) and Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) sponsored the legislation.

HF661/SF832*/CH103



CRIME

Drug law loophole closed



Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a new law April 27 that will close a loophole for people guilty of multiple drug crimes.

Current law allows courts to defer judgement for certain first-time drug offenders as long as the offender agrees to participate in diversion programs.

But if the same person commits another drug crime, the stay of adjudication doesn't apply as a prior conviction for the purposes of enhanced penalties for repeat offenders. As a result, the offender is only sentenced as if he or she has no prior convictions.

The new law, effective Aug. 1, will make such stays of adjudication the same as a prior drug conviction when courts consider if the enhanced penalty can apply.

House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) and Sen. David Knutson (R-Burnsville) sponsored the measure.

HF142*/SF1634/CH98



EDUCATION

Offenders banned from boards



A new law signed April 26 prohibits registered sex offenders from becoming school board members.

Any person who has been convicted of a sexual offense and is a registered predatory offender will be ineligible to run for election to a local school board, under the measure.

The law, effective Aug. 1, follows a New Ulm school board election that included a candidate who had served 41 months in prison for sexual abuse. The man's history was revealed shortly before the election, and he was not elected.

Sen. Dennis Frederickson (R-New Ulm), who sponsored the legislation in the Senate, said that incident prompted him to introduce the measure this year.

He said sex offenders should not have access to positions of authority over children, especially those that would allow them entrance to school facilities.

Rep. Marty Seifert (R-Marshall) sponsored the bill in the House.

HF1845/SF1527*/CH101



ELECTIONS

Preventing errors at polls

The House passed a bill April 28 that would change state law imposing penalties for voting in the wrong precinct. The vote was 124-8.

Voting in the wrong precinct is a felony in Minnesota, under current law. But prosecution under that law is rare.

Under the bill (HF1168/SF1144*), a person who votes in the wrong precinct would receive a letter from the Office of the Secretary of State citing the mistake and informing the person of the correct polling place.

The person would then have to provide proof of residency before voting in the next election. If the same person votes in the wrong precinct a second time it would be considered a misdemeanor, and a third instance would be considered a felony.

Rep. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley), sponsor of the bill, said so many instances of voting in the wrong place are reported that county attorneys do not prosecute them as felonies. Gerlach said the instances are most often misunderstandings, and the bill would make it easier to discover instances of repeated violations.

Gerlach argued that current law makes it hard to distinguish between mistakes and deliberate instances of fraud, so the crime goes unpunished. But if a smaller number of people could be identified as repeat offenders, he said it would be more feasible for offenders to be prosecuted.

Another provision in the bill would drop the requirement that a person can only be a witness to vouch for another person to register to vote if both people live in the same county.

The bill now goes to the governor.



ENVIRONMENT

Funding for environment

The House passed an \$1.1 billion omnibus spending bill for agriculture, environment, and natural resources April 27. The vote was 86-43.

On the House floor, lawmakers from districts near the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport added a provision to help some residents deal with airport noise, which they said is a serious environmental issue.

Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington) proposed requiring the Metropolitan Airports Commission (MAC) to determine the costs of mitigating the noise in those homes and buildings and to report the information to the House and Senate environment and natural resources committees.

Lenczewski said the airport commission studied whether the airport should expand at its current location or if it should move. And the decision to remain in Bloomington came with a promise to pay for insulating those homes, churches, and other public buildings that would be affected by the expansion. Now, she said, the Legislature needs to hold the commission to that promise.

"The burden doesn't belong on state taxpayers, and it certainly doesn't belong on those communities," she said. "This provision puts that burden where it belongs, on the MAC."

Lawmakers also voted to scrap proposed fee increases for fishing and hunting licenses, which would have raised \$4.5 million in new revenue.

Rep. Mark Holsten (R-Stillwater), chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee and sponsor of the bill (HF2388), said the committee's priorities were to spend money to physically improve the environment, as opposed to expanding administrative services or studies. He also said the committee tried to work toward implementing solutions suggested by past studies and making the best use of programs that bring in federal grants.

The proposed increases in license fees reflected those priorities, Holsten said. Revenue from those licenses would go into the game and fish fund, which is used for a variety of projects that benefit game and non-game wildlife.

Hunting and fishing groups support the fee increase, Holsten said, because the additional money would go toward improving the sports in the state. Hunting license fees have not increased since 1991, he added.

But Rep. Mary Liz Holberg (R-Lakeville) proposed keeping the fees at current rates.

"I was sent here to represent the people in my district, and I haven't heard any of them say they want higher fees," she said.

Most House members agreed with her and voted 99-33 to eliminate the proposed fee increase.

Rep. Tim Finseth (R-Angus) later proposed a successful amendment that would direct the Office of Strategic and Long-Range Planning to study removing the fish and wildlife division from the Department of Natural Resources. Finseth said without the revenue from fee increases, the state will need to look at ways to reorganize the DNR in hopes of allocating more money to maintain the quality of fishing and hunting in the state.

House members also debated senior citizen discounts on hunting and fishing licenses. Rep. Kris Hasskamp (DFL-Crosby) proposed offering senior citizens a rebate so they can get their licenses for free. Her amendment failed.

Holsten said he opposes such a rebate because seniors already receive discounts on licenses. A \$15 fishing license, for example, costs only \$5.50 for people age 65 and older. And as more baby boomers approach that age, a huge decrease in revenue would coincide with an increase in the number of retired people who could spend more time fishing and hunting.

Rep. Dennis Ozment (R-Rosemount), chair of the House Environment and Natural Resources Policy Committee, agreed, saying Hasskamp's proposal "may make short-term politics sound good, but it's lousy for long-term policy."

Personal watercraft fees

The bill would increase license fees for personal watercraft, but it would also remove a \$50 surcharge on those licenses. The proposed license would cost \$25.

Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) proposed keeping the license at its current fee of \$12, but the House voted against his amendment.

Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul) spoke against Haas' proposal, because money from those licenses is spent on enforcement of laws regulating use of personal watercraft.

Minneapolis vs. Kondirator

The bill would require the city of Minneapolis and other state and local authorities to issue permits to allow a metal shredding facility to be located along the Mississippi River.

Rep. Gregory Gray (DFL-Mpls) proposed eliminating the sections of the bill referring to the facility, called a Kondirator, because it would circumvent a court case between the city of Minneapolis and American Iron & Supply Co., the firm that has proposed building the facility.

"People are actively working in good faith toward resolution of this issue," he said.

Ozment spoke against Gray's proposal, because the company already received a permit from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

"I think it's important to raise the bar for good environmental reasons," Ozment said. "But when a company makes it over the bar we set, enough is enough."

Lawmakers voted 76-54 against Gray's amendment.

Farm initiatives

A proposal designed to benefit family farms that operate feedlots was defeated by a margin of only one vote.

The amendment, proposed by Rep. Mary Ellen Otremba (DFL-Long Prairie), would have required the Pollution Control Agency to consider imposing less stringent rules for feedlot operators who live at the site of the feedlot.

Owners living on-site would have to live with the smell of manure and would get their drinking water from the site, Otremba said. And that, she said, would create "self-motivated regulation." She said that could lead to less demand for employees at the Pollution Control Agency.

"A lot of us want to start trusting people more and relying on government less," Otremba said.

Disaster relief, marketing initiatives, and a proposed \$74.7 million appropriation for ethanol producer payments are among the agriculture provisions of the bill. The ethanol funding would bring several processing plants to full capacity. It would also add \$3 million to a proposed ethanol plant in St. Paul. And marketing initiatives would be developed through the Agriculture Utilization and Research Institute and the commissioner of agriculture.

The bill now moves to a House-Senate conference committee.

New effort to halt milfoil



The governor signed a measure April 23 that modifies the state's policy for controlling the spread of Eurasian water milfoil and other exotic species.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) developed the Exotic Species Program after Eurasian water milfoil was found in Lake Minnetonka in 1987 and zebra mussels were found in Duluth harbor. The program includes inspection of boats and trailers at launching sites of lakes that are known to be infested.

The new law, effective April 25, extends those inspections to lakes that are not infested, and it allows more time for those inspections. Under previous law, the DNR inspected boats from May 1 to Oct. 15 each year, but that period will now be extended to the entire open water season.

Previous law also prohibited people from harvesting bait from infested waters. The new law allows the DNR to grant permits for that purpose to people who have had training in handling exotic species.

Rep. Larry Howes (R-Hackensack) and Sen. Leonard Price (DFL-Woodbury) sponsored the measure.

HF1248/SF1528*/CH92.

Paul Bunyan trail route



Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law April 23 that alters the route of the Paul Bunyan State Trail.

Starting in the city of Baxter — near Paul Bunyan Land amusement park — the trail runs along an abandoned stretch of railroad right-of-way land and is used by walkers, bikers, and snowmobilers in Minnesota's popular resort areas.

The trail is nearly one-half completed, and when finished, the path will stretch 100 miles north to Bemidji.

The law changes the starting and ending points of the trail to state parks instead of cities. The Baxter starting point will be changed to Crow Wing State Park, and the Bemidji end point will be moved to Lake Bemidji State Park.

The measure also permits the use of motorized wheelchairs or carts used by those with physical disabilities on trails that otherwise restrict the use of motorized vehicles.

Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) and Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd) sponsored the legislation. The new law is effective Aug. 1.

HF1944/SF1470*/CH95



GOVERNMENT

State agency funding passed

The House voted April 22 to pass an omnibus state government finance bill that would place a cap on the overall growth of state worker salaries and would cut spending on some state agencies. The vote was 70-59.

The \$639.6 million in the bill (HF2386/SF2223*) is about \$100 million less than Gov. Jesse Ventura's recommendation, and some

lawmakers questioned whether the cuts would be reasonable.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) said the decision to cut funding for the Office of Citizenship and Volunteer Services is “really bad public policy.”

“Minnesota has the highest rate of volunteerism in the United States, and that doesn’t just happen by accident,” he said.

Other House members took exception to the provision that would limit salaries for state employees in all executive branch agencies and in the Legislature.

Under the bill, the amount spent on salaries for fiscal year 2000 could not exceed 101 percent of the amount spent in fiscal year 1999. And in the year 2001, the amount could not exceed 103 percent of the amount spent for fiscal year 2000.

Rep. Lyndon Carlson (DFL-Crystal) called the proposal an across-the-board cut that doesn’t take into account functions of state agencies. If enrollment increases in the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system, for example, new employees in those colleges could only be hired at the expense of other state agencies. And employees in some agencies bring in revenue to the state, Carlson said, so cuts in those areas would have other negative impacts.

House Majority Leader Tim Pawlenty (R-Eagan) commended Rep. Phil Krinkie (R-Shoreview), chairman of the House State Government Finance Committee and sponsor of the bill, for his work on the omnibus legislation. He said many people have talked about streamlining government, but Krinkie has backed up his talk.

“The people we have in our systems are good; it’s the systems that from time to time need a little updating,” Pawlenty said. “We’ve got to force these systems to take a look at themselves, to re-evaluate priorities, to embrace the future, to think about efficiency and innovation, and not just be guardians of the status quo.”

Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia) disagreed with Pawlenty’s rosy assessment of the bill.

“This is a bill people love to hate, but why did you have to make it so easy for us to hate?” Rukavina asked.

Krinkie said the bill should be taken in context with all of the needs of state government. The House has supported other bills that would increase state spending on health and human services and on education.

Those increases mean less money is available for state agencies, Krinkie said. He acknowledged that he has reservations about some provisions of the bill, but he said that it

reflects the priorities of the House leadership.

Krinkie also said there are many positive provisions in the bill, such as continued funding for bonuses to Persian Gulf War veterans, one-time spending to support a federal World War II veterans’ memorial, funding to the State Board for the Arts at the same level as the previous biennium, and \$20 million in revolving funds for local governments in case vital computer systems fail to because of the Y2K bug.

The House voted to delete a provision that would require the commissioner of administration to develop a request for bids to operate the Rush City correctional facility, which would have allowed private vendors and the State Department of Corrections to submit proposals for how the facility would be managed and how much it would cost.

The bill now moves to a House-Senate conference committee to reconcile differences in the two versions of the bill.

Zoo funding to conference

A bill that would pay \$17 million to state agencies and departments with budget shortfalls in the current fiscal year is headed for a House-Senate conference committee.

The House voted not to accept the Senate version of the bill April 27. There was opposition to the Senate plan mainly because it does not contain a provision that would require the Minnesota Zoo to develop a plan to become a private nonprofit organization instead of a state agency.

The zoo would receive \$600,000 under the House version of the bill, compared to

\$1 million under the Senate version. Rep. Dave Bishop (R-Rochester) is sponsoring the House bill (HF878/SF2234*).

Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul) said the House provisions are especially important, because a separate agriculture, environment, and natural resources omnibus bill contains additional funding to cover projected budget shortfalls at the zoo over the next biennium.

Among the other proposed payments in Bishop’s bill are \$3.5 million to the Department of Children, Families and Learning to pay legal costs of two major lawsuits — one in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul. Both involve claims that school districts are providing constitutionally inadequate education.

The Department of Public Safety would receive \$629,000 to pay for license plates for new automobiles, due to higher than expected automobile sales and other factors. That money would be paid back as the license plates are sold. The department would also receive \$200,000 to pay for additional security for Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Other areas that would receive funds are the Campaign Finance and Disclosure Board, Department of Human Services, and State Services for the Blind.

Commission membership cut



Gov. Jesse Ventura signed into law April 26 a measure that will shrink the size of the Legislative Audit Commission and change some of its duties.

As of Jan. 1, 2000, the commis-

Capitol rally



Among women rally for support for welfare and education issues on the Capitol steps April 23.

sion will only be made up of 16 members. Twenty legislators now serve on the commission, which works with the legislative auditor to choose which organizations and programs will be subject to financial evaluations.

The commission's membership was increased to 20 members in 1997 to increase bipartisanship, but Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) said that is no longer a concern. McElroy is the current chair of the Legislative Audit Commission.

Under the law, four members from each of the House and Senate caucuses will serve on the commission.

The law also strikes a past requirement that the chairs of the House and Senate tax committees must be commission members.

In an effort to reduce paperwork, the new law eliminates some reports previously required of the auditor or various state agencies. The measure also requires the deputy legislative auditor to hold an active certified public accountant's license and clarifies data privacy guidelines for audit data.

Except for the membership provisions, the law is effective April 27.

Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan), the commission's vice chair, sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

HF1003*/SF840/CH99



HEALTH

Too young to serve



Nursing home administrators must be at least 21 years of age, under the terms of a new law effective April 27.

The new law also enacts other housekeeping changes requested by the Board of Examiners for Nursing Home Administrators.

The minimum age for nursing home administrators was lowered to 18 during the Vietnam War era, when the prevailing feeling was that anyone old enough for military service was old enough to serve in most public positions.

Over the years, board rules and state law on the age issue had come into conflict. The new law brings them into uniformity and sets the minimum age at 21.

The law also allows a permit process for acting administrators who in the past had to obtain a full-fledged license to serve as administrator on a temporary basis.

The law further makes board members (and others investigating violations of laws and rules administered by the board) immune from civil liability and criminal prosecution when

performing their duties, as long as they act in good faith.

Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) and Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) sponsored the measure.

HF1309/SF1273*/CH102

Chiropractic care contracts



A new law signed April 23 clarifies the way managed care networks deal with chiropractors in the state.

Effective Aug. 1, networks will be prohibited from requiring chiropractors to provide care under categories of coverage other than those specified in their contract, unless the chiropractor consents.

Chiropractors have complained that health maintenance organizations and preferred provider organizations may have used their general health contracts as "bait" to later dump the chiropractors into a network of providers of noncertified workers' compensation or auto personal injury lines of coverage without prior notification.

If the chiropractor doesn't agree to the other lines of coverage, he or she can lose the contract entirely.

The new law will prevent the health insurers from terminating a contract for this reason, provide time for chiropractors to review their options, and add a mechanism under which chiropractors can recover damages if a health insurer violates the law.

Rep. Doug Reuter (R-Owatonna) and Sen. Edward Oliver (R-Deephaven) sponsored the measure.

HF566/SF673*/CH94

Guaranteed coverage



A new law that brings Minnesota's law into conformation with federal laws regarding Medicare supplement insurance took effect April 24.

Federal law enacted in 1997 requires state laws to mandate guaranteed issue, with no preexisting condition limitations, for Medicare supplement insurance in certain situations. (Guaranteed issue means an application for coverage cannot be turned down.)

Minnesota's previous law contained instances in which coverage wasn't assured.

The new law took effect in time to meet the April 29 deadline imposed by the federal government for enacting the changes.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) and Sen. Edward Oliver (R-Deephaven) sponsored the measure.

HF1968*/SF1827/CH90

Regulations on psychologists



A new law signed April 27 clarifies fee-splitting practices for psychologists and stiffens penalties for violating the Psychology Practice Act, among other provisions.

Effective Aug. 1, the new law makes it explicit that what is prohibited is "kickbacks," not legitimate divisions of revenue in a business made in proportion to the psychological services provided.

Violating the Psychology Practice Act will become a gross misdemeanor instead of a misdemeanor, making it the same penalty for violating practice acts used by other professions, including medicine, nursing, and social work.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe) and Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins) sponsored the measure.

HF984/SF983*/CH109



HOUSING

New regulations for deposits



The governor signed a new law April 26 that will specify how pre-lease deposit agreements can be made between landlords and tenants.

A pre-lease deposit is money put down on an apartment by a prospective tenant to help secure the apartment. The pre-lease deposit doesn't include money provided to the landlord for credit or criminal background checks.

The new measure, effective Aug. 1, will require that tenants and landlords must have the terms of the pre-lease deposit in writing, including how the deposit would be returned if the tenant isn't accepted by the landlord. The law also requires the deposit to be returned within seven days as specified in the agreement.

If a landlord accepts the tenant, the law will require the pre-lease deposit to go toward either the damage deposit or the rent. And the new law provides legal remedies if the terms for pre-lease deposits are violated.

Proponents argue that the law regulating such deposits is necessary because the state is seeing a shortage of affordable housing and the practice of requiring pre-lease deposits is becoming more common. They say the new law will provide protection for both landlords and tenants who make these agreements.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville) and Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton) sponsored the measure.

HF1178*/SF1253/CH97



INSURANCE

Seeking health coverage options

The House passed a bill April 28 that is designed to increase competition in the state's health care insurance arena. The vote was 116-14.

Bill sponsor Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin) said the measure would provide options for less expensive and less comprehensive employee health policies for small businesses, many of them in rural areas.

Haas' bill (HF870/SF841*) would permit insurance companies that do not already have a major presence in the state to offer alternatives to the minimum state-mandated policies.

Under existing state law, insurers and health maintenance organizations may offer only one of two policies for small employers.

The bill would permit policies with different copayments and deductibles, as well as those that would pay on a basis other than medical expenses incurred, such as a flat dollar amount per day in the hospital or a flat dollar amount upon a diagnosis of cancer.

The policies would have to be sold only to companies that have 50 or fewer employees.

Haas' bill was amended on the House floor to include five specific areas of coverage that would have to be part of the alternative health plans the bill would allow.

Those amendments would mandate cover-

age for breast cancer screening, cleft palate treatment, minimum maternity hospital stays, outpatient mental health treatment services, and immediate coverage for newborns.

Haas warned that each mandate added would drive the cost of the minimum policy up and eventually defeat the purpose of the bill.

And Rep. Fran Bradley (R-Rochester) said the amendments were making a "Christmas tree" out of the bill and reminded his House colleagues that the mandates would impact only a small portion of Minnesotans, because the bill would not affect the many people who are covered by large employers' self-insurance programs.

The House rejected an amendment that would have required the newly developed minimum health plans to be "test-driven" on House members.

Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) said it was only fair that Legislators should be willing to take part in something they would be asking employees of small companies to accept.

Prior to the vote on the bill, Skoglund said the health insurance policies that could result from the bill would be "little better than nothing."

The bill moves to the Senate.

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

Covering funeral costs



Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a measure April 26 that will update the law regarding insurance for funeral or burial expenses.

The law, effective Aug. 1, allows funeral home owners, directors, and employees to receive commissions from the sale of insurance contracts totaling \$20,000 or less. However, the commissions only apply to "pre-need" contracts, or those purchased before the services are needed.

In addition, the law clarifies the definition of who can make decisions regarding a person's funeral arrangements. Current law allows such decisions to be made only by family, next of kin, or another representative. The new law will simply state that such decisions can be made by one who has the legal authority to act on behalf of the deceased.

Rep. Greg Davids (R-Preston) and Sen. Arlene Lesewski (R-Marshall) sponsored the measure.

HF1150/SF1182*/CH100



LAW

Seat belt bill vetoed



Gov. Jesse Ventura vetoed a bill April 27 that would have changed the so-called seat belt gag rule to allow defective seat belt claims to move forward in court.

In his veto message, Ventura wrote that the Legislature overstepped its bounds by designating what evidence the courts can consider.

"It is not the place of the Legislature or the executive branch to determine what evidence is, or is not, admissible in a court of law," he wrote.

The current gag rule law states that the fact that a person is wearing or not wearing a seat belt cannot be considered by the courts when deciding personal injury or property damage claims resulting from a car crash.

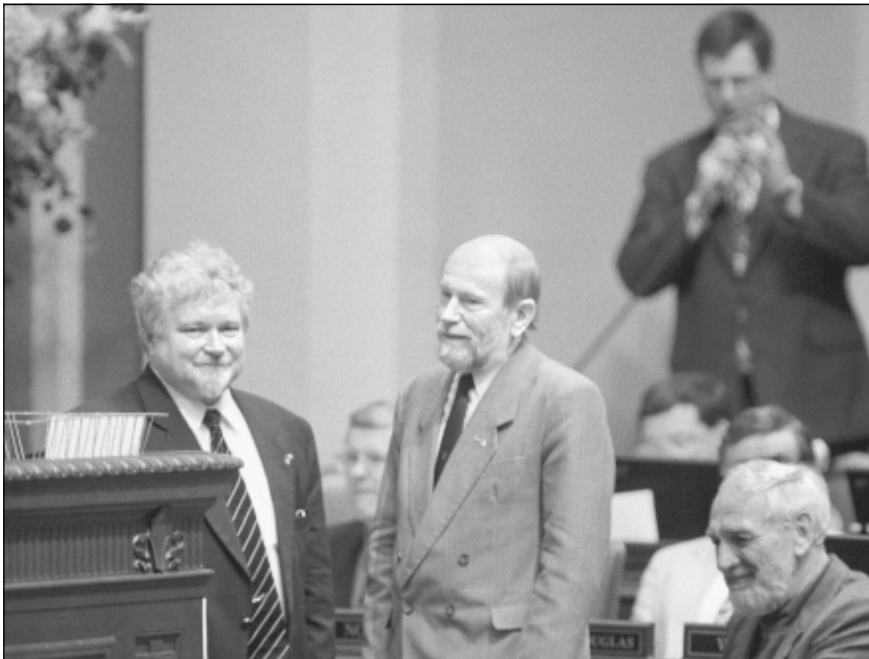
In a 1997 case, the Minnesota Supreme Court ruled that the gag rule law, as it is written, also applies to cases in which the claim is filed against the auto manufacturer for a defective seat belt.

If plaintiffs can't establish that they were actually wearing the seat belt, they can't prove that the seat belt caused or failed to prevent the injury. And the cases cannot move forward.

The bill would have simply exempted claims of defective or malfunctioning seat belts from the gag rule law.

Ventura argued that the bill didn't go far enough and that the entire gag rule should be repealed.

Czech senators



Rep. John Tuma introduces Czech senators Petr Pithart, left, and Frankisek Meziborak, center, to the House of Representatives on April 27. The two were in town as part of Czech President Vaclav Havel's delegation visiting the Twin Cities this week.

"Only a full repeal will ensure citizens the right to introduce evidence at trial that is germane to their cases and allow the other party to refute that evidence on the same terms," Ventura wrote.

The governor also expressed concern that the bill would have affected cases currently before the courts and that the bill favors one party over another in these cases.

"By partially repealing the seat belt gag rule an unfair advantage will be given to one party in the courtroom," Ventura wrote. "Juries should hear all of the arguments and facts in a case before rendering a decision."

The Senate voted to override the veto April 28. The House hasn't yet acted on the governor's message. A two-thirds vote of the House will be needed to complete the override of Ventura's veto.

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights) and Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Coon Rapids) sponsored the measure.

HF462/SF303*/CH106

Cover for 911 dispatchers



The governor signed a new law April 27 that will allow emergency dispatchers to give over-the-phone medical instructions to callers without fear of legal troubles.

The measure, effective April 28, exempts dispatchers from civil liability when in the course of an emergency call they provide medical information before emergency responders arrive on the scene.

Some municipalities had advised dispatchers not to give medical information over the phone because the local unit of government could possibly be held liable in a lawsuit.

Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), House sponsor of the new measure, said the law will give emergency dispatchers the ability to do their job "without fear of superfluous litigation."

Sen. Leo Foley (R-Coon Rapids) sponsored the measure in the Senate.

HF541/SF436*/CH108

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Amortization prohibition



A new law prohibits cities and counties from setting a deadline for property owners to cease operations that do not conform to zoning ordinances — a maneuver sometimes used to force out undesirable businesses or halt unpopular practices.

The practice is known as amortization and

the law, effective April 24, prohibits it except in cases where it is used to close strip clubs and other adults businesses.

Cities and counties can change zoning ordinances to reflect changing land uses, such as a growing business or industrial district. But if an existing section of property becomes a non-conforming use due to a change in zoning, state law allows the owner of that property to continue that use if it is not expanded.

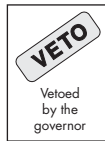
The city or county can also condemn the nonconforming property, but the property owner must be paid fair market value.

Opponents of amortization call it a loophole in the law, because it effectively makes the property worthless since setting a deadline would force an existing property to conform to a new zoning ordinance or move. A potential buyer would have no incentive to buy the property until after the deadline.

Rep. Peg Larsen (R-Lakeland) sponsored the measure in the House and Sen. Keith Langseth (DFL-Glyndon) was the Senate sponsor.

HF896/SF854*/CH96

Public purchasing bill vetoed



A bill that sought to raise the dollar level above which cities are required to solicit sealed bids for purchases was vetoed April 22 by Gov. Jesse Ventura.

Current law requires cities to solicit sealed bids for purchases if the cost is more than \$25,000. The bill would have raised the threshold to \$50,000.

For purchases between \$10,000 and \$50,000, the bill would have allowed cities to seek price quotes from at least two vendors or to advertise for bids.

Proponents of the bill said it would give cities more flexibility in purchasing items in that price range.

The bill also would have allowed cities to purchase supplies, materials, or equipment through a national municipal association or a cooperative.

In a letter accompanying the veto message, Ventura wrote that the proposal could have increased unethical conduct in purchasing decisions.

"The municipal contracting statute was enacted, in part, to ensure that municipal contracts are awarded on the basis of the best value at the best price, rather than being awarded on the basis of favoritism," Ventura wrote.

"I believe that contracts should be awarded on the basis of what you know, not who you know. Competitive bidding is essential to

ensure that this type of favoritism does not negatively affect a community's interest to the benefit of a contractor who happens to be in favor with the city manager, mayor, or city council."

Rep. Bill Kuisle (R-Rochester) sponsored the measure in the House, and Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins) was the Senate sponsor.

HF1097/SF1188*/CH82



MILITARY

Armory board eligibility



Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law April 15 that will broaden eligibility for National Guard members to serve on armory boards. The new law takes effect Aug. 1.

Current law limits eligibility for such positions to officers. The new law will extend it to enlisted personnel and warrant officers, who already perform duties of managers of armories.

The measure also will allow retired National Guard members to serve as recruiters and to handle other temporary duties. It is designed to give the Department of Military Affairs more flexibility in hiring qualified people for those temporary duties.

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township) and Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan) sponsored the legislation.

HF1565*/SF1677/CH46



TRANSPORTATION

Penalties for trucking violations



A new law effective April 1, 2000, will increase penalties for drivers who use trucks that have been ordered out of service. Gov. Jesse Ventura signed the measure April 23.

An out-of-service order means that a truck is damaged or defective and cannot be driven until repairs are made. Under current law, penalties for driving such a vehicle involve fines for drivers and their employers.

The impetus for the new law was a potential loss of some federal highway dollars if the state did not step up its penalties.

Under the law, drivers will be disqualified from driving commercial motor vehicles for 90 days after the first offense. A second offense in five years will disqualify drivers for one to five years, and a third offense within five years

will result in three to five years' disqualification.

In addition, the Minnesota Department of Transportation will be required to impose fines of at least \$1,000 for drivers and up to \$10,000 for employers who knowingly violate out-of-service orders.

Rep. Tom Workman (R-Chanhassen) and Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) sponsored the legislation.

HF1046/SF1324*/CH93

Steel storage tanks



Gov. Jesse Ventura signed a law April 23 that will change fuel storage tank specifications for the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Effective Aug. 1, the measure requires the department's specifications to allow for steel storage tanks, in addition to the fiberglass tanks already used by the agency, to store fuel underground.

Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake) sponsored the bill on behalf of some steel tank manufacturers who said the department's specifications were shutting them out of the bidding process.

Under the new law, the steel tanks would have to meet standards set by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the U.S.

It's a beautiful day



House pages take a little time from their regular duties to enjoy a perfect spring day April 28. They are, left to right, Sam Haswell, Michelle Dickenson, Luke Backman, and Mike Braboy.

Environmental Protection Agency before the department could use them.

Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing) sponsored the legislation in the Senate.

HF528*/SF1529/CH88

Trucking regulations ditched



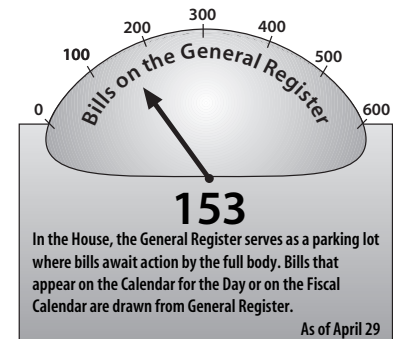
A new law signed April 20 eliminates a registration requirement for two types of vehicles.

Effective Aug. 1, drivers of trucks whose taxes are based on their weight listed on license applications and trucks traveling through the state that need one-way permits will no longer have to apply in writing to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Alice Gonzalo, assistant director of the department's Driver and Vehicle Services Division, said the two categories are the only ones left that require written applications. She said the requirements will be lifted to make it easier for the department to implement electronic registration, such as by fax or the Internet.

Rep. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook) and Sen. Carol Flynn (DFL-Mpls) sponsored the measure.

HF1507/SF1600*/CH70



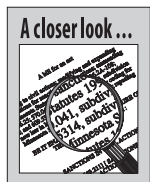
1999 House Membership Statistics

- 71 Republican members
- 63 DFL members
- 99 men
- 35 women
- 20 DFL women
- 15 Republican women
- 21 newly elected members*
- 1 newly elected member previously served in the House
- 14 newly elected Republican members
- 7 newly elected DFL members
- 15.7 percent of House members did not serve last session
- 16 newly elected members are men
- 5 newly elected members are women
- 23.8 percent of newly elected members are women
- 26.1 percent of all House members are women
- 94.9 percent of incumbents were re-elected
- 0 Republican incumbents lost
- 6 DFL incumbents lost
- 15 seats were open
- 6 uncontested House races
- 0 uncontested races in DFL-held districts

* Count includes Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) who was elected in 1994 to one term in the House.

Plan would cut income taxes, scrap 'sick tax'

By Paul Wahl



A \$1.3 billion sales tax rebate and more than \$3 billion in income tax cuts over the coming biennium are the pillars of an omnibus tax bill approved by the House on April 29. The vote was 95-35.

"Today is the day," said Rep. Ron Abrams (R-Minnetonka), chair of the House Taxes Committee and sponsor of the omnibus bill (HF2420). "Today is the day in which we give Minnesotans — all Minnesotans — a tax cut, which they richly deserve."

The bill contains a variety of additional income, sales, and miscellaneous tax changes.

Under the plan, more Minnesotans making contributions to charitable organizations would be rewarded with a deduction and Holocaust survivors who receive financial settlements would not have to pay state income tax.

The state's medical services provider tax — often called the "sick tax" — would not be immediately eliminated under the bill; however, a phase-out is proposed over three years or two, if sufficient state revenue is available.

Among the proposed sales tax changes are

provisions of a separate bill (HF878) passed on the House floor April 13.

Here are other highlights of the omnibus tax package.

Reverse referendum

A section of the bill would require cities and counties of more than 2,500 people to allow citizens to vote on a property tax levy that is higher than the previous year's levy.

To trigger the reverse referendum, 10 percent of the registered voters in the jurisdiction would have to sign a petition within 14 days after the public hearing and adoption of the levy.

The original measure was offered by Rep. Bob Milbert (DFL-South St. Paul), who said he sees it as a method of protecting taxpayers.

The bill also would exempt cities and counties with populations of more than 500 from holding a truth-in-taxation hearing if their proposed property tax levy has not increased over the previous year's levy.

Also included is a provision that would extend levy limits for cities and counties for at least two more years.

Officials from both cities and counties had argued that levy limits would eliminate the

no longer be permitted to build ice rinks, community centers, or other similar facilities with TIF money.

Further, the bill would prohibit TIF funds from being spent on improvements, equipment, and other items whose primary purpose is decorative or aesthetic.

Entities that violate state law regarding TIF could lose their right to form tax-increment financing districts for up to five years.

Many communities have come to rely on TIF districts to create economic development. Using TIF, a local government can create a specific district in which property tax values are frozen.

As a developer proceeds with a project, the taxes generated by the increase in property value over the frozen amount, known as the increment, are captured to finance economic development, usually improvements directly beneficial to the project.

Limited market value

The bill would continue the state's commitment to limited market value, a method of controlling increases in taxable valuation that drive up property taxes.

A provision in the bill would limit the increase in market value to 7 percent of the preceding year's assessment or 15 percent of the difference between the current assessment and the preceding assessment. In prior years, the increase was at 10 percent of the preceding year's assessment or 25 percent of the difference.

The limit would continue to apply to the same classes as in previous years — agricultural homestead and non-homestead, residential and non-homestead, and seasonal recreational residential property.

Early consideration was given to a plan to freeze assessments at their existing level while property tax reform was ongoing.

Lights out on light rail

Political subdivisions would be prohibited from levying a property tax to finance light-rail initiatives, under the omnibus bill.

Under the ban, no property tax money could be used for planning or designing a system, acquiring property, constructing or equipping a system, relocating persons or property, or operating and maintaining the system.

Further, the entity wouldn't be able to transfer funds from other tax revenue accounts to cover light-rail expenses.

Continued on page 14



House page Paul Koll places signs on lawmakers' desks in the House chamber prior to the April 29 floor debate on the omnibus tax bill.

exemptions for companies filming television commercials in the state, counties purchasing equipment and supplies for road maintenance, vehicles given as gifts by individuals, and prizes for games of skill or chance at carnivals and fairs.

The full House has already endorsed both the rebate plan and the income tax cuts, as

need for truth-in-taxation hearings.

Tiff over TIF

Spending tax-increment finance (TIF) dollars to construct or renovate facilities for social, recreational, or conference facilities or for public parks would be prohibited under the omnibus bill. Cities and counties would

Cities and counties would still be able to receive and use federal and state dollars for light rail.

The provision follows on the heels of a decision not to include \$60 million in light-rail funding in the omnibus transportation finance bill (HF2387).

Multi-state businesses

Changes in how Minnesota's large multi-state corporations pay their taxes are included in the omnibus tax bill.

Under existing law, most corporations are required to use a three-factor formula, based on property, payroll, and sales. The tax is weighted most heavily on sales, which means companies that are based in other states but have significant sales here pay the most tax.

Companies that own and operate plants here pay less in corporate taxes.

The new law adds additional weight to the "sales" category and lowers the amounts paid based on property and payroll. The net effect is intended to attract more manufacturing businesses and high-paying jobs to the state.

The change will result in \$44.8 million less in tax revenue flowing into state coffers over the coming biennium.

This old house

Several changes to a section of the state's tax code that allows property tax breaks for refurbishing older homes would be made under the omnibus bill.

It would increase the age at which a house is eligible from 35 years to 45 years old and increase the minimum value of the improvement that must be made in order to qualify from \$1,000 to \$5,000. It would also eliminate the limitation that only three improvements can qualify for the exclusion.

The reforms were offered to assure that only truly aged homes would qualify under the program. The new language offers the tax break only to homes built prior to World War II and excludes homes built in the boom that followed the war.

Ag studies

The omnibus bill contains requirements that two property tax studies related to agricultural land be completed in the coming year.

The first would establish an 11-member task force to study how the classification system, the agricultural property tax law, the open space law, and the agricultural preserves law impact what landowners pay in taxes.

A second study would consider the "feasibility and desirability" of basing agriculture property taxes on production value. Land that would support crops that have a higher value would be taxed at a higher rate.

Both studies would be due in 2000.

Met Council limited

The Metropolitan Council would have its levy limits trimmed under several provisions in the omnibus bill.

The provisions were included because the council has not needed to tax to the maximum in many of its accounts.

Several lawmakers argued that the limits reinforce the idea that taxing entities should levy to the maximum or risk having their levying ability slashed.

Proponents of the move argued that if the council didn't need to levy, it shouldn't have the authority to do so.

Bug farm

The Gordon Vadis farm near Ham Lake will be deemed agricultural property for property tax purposes under a section of the omnibus bill.

Vadis appeared before the Property Tax Division of the House Taxes Committee in February to complain that the Anoka County assessor said he didn't qualify for the agricultural classification. Vadis raises crickets for animal consumption, and he was denied agricultural classification because he wasn't raising food for human consumption.

The provision adds "insects primarily bred to be used as food for animals" to the definition of agricultural property.

Long-term care insurance

Folks who purchase any long-term care insurance policy will be allowed to take a credit, under provisions in the omnibus bill.

Under current law, the policy must include inflation protection in order for premiums to qualify for the credit.

The proposed change allows the credit if the policyholder has been offered the option of purchasing inflation protection.

The original measure was sponsored by Rep. Roxann Daggett (R-Frazee), who said any costs to the state now would be far outweighed by future nursing home expenses, should a significant number of uninsured people require service in coming years.

Offers-in-compromise

The omnibus bill proposes specific guidelines when farmers and others seek arrangements to settle their tax liability.

Under a measure offered originally by Rep. Bill Kuisle (R-Rochester), the commissioner of revenue would have to establish guidelines to determine whether an offer-in-compromise or an offer to make installment payments is adequate and should be accepted.

The guidelines would have to include a

stipulation that the department will not reject an offer-in-compromise from a low-income taxpayer solely on the basis of the amount of the offer.

The bill would also provide an appeal process, should the taxpayer not agree with the department's determination.

Kuisle told the taxes panel that without guidelines, offers-in-compromise are considered on a case-by-case basis, which leads to frustrations and misunderstandings.

Taconite tales

Two proposals dealing with taconite production tax rates and the taconite economic development fund, offered by House Speaker Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), were incorporated into the omnibus bill.

The measure would freeze the taconite tax at the 1998 level of \$2.141 per gross ton for the coming year. The tax had been scheduled to increase by a specific percentage each year in perpetuity.

Proceeds from the taconite tax flowing to the taconite economic development fund would rise from 15.4 cents per ton to 25.4 cents with increases planned over the next nine years.

The Northeast Minnesota Economic Protection Trust Fund and the Environmental Protection Fund would receive lower distributions.

The taconite economic development fund is administered by the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board.

Tax up in smoke

Minnesota residents who smoke are taxed when they purchase tobacco and then are taxed again when they purchase devices to help them quit.

Recognizing that incongruity, the omnibus bill would exempt federally approved smoking cessation devices from sales taxes.

The original measure was offered by Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe), a physician.

Taxing by ZIP

Consumers who have items delivered to their homes may find themselves paying more sales tax than is legal. Many companies use ZIP codes to determine whether a sale is subject to local sales tax, rather than city boundaries.

Under a provision in the omnibus bill, that practice would be prohibited unless the ZIP code is entirely contained in the political subdivision that imposes the local tax.

Rep. Ron Erhardt (R-Edina) sponsored the original measure. Erhardt said he had a constituent who found himself paying extra taxes because of the ZIP code based determinations.

System sometimes makes victims out of survivors

By Grant Martin

This year's National Crime Victim Rights Week — April 26 through May 1 — opened with a somber reminder of the turmoil suffered by crime victims and their families.

The previous week, District Court officials in Dakota County had announced that the trial of the alleged killer of Two Harbors teenager Paul Antonich would be delayed for the fourth time. The delay will allow judges to rule on appeals submitted by prosecutors and defense attorneys.

The trial for John Steven Martin is now scheduled to begin May 10 — almost three years after the crime was committed.

Paul Antonich, who was 17 at the time of his death, was car-jacked in Duluth coming home from church on Aug. 28, 1996. He was taken to another site, beaten, and shot to death. Martin allegedly pulled the trigger. Antonich's body was found in the trunk of his car in a ditch on the Fond du Lac Reservation.

Of the five men charged for the Antonich murder, one pleaded guilty to second-degree murder, two were found guilty of aiding and abetting first-degree murder, and two — Martin and another — still await separate trials.

Antonich's parents had planned to attend the opening day of the trial scheduled for April 26. They spoke instead at the opening press conference for Crime Victim Rights Week.

There they expressed their frustration with the delays.

"We're very disappointed," said Mary Antonich. "We're very upset."

Larry Antonich said the delays simply add to the ongoing grief he feels over his son's murder. "Grief is a 24-hour job and it's the toughest job I've ever had to face," he said. "To deal with the court system on top of that is almost too much."

Marie Bibus, executive director with the Minnesota Center for Crime Victim Services, said emotions felt by the Antoniches are typical of crime victims.

She said the criminal justice process is moving particularly slow in the Antonich case because some of the offenders requested separate trials and all of the defendants requested that the case be moved from Duluth because of the publicity surrounding the crime.



Mary and Larry Antonich of Two Harbors have been waiting for the trial of their son's alleged killer for two and half years. Their son, Paul, was kidnapped and murdered outside of Duluth after a minor car accident in August 1996.

Photo illustration by Tom Olmscheid

"That really makes a lengthy grieving process for the family," she said.

Bibus added that while the defendants have a constitutional right to make such requests, the victims and their families don't have a mechanism to ensure that their interests are considered.

"I think we just need to balance (defendants' rights) with the rights of victims," she said, "or at least offer a little consideration for their lives."

For example, Bibus said the courts don't consider crime victims when they schedule and re-schedule trials. The Antoniches have to take time off from work and find lodging in the area. A two-week delay can be a real ordeal for the victims, she said.

"Somehow we need to get some consideration for the victims in the scheduling," she said.

Minnesota has made a good deal of progress in crime victim issues since 1974, when the first laws were enacted for victims' rights.

Current law requires prosecutors to notify the victim of the terms of any plea agreement made with the offender. Prosecutors must seek input from victims if the offender is referred to a diversion program. And the courts must provide separate waiting facilities for the victims and their families during the trial.

Also under current law, crime victims have a right to make a victim statement to be read at the offender's sentencing. And victims have a right to be notified if an offender seeks to have his or her sentence modified and to be

notified when an offender is released from prison.

The state also provides services to crime victims. In 1998, the state consolidated several victim services into the Minnesota Center for Crime Victims Services.

The center administers the crime victim reparations program. Created in 1974, the program provides financial assistance to victims of crime. The program receives funding from restitution paid by offenders and state and federal inmate wage deductions.

The center also funds 160 different crime victims advocacy agencies, and it does research, training, and advocacy for victims.

The state's Ombudsman for Crime Victims also handles crime victim issues. The ombudsman investigates complaints of unfair treatment of crime victims and witnesses by criminal justice agencies and reviews the state's victim assistance programs.

views the state's victim assistance programs.

This year lawmakers are considering several funding initiatives to assist victims of crime. These provisions are included in the different versions of the omnibus judiciary finance bill (HF2404/SF2221*), currently being considered by a conference committee made up of both House and Senate members.

One such provision in the Senate version would provide \$100,000 to an existing emergency fund. People such as the Antoniches could request reimbursements from this fund to pay the additional lodging and travel expenses caused by the trial's delay. The House version of the bill would provide about \$1.3 million for new crime victim initiatives.

Crime victims have also become active in the legislative process. Last year, the Antoniches successfully lobbied the Legislature to include the Paul Antonich Amendment in the 1998 omnibus crime law.

That amendment classifies that murder committed in the course of a kidnapping is a "heinous crime." A person convicted of such a crime can be sentenced to life without parole, Minnesota's toughest sentence.

After their son's death, the Antoniches became members of an informal club of crime victims and their families, Larry Antonich said, and it is a club they didn't choose to join.

"To have your son or daughter murdered is the highest due you can possibly pay," he said.

Step-by-step study uncovers the stories behind laws

Say you wanted to know just why the Legislature banned “trafficking in skunks” in 1982. Whom should you ask?

Although there might be a few lawmakers who would still recall that debate of 17 years ago, their memories may be a bit sketchy. The best way is to spend a little time at the library and the Minnesota History Center.

Most official state archives are stored at the History Center, as are legislative floor and standing committee minutes and many older audio tape recordings. Audio recordings from the past decade are available through the Legislative Reference Library in the State Office Building.

Below is a list of resources and tips on how best to put together legislative histories and how to track the path of that enigmatic anti-skunk law.

1. Identify the section in *Minnesota Statutes* you want to research.

A trip to any local library will get your legislative research underway. The process is largely a backwards journey.

Start by finding the most recent 15-volume set of *Minnesota Statutes* — the codified laws of the state, the final product of the legislative process. *Minnesota Statutes* is issued every two years, with “pocket parts” to cover odd-numbered years.

Use the subject index to locate chapters in the statutes you want to research.

Skunk trafficking control is located in Chapter 145, which deals with topics of “Public Health.” Section 365 makes it a misdemeanor to “acquire, sell, barter, exchange, give, or purchase any live skunks” or to import or export the little critters.

Even better, if you have access to the Internet, the most recent *Minnesota Statutes* along with a handy search engine are available (www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/statutes.htm).

2. Look for the History notation after each statute section for references to *Laws of Minnesota*.

Every section in *Minnesota Statutes* cross-references chapters and sections for every year in which changes occurred. These reference numbers refer to bills in *Laws of Minnesota*.

In the italicized History note following the anti-skunk statute, “1982 c 591 s 1” appears. That means that the law was passed in 1982 and can be found in its bill form under Chapter 591, Section 1 of that year’s *Laws*. Because no other citations appear, the statute has not been amended since.



Salima Khakoo, public policy coordinator for YWCA Minneapolis, researches the history of a law in the Legislative Research Library on the sixth floor of the State Office Building. The public can research legislative history for all laws at the library, and, for newer legislation, on the Internet.

3. Read through the relevant chapters in *Laws of Minnesota* to determine which ones affected or created the statute you are interested in.

Laws of Minnesota compiles the official text of all bills passed by the Legislature chronologically. *Laws of Minnesota* will also show appropriations provisions, if any; generally, *Minnesota Statutes* will not.

The *Laws of Minnesota* from 1994 to present are also available on the Internet at the site mentioned above. But, because the skunk law was enacted in 1982, you’ll actually have to refer to the bound version of the 1982 *Laws of Minnesota*.

Reading the text of legislation can answer some tricky questions. Chapter 145 of the statutes contains a subsection that appears to have been repealed. But reading the *Laws of Minnesota* shows that the bill had a self-repealing clause — it exempted skunk trading businesses from the export and commerce bans until 1985. That clause was subsequently deleted for the sake of clarity.

4. Note the House and/or Senate File numbers, located in the chapter headings of *Laws of Minnesota*.

The scent of the anti-skunk bill remains fresh. It was passed as Senate File 1443. So the best place to look next is the official record of the state Senate for 1982: the *Journal of the Senate*.

Senate Journals from 1996 to present are available online at www.senate.leg.state.mn.us/journals/index.htm. And House Journals from 1994 to present can be found at www.house.leg.state.mn.us/cc/journals/

[journal.htm](#).

Again, in your skunk quest, you’ll have to refer to the bound editions of the journals.

5. Go to the Numerical Index in the index volume of the *Senate Journal* or *Journal of the House* for the appropriate year. Locate your bill number and the first page reference.

Senate File 1443 was introduced on the floor of the Senate on page 2840 and referred to the Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee.

6. Go through the other *Journal* page references.

A bill might be re-referred, tabled, vetoed, etc. during its serpentine path through the Legislature, so make sure you check all page references in the journals so you understand what happened, when it happened, and who, exactly, was responsible.

The Senate Agriculture Committee recommended that the state crack down on the skunk trade and referred the bill to the Senate floor on Feb. 15, 1982.

Committee reports are printed in full in the journals. For the skunk bill, the Senate committee actually inserted the word “live” before the word “skunk” during its deliberations. Presumably, the original legislation could have applied to *dead* skunks as well.

The last page citation shows that Gov. Al Quie signed the bill into law on March 23, 1982.

7. Check for a companion bill in the Legislature's other chamber by looking in the Companion Bill index in the index volume of either the House or Senate journals.

Senate File 1443's companion was House File 1509. It turns out that the House version was amended to apply to raccoons as well (though that language was stricken by a conference committee). Raccoons? Those friendly, masked substitutes for teddy bears? Why discriminate against them, too? Audio recordings are really the only way to find out.

8. Ask a library aide to help you find committee minutes and audio recordings of committee hearings and floor sessions.

Committee work is at the heart of the legislative process. Often, legislative committees are where the real "action" takes place and where bills take their final form.

Senate "committee books" (which are collections of minutes) go back to 1911, while the House books date from 1919. The exceptions are the two Judiciary committees, which have minutes as far back as 1883.

Minutes will tell you the date of a committee hearing, and you can use that information

to find committee audio recordings. In addition, "committee books" have the texts of amendments offered during hearings.

Tapes of House committee hearings are available back to 1973; Senate committee recordings date to 1973, though there are a few from as early as the mid-1960s. Floor session recordings began in 1973 for both chambers. Any recordings made prior to 1987 for the House and prior to 1989 for the Senate may be found at the History Center. More recent recordings are held by the Legislative Reference Library in the State Office Building.

In the case of the skunk trafficking bill, a lot of the fireworks occurred on the floor of the House. Former Rep. John Brandl got an amendment passed to outlaw the raccoon trade along with skunk commerce. "They're deceptive animals," Brandl explained, "They may appear to be gentle, but they can turn vicious." An original co-author was so mad the bill was amended, he voted against the legislation, claiming (in a rising voice) that Brandl was letting his emotions "interfere with our legislative responsibilities."

The recording of March 10 floor debate also (finally) gets to the heart of the great skunk debate. Former Rep. Robert Reif, the chief author of the bill in the House, said that,

despite jocular newspaper articles to the contrary, the issue was "not a laughing matter." Reif claimed that 80 percent of all Minnesota rabies cases were attributable to skunks. The House agreed with Reif's diagnosis of rabies-infested skunks as "a potential time bomb," and passed the bill by a vote of 76-35.

The trafficking in skunks law is relatively easy to track. In some cases, official committee and floor records will not have the breadth of information you are looking for. Other avenues of inquiry available at the History Center's Weyerhaeuser Reading Room include:

- *Minnesota Rules*. This reference has the text of administrative rules that have been adopted to implement the law. Rules offer more detail on how a statute is actually being administered. The most recent compilation of administrative rules can also be found online at www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/.
- Official records of state agencies, political parties, and other groups concerned with legislation.
- Newspaper articles or editorials referring to the subject.
- Personal and/or public papers of lawmakers involved in the issue.

Research tips to remember

- First, the Legislature is not always efficient. The process can be very confusing. It may make our democratic system more deliberative, but it also makes historical inquiry unavoidably circuitous.
- Be prepared for an onslaught of "legalese." Laws and statutes generally aren't written by writers. Patience and perseverance are your best resources.
- Start with the Internet if you can. If the action you are researching happened in the last few years, you may be able to do the bulk of the research on the Web. If not, at least you will have a better idea what you are in for before you leave the comfort of your home.
- The more recently the state took legislative action, the more material you are likely to find. It is rare for any committee records to exist prior to 1919, while after 1972, tape recordings of committee hearings and floor debates are nearly complete.
- Beware that the History citations in *Minnesota Statutes* may not trace the

- law to its year of origin. For example, the first historical reference for juror compensation (Chapter 593, Section 48) refers to a 1977 law. However, that 1977 law merely recodified previously enacted laws relating to juries. That means laws from several different sections were reassembled under one chapter and renumbered. The first jury compensation law was actually passed in the 19th century.
- Write down dates of legislative action. Dates are your best source for finding minutes or audio recordings with information on a particular bill.
 - Committee minutes are usually not very informative. Although they chronicle formal actions, names, and dates of those who testified, and a list of committee members, they do not really record the substance of the discussions that took place.
 - Archival recordings are fascinating and can bring you closer than any other source to the issue you're looking at.

- With the tapes you'll hear all the nuances of lawmakers' public discussions: everything from sneezes, to snickers, to screams. However, there may be times during your research when it seems like Rosemary Woods might have been the State Archivist: many of the tapes are of poor quality, and a few hearings were inadvertently not recorded.
- Use human resources. If you have any questions, ask the librarians. They are an amazing source of information and are extremely helpful.

The research facilities of the Minnesota History Center are located at 345 Kellogg Blvd. W. in St. Paul, south of the Capitol. It's open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, and from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday. Call (651) 296-2143 or check out the Web site at www.mnhs.org/library/about/index.html for more information.

The Legislative Reference Library and tape room is in the State Office Building, just west of the Capitol. The library is open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. when the Legislature is in session, and the tape room — with committee books and audio tapes — is open Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. You can call (651) 296-3398 or go to www.leg.state.mn.us/lrl/lrl.htm for more information.

Continued from page 4

Likewise, she said, a student is not mandated to be at a public library, and parents should be responsible for their children at such facilities.

Charter schools

Fledgling charter schools would see more state money under the House plan. Funding for building lease costs would jump to \$1,500 per pupil unit from the current level of about \$465 per student.

Grants for start-up costs would also be increased, to a minimum of \$50,000 per school to a maximum of \$250,000, depending on the number of students. And established schools that opened without the benefit of start-up aid would be eligible for some extra money for health and safety initiatives.

Other provisions are aimed at making it easier to create new charter schools. Cities, towns, and educational cooperative boards would be added to the list of entities that can sponsor charter schools, and districts would be required to convert existing schools to charter schools if the majority of full-time teachers at a school petition for the change. Under current law, 90 percent of those teachers must petition to necessitate the conversion.

Also, a nine-member charter school appeals board would be created to approve charter school applications. Currently, those applications are handled by the State Board of Education, which will be abolished at the end of this year under a 1998 law that transfers most of the board's duties to the commissioner of Children, Families and Learning.

"We felt some board or group of people needed to be there to review charter schools," said Seagren, who sponsored most of the charter school provisions.

The omnibus bill would also require school districts that are considering sponsoring a charter school to make the decision in 90 days or less. And, if the district rejects the proposal, the measure would provide for an automatic appeal to the State Board of Education or the new appeals board.

New teachers

The omnibus measure also includes initiatives aimed at improving teacher training and preparing for the expected statewide decline in teachers.

One proposal, sponsored by Cassell, would encourage collaborations between school districts and colleges, universities, or other teacher training institutions. Collaborations could include placing teaching students in K-12 classrooms, under the supervision of licensed teachers, or having licensed teachers assist in education courses at the college or graduate

level. Up to five grants of \$20,000 each for start-up costs would be made for the 1999-2000 school year.

Another plan would allow school districts to provide salary credits for prior experience to new teachers from non-traditional backgrounds. Currently, the Minneapolis School District uses such a plan, under which entry-level teachers with other work backgrounds can earn higher than starting salaries.

Also, under a provision originally sponsored by Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan), education students who have completed their student teaching and are in good standing at the school would be eligible for temporary substitute teacher licenses. Buesgens said many districts have been suffering under a shortage of substitute teachers.

And districts would be required to reserve 25 percent of their staff development funding for mentoring first-year teachers, under a provision originally sponsored by Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL-Winona).

Funding disparities

The bill also includes provisions to address statewide funding disparities between districts. Currently, about 32 percent of school districts' budgets come from local levies, and districts that, for whatever reason, have trouble getting voter approval for levy hikes face recurring funding crunches.

The House proposal would direct almost \$28 million over the upcoming biennium to a new funding component called equity revenue. Equity revenue would provide additional money, on a sliding scale, to districts that have less than the state's average per-pupil funding based on combined state and local revenue.

The plan would also increase the level at which the state "equalizes" local referendum funding. Currently, additional state funds are provided for districts' first \$315 in per-pupil funding from local levies, based on the districts' property tax base. The House plan would raise that level to \$350 for fiscal year 2000 and to \$415 the following year.

"We wanted to attempt to close the gap between the high-spending and low-spending districts and we think this is fair," Seagren said. She said districts including Big Lake, Renville, Montevideo, and Pine City would benefit from the measure.

Also, the bill would create an equity component for the current spending, called compensatory funding, that is directed to districts with high concentrations of poor and non-English speaking students. The measure would continue existing compensatory funding, and it would add about \$12 million over two years in funding for districts that don't have high

enough concentrations of poor students to qualify under the current formula. Seagren said certain suburban districts, like Osseo and Anoka, would benefit from the new funding.

Technology funding

The bill also addresses schools' continuing technology needs.

One provision would continue funding telecommunications access grants for two more years. The grant program, set to expire this year, provides money for districts to upgrade technology and to secure Internet access for students and staff. Ventura did not recommend funding the program in his budget proposal.

"This will enable schools — especially rural districts — to finish up their tasks of providing access to the Internet," Seagren said. Under her bill, the program would receive \$20 million in one time funding in fiscal year 2000.

The measure would also provide individual technology grants, ranging from \$50,000 to \$200,000, to nine school districts across the state. Seagren said the grants are intended to compensate districts that suffered losses when the prevailing wage law was passed, requiring districts to pay prevailing wage for construction contract work.

Some districts that had already bonded for certain projects had to re-bid and often cut technology plans out of their proposals. Several districts received similar technology grants last year, and Seagren said the nine grants this year would help the remaining districts with technology initiatives.

Contract deadline

A proposed deadline of Jan. 15 for settling teachers' salary contracts with school districts was not included in the omnibus measure.

The provision, which was originally added to the bill just before it was approved by the House K-12 Education Finance Committee, was removed by lawmakers in the House Ways and Means Committee. Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) offered an unsuccessful amendment to reinstate the provision on the House floor. His proposal would have imposed a \$25 per pupil unit fine on districts that haven't settled contracts by Jan. 15.

"For many years, there was a Jan. 15 deadline, and 97 percent of districts were settled by then," Entenza said. "Then, two years ago we decided to experiment with not having deadlines, and today a vast majority of contracts are not settled."

A 1989 law imposed the original Jan. 15 deadline, and a 1997 law removed it. And although no one disputes that many more contracts were settled earlier under the *Continued on page 19*

Capitol tours . . .

Spring brings stream of curious kids to Capitol

By Paul Wahl

School children visiting the Capitol these days aren't much interested in when it was built or where the marble for the floors came from.

They're mostly interested in Gov. Jesse Ventura.

"Where's Jesse?" they often ask.

"Can we meet him?"

Ask any of the 18 part-time Capitol tour guides and they'll tell you — Ventura is a hit with kids.

"I think you could have Hubert H. Humphrey back from the dead here and they'd still want to see Jesse," quipped one guide.

Spring is a popular time of year for school groups to make their pilgrimage, according to Carolyn Kompelien, manager of the Capitol Historic Site for the Minnesota Historical Society.

"May is completely booked up already and then some," said Kompelien from her office amid the pipes and wiring of the Capitol basement. "Some school groups have had their reservation in since last fall."

Kompelien's army of guides conducted 2,900 tours during fiscal year 1998. Each tour lasts 45 minutes, with between 35 and 40 being conducted each day.

For school groups, the content is tailored to the interests and age of the students. In the summer, many preschoolers visit. During the school year, a tour guide may entertain students ranging from first-graders through high school seniors.

Many guides inquire whether the group is studying politics or architecture or Minnesota history at the onset of a tour.

"Sometimes they're just here to see what



Hundreds of school children from all over Minnesota come to visit the Capitol nearly every day during the school year, but spring is the busiest time for tours.

there is to see," Kompelien said.

The challenge for guides always is to keep the interest of the children and provide them with a learning experience.

Sometimes that's easier than at other times, although most of the guides say the students are mostly well-behaved and extremely curious. Youngsters are always reminded to be respectful of the people who work in the Capitol.

Guides say the most knowledgeable visitors are sixth graders, because often those students have been studying Minnesota history and have all of the details fresh in their minds.

Most tours begin on the front steps where

the first challenge is to get the group together and get their attention. From there, the groups move into the rotunda where the significance of the star pattern in the floor is related.

Then, the tour may go in any of a number of directions, depending upon what's happening. If the Senate is in session, the group will usually be taken to see the House chamber. This late in the session, there are often times when both houses are in session.

But that's not a disadvantage, says Kompelien, who has been in her position since 1988.


"The level of activity is a learning experience in itself," she said.

The quadriga, the golden horse-drawn chariot perched above the main entrance of the Capitol, is also a popular attraction for students. When conditions permit, they are given the opportunity to see the statuary up close by venturing onto the Capitol roof.

Throughout the tour, guides are bombarded with questions about how big things are, how much they weigh, and how much they cost. They're asked how many people work in the Capitol and are often quizzed on the details of the life of Cass Gilbert, the architect of the Capitol.

Each guide is required to undergo a month-long training session. Many of them work part time year-round, although business picks up when the Legislature is in session.

"They have to enjoy being with people," Kompelien said. "It does show if they don't enjoy it."

Enjoyment doesn't appear to be a major problem. Many of the guides have been around for years and they range from graduate students to grandmothers. 

Continued from page 18

deadline, opponents of the policy say settling contracts later is not necessarily harmful for students or teachers.

"Why have a gun to the school board's head because they know the unions can just hold out until Jan. 15 and then the school district gets fined," said Rep. Bill Haas (R-Champlin). "So now we're taking money away from schools because (teachers) didn't want to settle."

Summer school

The bill would also provide almost \$2.3 million over the next biennium to fund basic skills summer school programs, under a provision backed by Rep. Bob Ness (R-Dassel).


Districts could receive the funding for students who do not pass a basic skills test in reading, writing, or mathematics. The governor's proposal did not include funding for that provision.

All-day kindergarten

The House plan would not continue to fund all-day kindergarten pilot programs around the state. The first-grade preparedness program was initiated in 1996, with \$5 million in spending, and it was given a \$1.5 million funding boost in the 1998 omnibus education law. Proponents of the program say that attending all-day kindergarten dramatically increases children's academic and social skills.

Entenza offered an unsuccessful amendment on the House floor that would have continued funding all-day kindergarten, but opponents said districts could choose to fund that program or other initiatives if they receive extra money, as proposed, from the general formula.

Help with English

And the omnibus bill would increase funding for students who speak little or no English. Money for limited English proficiency programs would be raised from the current \$190 per pupil unit to \$365 per pupil unit. Seagren said those funds would mostly benefit the Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. 



Visiting the Minnesota State Capitol complex can be a rewarding and educational experience for everyone. There are buildings to explore and tours to take almost any time you choose to visit. And when the Legislature is in session during the first part of every year, there are floor sessions to observe, committee meetings to attend, and legislators to meet. Remember that this is your state Capitol, and you are always welcome.

How to get here

Location

The Capitol complex is north of I-94, just minutes from downtown St. Paul. It is accessible from the east and west on I-94, and from the north and south on I-35E.

I-94 eastbound: Exit at Marion Street. Turn left. Go to Aurora Avenue and turn right. Go one block, cross Rice Street, and enter Parking Lot D.

I-94 westbound: Exit at Marion Street. Turn right. Go to Aurora Avenue and turn right. Go one block, cross Rice Street, and enter Parking Lot D.

I-35E northbound: Exit at Kellogg Boulevard. Turn left. Go to John Ireland Boulevard and turn right. Metered parking spaces line both sides of the boulevard.

I-35E southbound: Exit at University Avenue. Turn right. Go to Rice Street and turn left. Go one block and turn left to enter Parking Lot D.

Parking

Public metered parking is available in Lot Q, north of the Capitol at Cedar Street and Sherburne Avenue; Lot D, next to the State Office Building off Rice Street on Aurora Avenue; Lot F, directly behind the Transportation Building; Lot K, across from the Armory on Cedar Street (enter from 12th Street); and on the orange level of the Centennial Office Building Ramp at Cedar Street and Constitution Avenue. All-day metered parking is available in Lot Q. Capitol Security personnel will issue tickets for expired meters.

All-day parking permits may be purchased for \$3.50 from Plant Management on the third floor of the Ford Building. Cash or checks are accepted and correct change is appreciated. For more information, call (651) 297-3993.

Outdoor handicapped parking is available in Lot O, which is on the northeast side of the Capitol, and in Lot F.

Indoor handicapped parking is available on the lower level of the State Office Building Ramp (use the call box at the ramp entrance to gain entry); on the blue level of the Centennial

Office Building Ramp; and on the entry level of the Administration Building Ramp (two stalls).

There are two handicapped entrances to the Capitol. One is on the northeast side of the building, just off Lot O; the other is a drop-off entrance under the south main steps at the front of the building.

Since parking is limited during legislative sessions, busing may be easier. Freeway express bus service is available. Bus number 94B takes you to the Capitol and the State Office Building. Call the Transit Information Center at (651) 349-7000 for schedule and route information.

What to do

Tours

Tours of the Capitol are offered through the Capitol Historic Site Program of the Minnesota Historical Society.

Tour guides lead the 45-minute tours on the hour Mondays through Fridays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (last tour leaves at 4 p.m.); Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. (last tour leaves at 3 p.m.); and Sundays between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. (last tour leaves at 3 p.m.). The tours are free of charge and begin at the Capitol's information desk at the end of the corridor to the right of the main entrance. Brochures in about 20 foreign languages also are available there.

Tour participants may request customized tours that emphasize either the building or state government.

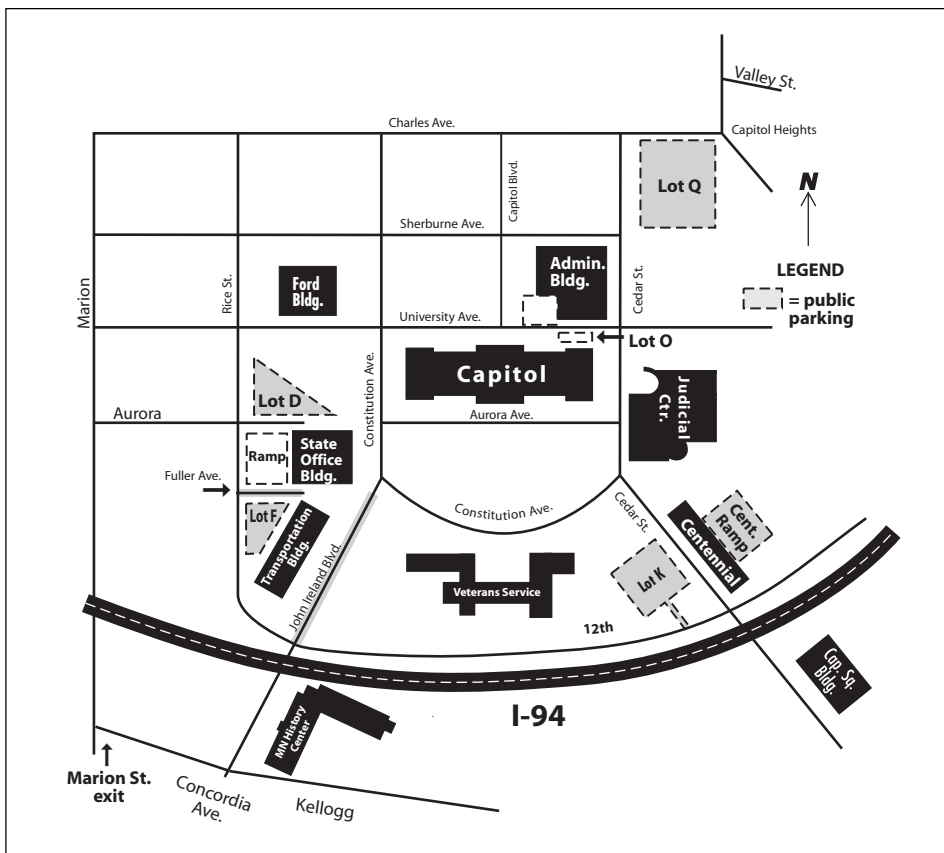
Historical society officials ask that groups of 10 or more call at least two weeks in advance to reserve a tour time.

The society offers "Voice of the People: Your Role in Minnesota Government," a half-day session for students in grades 9-12.

Also, special tour events are scheduled monthly throughout the year. Some of these events entail admission fees; others are free. A special events guide is available upon request.

For a recorded message regarding tours and events, call (651) 297-3521.

For more information about the tours or to reserve a time, call the Capitol Historic Site Program, (651) 296-2881.



Legislative sessions

Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate debate bills when the Legislature is in session.

At the beginning of a legislative session, the pace of floor sessions is generally slow as new bills are assigned to committees and non-controversial items are discussed. At about the session's midpoint, however, the legislative pace quickens.

The House usually meets at 2:30 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays, and the Senate meets at 11:30 a.m. Mondays and at 9 a.m. Thursdays during the first few weeks. House floor sessions are scheduled for the afternoon because committees meet in the morning and early afternoon. As the session nears the end, however, both bodies may meet several times a day, often into the night.

All House and Senate floor sessions are open to the public. Visitors interested in observing these sessions may call the House Chief Clerk's Office, (651) 296-2314, or Senate Information, (651) 296-0504, with questions. Spectators may sit in the galleries of either chamber.

Committee meetings

Visitors wanting to attend a committee meeting may call the committee hotlines for prerecorded messages with the meeting times and agendas for each day: House, (651) 296-9283; Senate, (651) 296-8088. Printed agendas for the week also appear in each issue of the *Session Weekly* and the *Senate Briefly*.

Committee meetings are open to the public. When a public hearing is scheduled, the committee may listen to comments from the audience (when time permits) in addition to the scheduled speakers. Committees have different policies on hearing testimony depending upon their size and workload. Informational handouts that committee members receive during meetings or hearings are considered public information and are available to the audience on a first-come, first-served basis.

Major proposals often have several public hearings so committee members may listen to all arguments for and against a bill.

Each committee has a chair, vice chair, administrator, and legislative assistant. A list of committees and members is available in the House Public Information Office in Room 175, State Office Building, or the Senate Information Office in Room 231, State Capitol.

Groups and individuals wishing to testify before a committee should call the appropriate committee's legislative assistant well in advance of the meeting and ask to be placed on the agenda. Committees prefer requests one week in advance but will accept later notification when unexpected issues appear on the committee schedule. A brochure containing tips on testifying at legislative committee hear-

ings is available from the House Public Information Office.

Dining

Most buildings in the Capitol complex have their own cafeterias. The small State Office Building cafeteria is usually open only when the Legislature is in session, but it will remain open year-round during the restoration of the Capitol cafeteria, due to be completed in 2000. A large, year-round cafeteria is available in the Transportation Building.

Also, there are many restaurants within walking distance. On Rice Street, there is Benjamin's Restaurant and Lounge located inside the Kelly Inn, Cafe Capitol, the Lagoon Vietnamese Restaurant, White Castle, and El Bravo Mexican Restaurant. On University Avenue, there is McDonald's, Burger King, Mai Village, and other restaurants. There also are dozens of restaurants only minutes away in downtown St. Paul. Bus rides downtown cost 25 cents. Bus stops are located on Constitution Avenue.

Group visits

Sometimes groups plan a "legislative day" at the Capitol in order to express a particular viewpoint to legislators.

Rooms for special conferences or speakers can be reserved by calling the State Office Building room scheduler at (651) 296-5408 or the Capitol room scheduler at (651) 296-0866.

If group members want to meet with their individual legislators or testify before a committee (see "Committee meetings"), arrangements should be made at least a week in advance.

Often such groups have members wear a distinctive name tag or badge to indicate their concern about a particular issue.

Groups planning a trip to the Capitol should remember that seating is fairly limited in some committee rooms — particularly when the topic is controversial.

E-mail schedules

Anyone with e-mail can receive both House and Senate committee schedules.

To receive the House schedule, send a message to:

listserv@hsched.house.leg.state.mn.us

Leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message, enter:

subscribe h-schedules

To receive the Senate schedule, send a message to:

listserv@senate.leg.state.mn.us

Leave the subject line blank, and in the body of the message, enter:

subscribe sen-schedules

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

175 State Office Building
(651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550

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

Most of what this office publishes can be viewed on the Legislature's World Wide Web page. To connect, point your web browser at: <http://www.leg.state.mn.us>

House Television Services

216C State Capitol (651) 297-1338

House Television Services is responsible for live coverage of House floor sessions and some committee hearings. Such coverage is aired in the Twin Cities area on KTCI-TV, Channel 17. The House also broadcasts via satellite statewide. Outstate residents should check with local cable operators for time and channel information or the office's Web site at: <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/htv/htv.ssi>

All televised floor sessions and committee hearings are close-captioned for people with hearing impairments.

Chief Clerk's Office

211 State Capitol (651) 296-2314

The Chief Clerk's Office provides copies of bills at no charge, all agendas for House sessions, and the Journal of the House.

House Index Department

211 State Capitol (651) 296-6646

The House Index Department, a part of the Chief Clerk's Office, has a computerized index available for public use. House Index lists bills by committee, topic, author, file number, and other categories. The office can also give you the current status of legislation.

Senate Information Office

231 State Capitol (651) 296-0504

The Senate Information Office is responsible for all information about the Senate, including the committee schedule, bill status, legislator information, and the distribution of bill copies.

Senate Media Services

B-44 State Capitol (651) 296-0264

Senate Media Services, a bipartisan office, produces television programs, multi-media productions, scriptwriting, photography and graphics. It offers live coverage of the Senate floor sessions and some committee hearings.

Governor's Desk

CH87-CH112

Bills await governor's action

Once a bill has passed both the House and the Senate in identical form, it's ready to be sent to the governor for consideration. The governor has several options when considering a bill. The governor can:

- sign the bill and it will become law;
- veto the bill;
- line-item veto individual items within an appropriations bill; or
- do nothing, which results in the bill becoming law in the first year of the biennium.

The timing of these actions is as significant as the actions themselves.

In the first year of the biennium, the important thing to remember is that the

governor has three days from the time of "presentment" to veto a bill. If the governor doesn't sign the bill within this time frame, it will become law with or without his signature. (Sundays are not counted in the three-day time limit, but holidays are.)

Only on appropriations bills can the governor exercise the line-item veto authority. This option allows the governor to eliminate the appropriation items to which he objects. As with all vetoes, the governor must include a statement listing the reasons for the veto with the returned bill. Here, too, the timetable is within three days after the governor receives the bill.

A two-thirds vote of the members in each house is needed to override a veto. But

because only the governor can call a special session of the Legislature, anything vetoed after the Legislature adjourns is history — at least until the next year.

The governor's veto authority is outlined in the Minnesota Constitution (Article IV, Section 23).

Internet access to this information is available at:

<http://www.mainserver.state.mn.us/governor/>

(Select "It's a New Day" and then click on "Legislative Logs")

Key:

CH=Chapter; HF=House File; SF=Senate File

CH	HF	SF	Description	Signed	Vetoed
87	872*	682	Construction contracts environmental liability modifications.	4/23/99	
88	528*	1259	Undreground fuel storage tanks specifications requirements.	4/23/99	
89	627*	616	Washington County Housing and Redevelopment Authority commissioners term modification.	4/23/99	
90	1968*	1827	Medicare supplemental insurance regulation provisions modifications.	4/23/99	
91	1975	1920*	State archaeologist position appointment process modification.	4/23/99	
92	1248	1528*	Harmful exotic species provisions modifications.	4/23/99	
93	1046	1324*	Commercial motor vehicle disqualification and violations modifications.	4/23/99	
94	566	673*	Health plans network shadow contracting restriction.	4/23/99	
95	1944	1470*	Paul Bunyan state trail route modification.	4/23/99	
96	896	854*	Counties, cities, or towns lawful land uses termination prohibition.	4/23/99	
97	1178*	1253	Landlords' prelease deposits acceptance regulation.	4/26/99	
98	142*	1634	Subsequent controlled substance conviction definition expanded.	4/26/99	
99	1003*	840	Legislative Audit Commission modifications.	4/26/99	
100	1150	1182*	Funeral or burial insurance sales restrictions eliminated.	4/26/99	
101	101	1527*	Convicted sexual offenders prohibited from school board candidacy.	4/26/99	
102	1309	1273*	Nursing home administrators licensing and examiners board modifications.	4/26/99	
103	661	832*	Small company securities offering registration modifications.	4/27/99	
104	1035	1017*	Marriage dissolution summonses alternative dispute resolution requirements.	4/27/99	
105	1052	451*	Uniform Commercial Code agricultural crops financing modifications.	4/27/99	
106	462	303*	Seat belt use evidence admissibility clarification.		4/27/99
107	877	1218*	Re-employment insurance housekeeping changes.	4/27/99	
108	451	436*	Emergency telephone service (911) dispatchers liability immunity.	4/27/99	
109	984	983*	Psychologists licensing and regulation provisions.	4/27/99	
110	893	1041*	Warehouse operators regulations modified.	4/27/99	
111	1125*	1087	Local correctional fees imposition responsibility transferred.	4/27/99	
112	1*	106	Agricultural assistance and tax relief.	filed without signature	

Monday, April 26

HF2418—Otremba (DFL) Jobs & Economic Development Policy

Eagle Bend wastewater funding provided, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2419—Anderson, I. (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Consolidated conservation land titles held by the state conveyed to counties.

HF2420—Abrams (R) Ways & Means

Omnibus tax bill and money appropriated.

HF2421—Jennings (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Cemetery law clarified and reorganized.

HF2422—Seifert, M. (R) Education Policy

Student state grant stipend minimum reduced.

Bill Introductions

HF2418-HF2432

HF2423—Tunheim (DFL) Civil Law

Motor vehicle forfeiture laws studied and task force created.

HF2426—Seifert, M. (R) Education Policy

Post-secondary enrollment options program eligibility modified requiring students to pass basic skills tests.

Tuesday, April 27

HF2424—Rukavina (DFL) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

BWCA and Superior National Forest; state and federal landholdings consolidated through land exchange, Children's state forest established, and state officers and employees duties and powers specified.

HF2425—Smith (R) Civil Law

Landlord and tenant law recodified.

Thursday, April 29

HF2427—Ozment (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Propane education and research act adopted and council created.

HF2428—Kahn (DFL) Crime Prevention

DNA; postconviction process created for obtaining forensic evidence demonstrating innocence.

HF2429—Howes (R) Environment & Natural Resources Policy

Surface water management task force established and study required.

HF2430—Davids (R) Commerce

Home bank protection; banking institution main office relocation requirements modified.

HF2431—Anderson, I. (DFL) Governmental Operations & Veterans Affairs Policy

Minnesota Historical Society voyageurs' interpretive center constructed, bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2432—Biernat (DFL) Education Policy

Minneapolis School Board membership modified providing five elected and two mayor-appointed members.

Coming Up Next Week . . . May 3 - 7, 1999

Committee Schedule

9 a.m.

**Conference Committee
Family and early childhood
education omnibus bill
HF1467/SF2222**
112 State Capitol
Chrs. Rep. Barb Sykora,
Sen. Pat Piper.

9:45 a.m.

**RULES & LEGISLATIVE
ADMINISTRATION**
118 State Capitol
Chr. Rep. Tim Pawlenty
Agenda: Calendar for May 3rd.

10 a.m.

The House meets in session.

30 minutes
following the House or Senate
session (whichever adjourns later)

**Conference Committee
Judiciary Finance omnibus bill
HF2404/SF2221**
5 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Sherry Broecker,
Sen. Randy Kelly.

TUESDAY, May 4

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

15 minutes
following the House or Senate
session (whichever adjourns later)

**Conference Committee
Higher education omnibus bill
HF2380**
118 State Capitol
Chrs. Rep. Peggy Leppik,
Sen. LeRoy A. Stumpf.

30 minutes
following the House or Senate
session (whichever adjourns later)

**Conference Committee
Judiciary Finance omnibus bill
HF2404/SF2221**
5 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Sherry Broecker,
Sen. Randy Kelly.

WEDNESDAY, May 5

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

30 minutes
following the House or Senate
session (whichever adjourns later)

**Conference Committee
Judiciary Finance omnibus bill
HF2404/SF2221**
5 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Sherry Broecker,
Sen. Randy Kelly.

THURSDAY, May 6

30 minutes
following the Senate session

**Conference Committee
Judiciary Finance omnibus bill
HF2404/SF2221**
5 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Sherry Broecker,
Sen. Randy Kelly.

FRIDAY, May 7

9 a.m.

The House meets in session.

30 minutes
following the House or Senate
session (whichever adjourns later)

**Conference Committee
Judiciary Finance omnibus bill
HF2404/SF2221**
5 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Sherry Broecker,
Sen. Randy Kelly.

Schedule is subject to change.
For information updates,
call House Calls at
(651) 296-9283.

All meetings are open to the
public.

Sign language interpreter
services:

(651) 224-6548 v/tty

To have the daily and weekly
schedules delivered to your
e-mail address, send a mes-
sage to:

listserv@hsched.house.

leg.state.mn.us

In the body of the message
type:

subscribe h-schedules

MONDAY, May 3

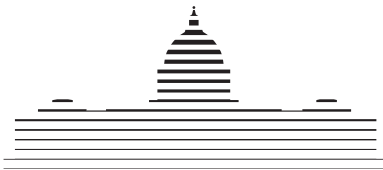
8 a.m.

CIVIL LAW

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Smith
Agenda: HF2425 (Smith) Recodifying
the landlord and tenant law.

Conference Committee Omnibus transportation bill HF2387

316 State Capitol
Chrs. Rep. Carol Molnau,
Sen. Janet Johnson.



MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
175 STATE OFFICE BUILDING
ST. PAUL, MN 55155-1298

Speaker of the House: Steve Sviggum
Majority Leader: Tim Pawlenty
Minority Leader: Thomas W. Pugh

MINNESOTA INDEX

Minnesota courts

Cases in which a petition for Minnesota Supreme Court review was denied, 1998	610
Total number of cases in which the Supreme Court issued an opinion, 1998	164
Decisions reversed in opinions issued by the Supreme Court, 1998	44
Reversed and remanded to lower court	10
Decisions that were affirmed in opinions issued by the Supreme Court, 1998	60
Affirmed in part, reversed in part	10
Affirmed in part, remanded in part	2
Affirmed in part, reversed in part and remanded	4
Court of Appeals filings in 1998 that were criminal cases, as percent	25.3
Civil cases	33.9
Family cases	17.1
Increase in number of trials in Minnesota courts from 1986 to 1996, as percent	41
Increase in the number of judges in Minnesota courts from 1986 to 1996, as percent	12
New District Court judgeships requested from the 1999 Legislature	18
Portion of judicial workload in 1997 that involved criminal cases, as percent	34.8
Civil cases	30.0
Family cases	17.4
Juvenile cases	11.7
Probate cases	6.2
State judicial branch operating budget for 1997, in millions	\$171.2
State funding for judicial branch, in millions	\$94.5
County funding for judicial branch (estimated), in millions	\$76.7
1997 operating budget for Minnesota Supreme Court, in millions	\$3.9
Court of Appeals	\$5.9
Trial courts	\$68.4
Civil legal services	\$5.9
State Law Library	\$1.8
State court administration	\$8.4
Annual salary of Supreme Court associate justice	\$104,626
Court of Appeals associate judge	\$98,585
District Court judge	\$92,544
Appellate filing fee (Supreme Court and Court of Appeals)	\$200
Fee for accelerated Supreme Court review	\$100
Court fee for marriage dissolution (each party)	\$122
For marriage license	\$70

Sources: *Minnesota State Courts, Annual Report 1997, State Court Administration Office; Minnesota State Courts, Annual Report 1998, State Court Administration Office; and The Minnesota Judiciary: A Guide for Legislators, November 1998, House Research Department.*

For more information



For general information, call:
House Information Office
(651) 296-2146 or
1-800-657-3550

To obtain a copy of a bill, call:
Chief Clerk's Office
(651) 296-2314

To find out about bill introductions or
the status of a specific bill, call:
House Index Office
(651) 296-6646

For up-to-date recorded message
giving committee meeting times and
agendas, call:
Committee Hotline
(651) 296-9283



The House of Representatives can be
reached on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us>



Teletypewriter for the hearing impaired.
To ask questions or leave messages, call:
TTY Line (651) 296-9896 or
1-800-657-3550

Check your local listings to watch House
committee and floor sessions
on TV.

This document can be made available
in alternative formats.