

SESSION WEEKLY

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CLIMATE COULD FRONT JOB GROWTH
BILLS MAKING THEIR WAY
LOCKING UP THE LIQUOR
MIGHTY DUCKS MIGHTY REQUEST

HF1405 - HF1704

SESSION WEEKLY

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

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On the cover: Ellen Beres plays the violin as the orchestra from Oakland Junior High School performs March 9 in the Rotunda.

— Photo by: Tom Olmscheid

Weathering the economic storm

Minnesota's adverse climate could front new job growth

By SUSAN HEGARTY

William Martin is confident in his employment abilities, but a series of hard-luck incidents caused him to become unemployed, divorced and in transitional housing.

"I do want to be a good manager of my own life. The majority of the time I do it on my own, but sometimes I do ask for help. I have no shame," said Martin, who is raising two daughters after his 2006 divorce.

After gaining experience in the building trades through Goodwill Easter Seals, Martin landed a series of construction jobs; but without a union card, he'd repeatedly get laid off during the off-season and be in search of the next job. Car problems exacerbated his difficulties. Then, laid off from his job as a forklift operator at 3M, he entered a vocational program called Summit Academy Opportunities Industrialization Center in North Minneapolis. Four-fifths of the center's 500 annual students enter the program unemployed, said Louis King, center president. The OIC is one of several operated throughout the state that prepares the unemployed for construction jobs.

Besides teaching Martin the hands-on skills he desires to become a welder, Summit Academy can hook him up with community support programs to help him with transportation, housing or legal needs.

"I'm just trying to get into a field where I can stay employed. I'm not worried about my work ethics," said the 45-year-old student.

More bill for their buck

Martin is like thousands of others affected by the recession.

Nearly half of the 20,700 jobs lost by Minnesotans in January came from the manufacturing industry, according to the Department of Employment and Economic Development. Between 2008 and 2010, the recession may be to blame for 120,000 lost jobs, said State Economist Tom Stinson. So, while the federal stimulus package could create an estimated 45,000 new jobs for Minnesotans, it's merely a start.

So where does government get the most bang for its' buck?

Rep. Jeremy Kalin (DFL-North Branch) thinks he has a win-win-win solution.

Kalin sponsors HF680, legislation that could employ thousands to improve the energy-efficiency of public buildings, thereby reducing reliance on state aid for heating bills.

Kalin has been on a fast track with his energy bill, presenting details to five House divisions. Comments and revisions are being made along the way, and the bill is expected to move through several more committees before landing on the House floor in one or two weeks ...

he hopes. A companion, SF657, sponsored by Sen. Yvonne Prettners-Solon (DFL-Duluth), was recommended to pass by the Senate Energy, Utilities, Technology and Communications Committee and referred back to the Senate Finance Committee.

The bill designates the Office of Energy Security as the fiscal agent for federal energy-related stimulus funds, and the office would work with other state departments to administer new and existing energy-saving programs.

First Reading continued on page 4



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Summit Academy students level an energy-efficient window.

First Reading continued from page 3

New green jobs coupled with energy-efficiency upgrades in schools and other public buildings are expected to result in net savings to the state's unemployment and utility coffers.

A window replacement program is one of the energy initiatives.

Minnesota is often referred to as the "Silicon Valley of Windows," and window companies, such as Andersen Corporation, which laid off 400 workers in January, stand to benefit from the stimulus package. Marvin Windows and Doors has not experienced layoffs.

"When the demand is there, we'll do what it takes to fulfill that demand," said John Kirchner, public relations manager for Marvin Windows and Doors. Headquartered in Warroad, population 1,700, the company employs 2,800 people, the vast majority from Minnesota, Kirchner said.

Besides window replacement, homes and public buildings may also be eligible for other energy upgrades through a weatherization program.

About \$134 million in federal stimulus money is expected for weatherizing low-income houses and rental units, said Kalin. This cash infusion to the state program would mean safer living conditions in more homes at an accelerated pace. Currently, fewer than 3,800 Minnesota homes are weatherized per year. The stimulus funds could boost that number up to 35,000. Five hundred energy auditors will be needed to assess homes, plus thousands of energy technicians to perform the work. Kalin proposes that unemployed workers be given priority for training and hiring practices.

"They not only replace unemployment checks with paychecks for ... potentially thousands of Minnesotans within 90 days of the governor's signature on this bill, it also saves us tax dollars on the public renovation side. It saves us tax dollars on the low-income heating assistance households that rely on that public assistance. By tightening up those homes and weatherizing those homes, we'll move down a road where hopefully within our lifetime ... we might be able to wean Minnesota off of the need for ... low income heating assistance," said Kalin.

Energy auditors would look for problems with insulation, mold, fire hazards, or potential explosions from faulty boilers, furnaces and water heaters.

To meet the demand for trained energy auditors and installers, DEED, together with OES and the Office of Higher Education, would develop a plan to spend stimulus funds on training programs.

For example, Dunwoody College of



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

William Martin is a student at Summit Academy Opportunities Industrialization Center in the 100 Hard Hats program.

Technology in Minneapolis would offer the Residential Energy Auditor training program through a grant provided by the Office of Energy Security. OICs, such as Summit Academy, could also receive funding to provide weatherization technician training.

The OES could also enlist help from up to 29 nonprofit organizations, known as the Minnesota Community Action Partnership. Scattered throughout the state, these CAP agencies have traditionally delivered weatherization and energy assistance at the local level.

"As soon as you get us the money, we're ready to spend it," said Patrick McFarland, executive director for Anoka County CAP, which provided emergency energy assistance to more than 4,100 households last year.

Accountability and transparency

Advocates for the disadvantaged and minorities have been part of the evolution of the bill since its Feb. 9 introduction. According to the bill, preferential hiring and training is to be given to persons from communities where unemployment is disproportionately high.

"We want a workforce that reflects the demographics of Minnesota," said the Rev. Paul Slack, pastor of New Creation Church and a member of ISAIAH, a coalition for racial and economic justice. "African-Americans and other people of color have chronically been out of work for decades," Slack told a House division last month.


In debate over non-compliant hiring practices by the Department of Transportation,

Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul) said, "It takes on special emotion now because we read in the newspaper that there is a huge infusion of federal money intended to put people to work ... and the questions have to do with, will it put everyone to work equally?"

Ron Elwood, an attorney at the Legal Service Advocacy Project, echoed the need for job equality. "I think the Legislature should make it unambiguously clear what their objectives are with respect to ensuring the fair and proportional inclusion of communities of color, low-income communities and women in the mix."

Electrician Al Rademacher, who was at the Capitol for IBEW Day on the Hill Feb. 18, said 35 percent of his union members have been out of work. "There needs to be a wage structure so they're not one step away from welfare. We need to have jobs where people can have livable wages."

Kalin repeatedly said he did not want this bill to create the kind of low-wage jobs where applicants find it necessary to fill out both an employment and a state-assistance application.

The bill requires the OES to give a progress report by Sept. 1, 2009, with a complete accounting of the following benchmarks: projects funded, average wage of jobs created/retained, energy savings calculation for each project, fund balances and training provided along with the number of trainees and compliance reports. Subsequent quarterly reports would be due through September 2010. 

Editor's note: The following Highlights are coverage of select bills heard in House committees and other House activities held March 5-12. Designations used in Highlight summaries: HF-House File; SF-Senate File; Ch-Chapter; and *- the bill version considered by the House or the bill language signed by the governor.

AGRICULTURE

Agriculture data public or private?

The Agriculture Department relies on farmer participation in various efforts to collect data about land use, agricultural practices and natural resources management. However, farmers can be reluctant to give out information because their identity and land locations could then be considered public information. A temporary embargo went into effect last February making certain

information private that would otherwise be considered public.

Because the provision will sunset June 1, 2009, Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) sponsors HF1095 that would amend the state's Data Practices Act and create a presumption that certain data collected by the department during research or monitor-assessment be classified as private. That could include: names, addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses of study participants or cooperators; and the location of a research study site and global positioning data. However, private/nonpublic data could be disclosed with permission of the subject or if the department deems that withholding data seriously threatens human health or the environment or hinders law enforcement.

The bill was approved March 9 by the House Agriculture, Rural Economies and Veterans Affairs Committee and now awaits action by the House Civil Justice Committee.

Its companion, SF1247, sponsored by Sen.

Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley), awaits action by the Senate Agriculture and Veterans Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

BONDING

Making bond sales more competitive

In a volatile market, an attempt is being made to make bond sales more competitive.

Sponsored by Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), HF918 would permit the use of either a competitive public sale or a negotiated private sale of the state's general obligation bonds.

Kathy Kardell, assistant commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget, said the bill would give the state flexibility to ensure continued access to the municipal bond market under current conditions, which are volatile and uncertain. She added that a private sale would permit the state to implement a program to access retail investors, something

YOUTHFUL AWARENESS



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Allie Lane, *left*, with the Union for Youth in Northfield and Leeaja Solomon with Bolder Options in South Minneapolis participate in the dropping of banners over the railing March 5 in the Rotunda as part of the "Rally for Youth Day." Youth groups came to the Capitol to bring awareness to the public about youth concerns in the areas of mentoring, early intervention, workforce prevention and out-of-school time.

that can't be done with a public sale. Currently only general obligation bonds are required to be sold by public sale.

In January, Minnesota Management and Budget sold \$400 million worth of bonds in three competitive sales. The sale would have normally occurred in October, but was deferred because of poor market conditions.

The bill was laid over March 10 for possible inclusion in the House Capital Investment Finance Division omnibus bill. A companion, SF1307, sponsored by Sen. Debbie Johnson (R-Ham Lake), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

— S. HEGMAN

CONSUMERS

Selling liquor storage devices

A near tragedy resulted in an invention that could help parents restrict their children's access to alcohol in the home. However, under current law, the device can't be sold at a liquor store, where its inventor thinks would be the appropriate point of sale.

Bob Schmitt of Minnetonka owns Just Encase Products, Inc., and he has a patent pending on a storage unit to help parents secure their liquor supply. He has an arrangement with a major liquor retailer to market his device. But the law needs to be changed for the device to be sold in those establishments.

He told the House Commerce and Labor Committee March 5 of an incident involving a family friend's high school freshman who drank alcohol at home before going to school. She passed out in her first class, before being rushed to the hospital for possible alcohol poisoning.

Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park) sponsors HF159 that would add devices designed to ensure safe storage and monitoring of alcohol in the home to prevent access by underage drinkers to the list of items that can be sold by liquor stores.

The bill was held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus liquor bill. Its companion, SF239, sponsored by Sen. Ron Latz (DFL-St. Louis Park), is scheduled to be heard March 19 by the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

Debtors kept from the deep end

Advocates of payday lending say the short-term, small loans they advance against a paycheck serve people who are short of cash in tough times. Opponents say the "serial borrowing" that results as those loans often roll over and accumulate huge interest charges is like "quicksand" that sinks desperate people deeper in debt.

Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls) introduced a bill that would tighten payday lending rules and create penalties for lenders who violate them.

He told the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division March 6 that HF914 would "strike the appropriate balance" between interests of above-board lenders and those of constituents "challenged by stagnant wages and rising health care costs of the last decade, exacerbated by layoffs, falling home values ... and a collapsing stock market."

The bill would prevent "loan churning"

by limiting lenders to two such loans to the same borrower in a 12-month period, with a few exceptions. Penalties for noncompliance would apply to any loan made to a Minnesota resident, even if made on the Internet.

Opponents said the bill would hurt legitimate businesses making such loans and the customers who rely on them to make ends meet in emergencies.

Industry advocates say limiting loans will drive borrowers to less reputable sources such as Internet lenders, or border states with higher rates.

MUSLIM DAY



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Aarif Ahmad listens as Rep. Steve Gottwalt explains during Muslim Day at the Capitol March 10 the compromise reached on the wearing of head coverings when being photographed for a driver's license. Driver's license photos will now conform to the same rules as those for U.S. passports that allow head covering for religious reasons.

Paul Cassidy, an attorney representing Payday America, the largest Minnesota short-term lender, said its average fee on a \$350 loan is less than 10 percent. In contrast, it costs \$38.50 for a \$300 cash advance from similar Iowa lenders, \$22 for \$100 in Wisconsin and \$15 for \$100 in South Dakota, according to Remi Stone, a lobbyist representing Advance America, which operates in 33 other states.

She said the solution to borrowers' money management woes is educating for "comprehensive financial literacy."

The division approved the bill and sent it to the House Commerce and Labor Committee. Its companion, SF806, sponsored by Sen. Kevin Dahle (DFL-Northfield), is scheduled to be heard March 17 by the Senate Commerce and Consumer Protection Committee.

— K. BERGGREN

No more ticket 'cherry-picking'

With today's sophisticated computer-ticketing technology, thousands of tickets for a popular concert can be sold in a matter of seconds. That may please the entertainment industry, but it has created some questionable ticket reselling practices.

Rep. Joe Atkins (DFL-Inver Grove Heights) said the issue came to his attention when tickets went on sale in early February for Bruce Springsteen concerts, and "consumers didn't think they had ample opportunity to purchase them at face value." He said people were redirected from the Ticketmaster site to TicketsNow, a secondary site the company owns, where they had the opportunity to pay considerably more than the ticket's face value.

Atkins sponsors HF819 that would prohibit the initial Internet ticket selling entity from offering tickets greater than their face value and establishing a seven-day waiting period before offering tickets through a reseller business.

In the Springsteen situation, Atkins told the House Commerce and Labor Committee March 5, sellers were "cherry-picking the very best tickets and not making them available to the average consumer when they first went on sale." After committee approval, the bill was referred to the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee.

Joseph Freeman, a senior vice president with Ticketmaster, explained that when a request could not be met, such as six tickets together in a certain section, the purchaser could refine their search in the primary market or click to go to a link to a resell market site.

The company voluntarily removed the link to the reseller site. "We've learned a difficult lesson in the last month," he said. "Ticket sales is a supply and demand business. There

is a saying in our business: 'They only make one first row.'"

A companion, SF759, sponsored by Sen. Ron Latz (DFL-St. Louis Park), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— L. SCHUTZ

CRIME

Keep out of police area

When the Interstate 35W bridge collapsed, authorities struggled to keep gawkers and a few entrepreneurs away from the site.

However, when it came time to charge people who would not obey police orders to leave, there were not appropriate charges in some cases.

"Even though you might think that the trespassing statute would apply to cases of that nature, in fact, there was no appropriate provision within the trespass statute that applied," said Dana Banwer, assistant Minneapolis City Attorney in the Civil Division.

"Many of these people were actually charged, but we had to get a little bit creative, along with the police department, and we ended up charging individuals with things like obstructing legal process," she said. "We saw many charges that resulted from failure to obey a lawful order of a police officer. ... (That statute) only applies to individuals who are in vehicles. Bicycles are included under that definition."

Sponsored by Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center), HF1264 would expand the trespass crime to include areas cordoned off "through the use of tape, barriers or other means conspicuously placed and identifying the area as being restricted by the police."

The House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee held the bill over March 10 for possible omnibus bill inclusion. A companion, SF1236, sponsored by Sen. Julianne Ortman (R-Chanhassen), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Minneapolis Police Department Inspector Kris Arneson said the bridge site was first cordoned off as a crime scene area because of the uncertainty as to why the collapse happened.

People who crossed the line included souvenir seekers and investigators for attorneys. "One person was even selling consulting services," she said. "There was a man trying to sell sonar services for recovery under water."

Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Wabasha) questioned what the phrase "other means conspicuously placed" referenced.

Banwer and Arneson said it would most

likely be crime scene tape around a site, but in a larger area like the bridge collapse, it could be sawhorses, cones or squad cars.

— M. COOK

Apprehending juvenile escapees

Law enforcement personnel can forcibly enter a home without permission to apprehend an adult that has escaped from custody or violates their release status.

A bill sponsored by Rep. Tim Kelly (R-Red Wing) would give the same permission to catch juvenile escapees or violators.

The House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee held HF1021 over March 5 for possible omnibus bill inclusion. Awaiting action by the full Senate is its companion, SF534, sponsored by Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing).

"If an adult either violates their release status or escapes from an institution or walks away from an institution, a felony warrant is issued for their arrest," said Cari Gerlicher, director of the Department of Corrections' Office of Special Investigations. "If a juvenile who's been adjudicated delinquent and is committed to the commissioner of corrections and violates a furlough release status or escapes from the secure custody at the facility at Red Wing, the warrant issued for their arrest is a gross misdemeanor."

However, a gross misdemeanor warrant does not permit officers to use forcible entry into a home to return the juvenile to custody, unless they are in fresh pursuit.

— M. COOK

Staff assault sentences

Three additional words could guarantee more time behind bars for some inmates.

The legislative intent of a statute enacted in 1997 was for a prisoner convicted of assaulting a correctional officer to serve the sentence consecutive to the one for which they are imprisoned.

However, Rep. Steve Smith (R-Mound) and Department of Corrections officials say judges do not always interpret statute that way.

Sponsored by Smith, HF1039, attempts to more clearly lay out legislative intent by changing state statute from "run consecutively" to "shall run consecutively, not concurrently."

The House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee held the bill over March 10 for possible omnibus bill inclusion. It has no Senate companion.

Smith said there were 142 assaults on corrections staff in fiscal year 2008, with 31 of those referred for prosecution.

"Staff are absolutely devastated when

they've been assaulted by an inmate, they get prosecuted, they get found guilty and then a judge fails to follow the language and gives them a concurrent sentence or 'time served' so to speak," said Lynn Dingle, the department's deputy commissioner for facilities. "The inmate then comes back to the facility and starts bragging about how you can take a shot at any staff member because nothing is going to happen to you. ... The safety of our staff is foremost for us."

"You can't do underscore in the statute books, but this is about as close as we can get to underscoring what the legislative intent is," said Rep. Paul Kohls (R-Victoria). "It's unfortunate you even have to come forward with the bill."

— M. COOK

Vulnerable, elderly adult protection

A World War II veteran, Alvin, became a prisoner in a neighbor's home during what are supposed to be his golden years.

The 92-year-old never married, had no children and no heirs for his estate. When he became frail, a neighbor befriended him and moved him in with her.

"This woman bilked him out of almost \$200,000 — the money was all spent at casinos," said St. Paul Police Sgt. Ann Bebeau. "She put his home on the market, which he was not able to even know that because he was not ambulatory. He'd be left to sit in a chair all day with no phone accessible, no walker there so he could not get around the house."

Bebeau, who has been investigating elder abuse cases since 2001, said the woman also placed a newspaper ad for a rummage sale of his belongings. "The ad said, 'No reasonable offer denied. Everything must go.'"

Because of current law, Bebeau said the woman was given probation and ordered to repay the funds.

Sponsored by Rep. Debra Hilstrom (DFL-Brooklyn Center), HF818 would make various statutory changes relating to investigations and crimes for maltreatment or financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. She said 52 agencies, entities and organizations were involved in the bill's creation.

Approved March 5 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee and March 11 by the House Labor and Consumer Protection Division, the bill was sent to the House Commerce and Labor Committee. A companion, SF758, sponsored by Sen. Mee Moua (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

Phil Carruthers, director of the Prosecution Division for the Ramsey County Attorney's Office, said bill components include:

- stiffer penalties, including creation of a 20-year felony for conviction of a financial exploitation of a vulnerable adult when the stolen amount exceeds \$35,000;
- immunity for any business or financial institution that acts on good faith in telling authorities about suspected maltreatment or financial exploitation;
- an increase in the statute of limitations;
- the right to a speedy trial; and
- removal of a consent defense, where the victim lacks the capacity to consent.

— M. COOK

EDUCATION

Funding key after-school programs

Northfield students told the House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division March 5 that after-school programs significantly enhance their academic and personal lives, and encouraged members to keep them funded.

High school student Ruth Amerman said she found a safe haven in the Northfield Union of Youth, a program also called The Key, after her father died four years ago.

"I found my home-base shattered," Amerman said through tears. "Around that



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Northfield middle school student Champange Eiklenborg shows her improved grades March 5 to the House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division, during testimony on a bill that would provide funding for after-school programs.

time I started coming down to The Key and just started hanging out. What I found was the security and sense of community I had lost."

Middle-schooler Champange Eiklenborg said a mentor there helped her handle bullying and improve poor grades. She shared her report card showing she'd improved from "Ds" in math and science to "almost an A" in math and a "C" in science in the past year.

Rep. Nora Slawik (DFL-Maplewood) sponsors HF378, which would appropriate \$5 million for the Education Department's After-School Community Learning Grants. Slawik said federal stimulus money could defray at least part of the appropriation, while a McKnight Foundation match of \$1 million could supplement a full appropriation.

St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman called after-school programs "my crime-fighting strategy, my economic development strategy, my community development strategy," and said they "help protect investments in early childhood education."

Opponents balked at the bill's price tag and said such spending should be backed by solid evidence, not stories. "It is very easy to pay for good intentions and it's another thing to actually have the program deliver them," said Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina).

These are "nice, but unaffordable, luxury type of programs when we have great needs in K through 12 during the school day," said Karen Effrem, EdWatch analyst.

The bill was held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus early childhood finance bill. Its companion, SF855, sponsored by Sen. Sandy Rummel (DFL-White Bear Lake), awaits action by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

— K. BERGGREN

Test for diploma examined

A math test Minnesota's 11th grade students must pass to graduate could be too high a hurdle, say some lawmakers. A bill would create some breathing room for the students, their parents, teachers and school administrators.

The math Graduate Required Assessment for Diploma 11th graders are scheduled to take this year is similar to a test given last year that resulted in just 34 percent proficiency.

HF501 would create a five-year grace period for the thousands of students who may not pass the GRAD. They'd still take the test, but could re-test twice after remedial work; if not proficient, they could still graduate by meeting all other school and state requirements. Meanwhile, a council would study the role of high-stakes assessments in education policy.

A "much more mature, fuller conversation" about a comprehensive policy on which types of

assessments work best is needed, said the bill's sponsor Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul).

Critics, such as the Minnesota Business Partnership, call this a "short-term solution" that undermines academic standards.

The rationale for moving the high-stakes test to high school and raising the bar of its content was based on the assumption students would have learned more high-level math, said Julie Cutshall, a Lakeville North High School math teacher. However, today's students may not have taken the proper "scope and sequence" of courses to adequately prepare them.

Short-term remediation is "not appropriate" in such cases, said Angie Roesner, an Eden Prairie High School teacher. "We do need a short-term fix so that these current juniors are held harmless."

"Are kids even held back anymore?" asked Rep. Jenifer Loon (R-Eden Prairie). "I'm not advocating that, but we've got to figure out a way to make sure they're getting it, they're grasping the material before they move on to the next level."

The House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee approved the bill and sent it to the House Finance Committee. A companion, SF405, sponsored by Sen. Chuck Wiger (DFL-Maplewood), awaits action by the Senate Education Committee.

— K. BERGGREN

Schools push green energy projects

Some schools are interested in cost savings, energy conservation and teaching opportunities that could result if their bonding requests for alternative energy projects are approved.

The projects would also employ local workers, are "shovel-ready" and possibly eligible for federal stimulus funds.

Rep. Patti Fritz (DFL-Faribault) sponsors HF28, which would authorize \$1.5 million for a wind generator to be constructed on the campus of either the state Academy for the Blind or the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf in Faribault. Linda Mitchell, the academies' superintendent, said the schools' electrical bill last year was \$200,000, and that a 1-megawatt wind turbine would pay for itself in less than 10 years. The bill has no companion.

The project is "right for the planet and right for Minnesota," Mitchell said. "I'm excited about the educational aspect of this."

Fritz also sponsors HF125, which would authorize \$400,000 to construct a residential building for students ages 18-21 enrolled at the academy for the blind. South Central College carpentry students who complete an annual residential building project and sell it at market value would do the construction.

Its companion, SF209, sponsored by Sen. Dick Day (R-Owatonna), awaits action by the Senate State Government Budget Division.

HF588, sponsored by Rep. Andrew Falk (DFL-Murdock), seeks \$2.33 million to design and build a geothermal heating system for the Dawson-Boyd school district. The project could save the 525-student district \$73,000 a year in energy costs. Its companion, SF572, sponsored by Sen. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

The division also heard HF273, sponsored by Rep. Brita Sailer (DFL-Park Rapids), which would authorize a \$5.8 million maximum effort capital loan to the Red Lake School District. Its companion, SF925, sponsored by Sen. Rod Skoe (DFL-Clearbrook), awaits action by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

The House K-12 Education Finance Division sent the bills to the House Finance Committee March 11.

— K. BERGGREN

Some school mandates could go

School before Labor Day is back on the table.

The House K-12 Education Finance Division significantly amended a bill March 12 that would eliminate unnecessary mandates.

When HF920, sponsored by Rep. Tom Tillberry (DFL-Fridley), was approved by the House K-12 Education Policy and Oversight Committee on March 5, the bill addressed several reporting requirements that could save districts money.

But the bill's substance changed with the addition of two amendments: one offered by Rep. John Benson (DFL-Minnetonka) that would permit school districts to start before Labor Day for the next two school years, and another offered by Rep. Denise Dittrich (DFL-Champlin) that would postpone by one year school districts' requirement to implement revised standards in the arts, science, language arts and social studies as a cost-saving measure. The bill was approved as amended and held over for possible inclusion in an omnibus education finance bill.

According to the bill's sponsor, the bill resulted from a bipartisan work group commissioned to help school districts save money by eliminating unnecessary and costly rules. Special education mandates, the subject of a separate task force, were excluded.

Tillberry estimated, for example, the Wayzata school district would save \$100,000 if the bill is enacted.

"If you multiply that out statewide, this does something for schools, and that is what the work group assigned us to do, to allow

schools to find some money," he said.

The companion, SF1396, is sponsored by Sen. Dan Skogen (DFL-Hewitt) and awaits action in the Senate Education Committee.

— K. BERGGREN

ELECTIONS

Early voting bill approved

Minnesota voters could cast their ballots as early as two weeks before Election Day.

Under HF1113, Minnesota would join 31 others states that allow their residents to vote early. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Will Morgan (DFL-Burnsville), said the change would address a growing demand from the public, whose desire to vote may conflict with work schedules and personal lives.

"We think it's a matter of convenience for the voters," Morgan told the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee March 10.

Under the bill's provisions, early voting would be available on weekdays beginning two weeks prior to an election, and on the Saturday before Election Day. Early voters would be subject to the same eligibility requirements and other laws as regular voters.



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Ryan Anderson, Minnesota State University, Mankato student body president, testifies before the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee March 10 in support of a bill that would authorize early voting.

Supporters say it would benefit students, disabled persons and others whose living situations or lifestyles make it difficult to get to travel and/or wait in long lines at their polling places. They argue many Minnesotans are already voting early by abusing the state's absentee voting system.

Common Cause Minnesota Executive Director Mike Dean said early voting would help resolve some of the issues that have led to complications in the state's U.S. Senate recount, such as voters not understanding eligibility requirements and improperly filling out absentee ballot forms.

Opponents, including Rep. Steve Gottwalt (R-St. Cloud), raised concerns that the bill might add complication to the voting process, thus raising the potential for mistakes.

"Throughout American history, we've had a one-day voting system," Gottwalt noted, and said the high voter turnout in the last election is evidence that the current system is working fine.

The committee approved the bill and referred it to the House Finance Committee. Sen. Katie Sieben (DFL-Newport) sponsors the companion, SF970, which awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— N. BUSSE

EMPLOYMENT

Occupational English training

Anyone looking for a job in the middle of the recession knows how hard it is, but imagine doing it without being able to speak English.

That's the situation many people face in the state's Southeast Asian immigrant community, where unemployment is rampant and a lack of English language skills makes it difficult to find jobs.

Rep. Joe Mullery (DFL-Mpls) offers what he thinks will be a partial solution to the problem in HF744. The bill would appropriate an as-yet-undetermined amount of money to fund a project in Hennepin County that helps Southeast Asians learn workplace English and overcome cultural barriers. The focus would be on refugees and immigrant welfare recipients.

"Under our present system, usually they have to take regular English, and that takes years for them," Mullery said. "Meanwhile, they can't become full citizens of society, working and paying taxes and things like that, supporting their families."

Joe Vang, Minnesota Family Investment Program coordinator for the Centre for Asians and Pacific Islanders, said language and

cultural barriers make it difficult for Asian immigrants to interview for jobs or even use computers to submit resumes online.

The House Bioscience and Workforce Development Policy and Oversight Division approved the bill March 11 and referred it to the House Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division.

Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park) sponsors the companion, SF1127, which awaits action by the Senate Economic Development and Housing Budget Division.

— N. BUSSE

Pre-tax learning accounts

Many employees in Minnesota take advantage of pre-tax accounts to help pay for medical and dental expenses; they might be able to use them for education as well.

HF72, sponsored by Rep. Kim Norton (DFL-Rochester), would allow for the creation of lifelong learning accounts through the Department of Employment and Economic Development. Employers and employees who make contributions would be eligible for tax credits.

The House Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division approved the bill March 10 and referred it to the House Finance Committee.

The credit for employees would equal 50 percent of contributions up to \$1,000, while the employer credit would be equal to the employer's account contribution up to \$500. The accounts would be "portable," meaning they would stay with the employee and not the company.

Norton said the bill would help ensure that the state's workforce has the tools to deal with rapidly changing economic times and an aging population of workers who will likely need to be retrained.

"We often see it in the public good to fund education for kids, but for the private good often for adults. And I would say that isn't the case, and in the future I think we need to change our mindset," Norton said.

Rep. Joe Atkins (DFL-Inver Grove Heights) called the accounts a "neat idea," but wondered whether the state's projected budget deficit made it inadvisable to implement the program right now.

Sen. Kathy Sheran (DFL-Mankato) sponsors the companion, SF147, which awaits action by the Senate Business, Industry and Jobs Committee.

— N. BUSSE

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

Land use tied to gas emissions

Committee approval was given to a bill that would require developers to consider how far people would have to travel to the destination and available modes of transportation.

Sponsored by Rep. Frank Hornstein (DFL-Mpls), HF898 would establish policies to reduce the number of motor vehicle trips people drive and appropriates money for a competitive grant program and for a transportation study.

Approved on a split voice-vote March 5 in the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee, it was sent to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

The University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies would be allotted \$250,000 from the General Fund to develop a model for use by local governments and the Metropolitan Council for strategies that reduce both miles traveled and carbon emissions. The council would allocate \$500,000 to assist local government in implementing new policies.

An unspecified amount would be available to establish the Sensible Communities Grant Program, administered by the Environmental Quality Board. Grantees would work to change local ordinances to encourage more pedestrian and bicycle traffic, protect the ecosystem and expand housing opportunities.

The bill would also impact how and where a new school could be built, with consideration given to the energy costs associated with the location, such as pupil transportations costs.

Its companion, SF549, sponsored by Sen. D. Scott Dibble (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate Education Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

Solar energy for schools

Twin bills, with differing appropriations, would pay for solar energy installations in 20 to 30 Minnesota schools.

Sponsored by Rep. Brita Sailer (DFL-Park Rapids), both HF1259 and HF1260 appropriate \$5 million in grants, so that school districts could install solar thermal panels or photovoltaic devices in K-12 schools. Appropriations would either come from bond proceeds or from the federal economic stimulus funds.

Sailer said the Legislature should pass one or the other bill, but not both. The appropriation is intended to cover the full cost of the energy projects.

On March 11, the House Energy Finance and Policy Division approved HF1259 and referred it to the House Finance Committee.

It held HF1260 over for possible omnibus bill inclusion.

Both Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee) and Rep. Jeremy Kalin (DFL-North Branch) suggested that school districts bear at least some of the cost for the projects and hinted at a possible future amendment.

Eligible schools would include:

- buildings with sufficient physical characteristics to support a solar energy project;
- enrollment projections that warrant the school remaining open for 10 or more years; and
- ones where the cumulative energy savings would exceed the grant amount and any corresponding debt service if bonding methods are used.

Both bills include the solar heating of swimming pools, but Kalin said swimming pools may not be eligible for energy funds derived from the federal stimulus dollars.

The companion bills, SF1087 and SF1088, both sponsored by Sen. Sandy Rummel (DFL-White Bear Lake) await action by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

— S. HEGARTY

ENVIRONMENT

Debate on emissions reporting

Controversy is brewing whether Minnesota should preempt a new national policy regarding greenhouse gas emissions reporting.

HF774, sponsored by Rep. Kate Knuth (DFL-New Brighton), would create a statewide reporting system for greenhouse gas emissions, so that Minnesota could compare actual data to its Next Generation Energy goals for reducing emissions. Current emissions data is based on estimates, not on actual data, Knuth said.

Coincidentally, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released a 1,300-page rule on the subject March 10, the same day the bill was narrowly approved by the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee and sent to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. A companion, SF444, sponsored by Sen. Yvonne Prettner Solon (DFL-Duluth), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

Mike Robertson, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce environmental policy consultant, said the chamber does not support the bill.

“We agree with the need to do greenhouse gas emissions reporting. The initial reports we’ve seen (at the national level) says that the rule will require the reporting of 85 to 90 percent of the greenhouse gas emissions in the United States,” Robertson said. “Our concern is that any rule adopted at the state level be consistent

with, and not have significant discrepancies or diversions from, the federal reporting.”

Robertson compared the federal reporting requirement to an amendment on HF774 that would limit commercial reporting of carbon dioxide emissions to those who emit between 10,000 and 25,000 tons annually.

— S. HEGARTY

Pay extra to paint the town

Beginning Sept. 1, applying a fresh coat of paint could cost a bit more, under a bill approved by the House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee March 10.

HF569, sponsored by Rep. Brita Sailer (DFL-Park Rapids), would attach a yet-to-be determined fee onto each gallon of “architectural” paint purchased by consumers. Such paint is applied to buildings, and does not include artist paint, paintballs or other types.

Paint is one more example in a long list of products gaining attention for “end-of-life management” for environmental reasons. Sailer said the user fee would shift the disposal/recycling costs onto the consumer rather than burden local governments, which don’t fully recover their costs for accepting household hazardous waste.

Paint manufacturers and retailers support the bill and would form a nonprofit third-party program committee to oversee a pilot paint stewardship program. They need legislative backing to prevent a breach of federal anti-trust regulations.

If successful, Minnesota could be the model for a national paint stewardship program, said Mike Weber, chief operations officer for Hirshfield’s Paint. “We really would like to see this pilot program go through to see if, in fact, we don’t have different legislation going on in 50 states all the way down to the county level.”

A pending appropriation cannot exceed assessment costs for the pilot project.

Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Wabasha) called the fee a “tax” that could be collected against the will of the consumer. Sailer disagreed and said the fee does not meet the definition of a tax.

The committee approved it on a split-voice vote and referred it to the House Commerce and Labor Committee. A companion, SF477, sponsored by Sen. John Doll (DFL-Burnsville), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

— S. HEGARTY

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GAME & FISH

ATV uses for hunters

New allowances for using an all-terrain vehicle when hunting could end up in the House Game, Fish and Forestry Division’s omnibus bill. The provisions are contained in two bills that were heard March 9 by the division.

HF150, sponsored by Rep. Tom Anzelc (DFL-Balsam Township), would let licensed hunters who are permanently disabled receive a free lifetime permit to use ATVs along designated trails when hunting small game. Currently, these permits are issued for five years.

A companion, SF221, sponsored by Sen. Tom Saxhaug (DFL-Grand Rapids), awaits action by the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee.

Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake) sponsors HF1138, which also expands the use of ATVs, but when bear hunting. An ATV can now be used to transport and install hunting stands, but not to bring bait into the registered hunting area. This would bring into compliance many hunters who already are doing both at the same time, Dill said. The bill has no Senate companion.

Winter trout anglers could also gain under a section of Dill’s bill that would move up the beginning date for winter lake trout season from Jan. 15 to Jan. 1. Dill said many constituents complained that the later date prohibited trout fishing during school vacation days.

— S. HEGARTY

HEALTH

Cash for colon cancer screening

Colon cancer is one of the leading types of cancer, and one of the most preventable, according to representatives of the American Cancer Society, Midwest Division. However, the uninsured or underinsured tend to avoid the costly screenings necessary to find and treat colon cancer.

HF293, sponsored by Rep. Maria Ruud (DFL-Minnetonka), would create a pilot study under the proposed Minnesota Colorectal Cancer Prevention Act to screen 200 patients at two hospitals: Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis and MeritCare in Bemidji. Both facilities have lists of eligible clients waiting for the screenings, Dave Arons, director of government relations for the American Cancer Society, Midwest Division, told the House Housing Finance and Policy and Public Health Finance Division March 10.

The division will consider the bill for

possible inclusion in its omnibus bill. Its companion, SF366, sponsored by Sen. Kathy Sheran (DFL-Mankato), awaits action in the Senate Finance Committee.

Eligible patients would include people ages 50 to 65 who are at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level and who are not eligible for other medical assistance programs.

An estimated 25 percent of the 200 people screened could test positive for cancerous polyps, said Arons. Those patients would receive follow-up services through the bill's yet-to-be-determined appropriation. The American Cancer Society would also contribute money toward the project.

At the conclusion of the study, the health commissioner and University of Minnesota School of Public Health would evaluate the project and make recommendations for future screening projects to the Legislature by Jan. 1, 2011.

— S. HEGARTY

Psychiatrists may join loan program

Since 1990, select health professionals who agree to work in underserved areas of the state have had a portion of their student loans forgiven. Last year, \$7.8 million in loans were forgiven and soon, another \$20 million may be available from the federal stimulus funds. Beginning next fiscal year, HF113 would add pediatric psychologists to the list of eligible healthcare providers.

Rep. Matt Dean (R-Dellwood), the bill sponsor, said it is in response to a shortage of mental health beds and workers in Minnesota, which should be confirmed in a workforce shortages report due out this week.

"One of the issues that we're really grappling with is getting the right care at the right place at the right time across Minnesota. We've had real access problems in the state, particularly in the area of psychiatric help and also pediatric mental health services," Dean told the House Housing Finance and Policy and Public Health Finance Division March 10.

The bill will be considered for possible inclusion in the division's omnibus bill. Its companion, SF92, sponsored by Sen. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake), awaits action by the Senate Health and Human Services Budget Division.

— S. HEGARTY

Limiting pharmaceutical marketing

A bill that would limit the use of prescription information obtained by companies that sell prescribed products was approved March 10 by the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee.

Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL-Rochester), sponsor of HF491, said many physicians and patients

don't know that prescription information is sold to pharmaceutical marketing companies. The data is used to market drugs to specific physicians in a process called "detailing," a marketing strategy whose multi-million dollar cost is passed onto consumers, she said.

Greg Beaumont, a former detailer, said he would get weekly, monthly and quarterly reports on specific medications that almost every doctor in the state was prescribing. He would then market products to doctors prescribing certain classes and types of drugs to increase business.

Vernon Rowen, vice president of government affairs for Express Scripts Inc., said the bill goes too far in protecting information. The changes would prevent his company from being able to market generic drugs to physicians to help save money. "It still does not carefully craft the exceptions," he said.

Liebling countered "it does not cut off the flow of information" for companies like Express Scripts, rather it would prevent specific types of marketing and allow for education and research.

Rep. Laura Brod (R-New Prague) said the bill needed more work and unsuccessfully moved to table the legislation.

A similar New Hampshire law was upheld last year in the federal court of appeals.

The bill now goes to the House Commerce and Labor Committee. A companion, SF1044, sponsored by Sen. John Doll (DFL-Burnsville), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

— P. OSTBERG

Prohibiting participation

Persons under state civil commitment would be prohibited from participating in a psychiatric clinical drug trial while the order is in effect, under a bill approved March 11 by the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee.

Mary Weiss testified that her son, Dan Markingson, committed suicide when participating in a 2004 drug trial. She voiced concerns to his case manager about his deteriorating condition, but was unsuccessful in pulling him out of the drug trial. "I have promised Dan that I will fight for the rights of the mentally ill until the day I die," she said.

The bill, HF388, sponsored by Rep. Karla Bigham (DFL-Cottage Grove), doesn't exclude those who have tried multiple treatments, but failed to find one that is effective, said Sue Abderholden, executive director for the National Alliance on Mental Illness. Under the bill, those under commitment would lose their rights to make decisions, she said.

Many psychiatric drug trials already say patients at risk of suicide or of hurting others should not be recruited, said Dr. Carl Elliott,

professor for the Center for Bioethics at the University of Minnesota. While participation in a drug study carries risk, patients under civil commitment may not understand what they are signing up for, he said.

Rep. Julie Bunn (DFL-Lake Elmo) said a provision should be added to the bill that would allow participation of a person who has tried multiple treatments that have failed.

The bill now goes to the House Civil Justice Committee.

A companion, SF431, sponsored by Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley), awaits action by the Senate Health, Housing and Family Security Committee.

— P. OSTBERG

HIGHER EDUCATION

New regents elected

The University of Minnesota's Board of Regents will have one new member and three returning members starting this week.

In a special joint floor session March 9, House and Senate members elected four individuals to fill open seats on the 12-member board, which serves as the university's governing body. The regents-elect, who begin their terms March 12, are:

- from the 1st Congressional District, Patricia Simmons of Rochester (currently chairwoman of the board);
- from the 4th Congressional District, Richard Beeson of St. Paul;
- from the 6th Congressional District, current regent John Frobenius of St. Cloud; and
- from the 7th Congressional District, current board vice chair Clyde Allen Jr. of Moorhead.

Regents voluntarily serve staggered six-year terms, with four seats open every two years. One regent is elected for each of Minnesota's eight congressional districts, and four are elected at large.

According to statute, potential board members are selected by the Regent Candidate Advisory Council. A joint House and Senate committee on regent selection then votes to recommend a slate of candidates to the full House and Senate.

This year, the advisory council submitted eight candidates for the committee's recommendation, and a ninth, Frobenius, was successfully nominated by Rep. Larry Haws (DFL-St. Cloud). The slate recommended by the committee included Simmons, Beeson, Frobenius and Allen.

During the floor vote, Simmons and Beeson each received 192 votes, and Frobenius received 187. In the closest race, Allen bested opponent Anne Rasmusson, nominated on

Statewide school district pool

Two vetoes in the previous two years haven't stopped advocates of a school employee statewide health insurance pool from putting the proposal back on the table.

Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph) sponsors HF866 that would mandate school districts to obtain employee health coverage through the state public employees insurance program.

Close votes on several amendments March 10 by the House Commerce and Labor Committee exemplified how the issue crosses party and geographical lines.

Rep. Sarah Anderson (R-Plymouth) and Rep. Leon Lillie (DFL-North St. Paul) were among those objecting to mandated district participation. Anderson and Rep. Kurt Zellers (R-Maple Grove) unsuccessfully tried to amend the bill to exclude the school districts they represent.

Paul Bourgeois, executive director of finance and operations for the Minnetonka School District, which is self-insured and has been able to contain premium costs. He said participation in a state program would increase costs to teachers. "There are models out there that work, and by shoehorning us into a model, we feel we won't be able to exercise our ability to manage our care."

However, Rep. Tom Anzelc (DFL-Balsam Township) said many rural districts are having trouble containing health care costs because their employee insurance pool is not large enough.

"We hear a lot about Minnetonka, Wayzata, St. Paul, but the people from North Kooch and Lake of the Woods aren't here. Those teachers and students are important too," he said.

Education Minnesota President Tom Doohar said that, based on research, voluntary pools fail and mandatory pools succeed because of the greater numbers of employees participating.

"Health care costs are creating a huge burden on school districts and employees," he said. "Some school employees actually write a check to the school district every two weeks to come to work, because the cost (of health insurance) exceeds their salary."

The bill was approved 9-7 and referred to the House Health Care and Human Services Policy and Oversight Committee. Its companion, SF915, sponsored by Sen. D. Scott Dibble (DFL-Mpls), awaits action by the Senate E-12 Education Budget and Policy Division.

— L. SCHUTZ



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Clyde Allen, Jr., from left, John Frobenius, and Patricia Simmons are recognized in the House Gallery March 9 after being re-elected to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents. Richard Beeson was also elected to the university's governing body.

the House floor by Rep. Bernie Lieder (DFL-Crookston), by a vote of 114-78.

Other regent candidates interviewed by the joint committee were Randy Simonson from the 1st District, Anita Pampusch from the 4th District, and Kjell Bergh and Kathryn Roberts from the 6th District.

— N. BUSSE

HOUSING**Housing subsidies for mentally ill**

A former Section 8 housing administrator, turned legislator, is asking for an additional \$3.4 million to be added to a rent subsidy program for the mentally ill.

Rep. Jeff Hayden (DFL-Mpls), sponsor of HF522, saw 5,000 applicants for 150 vouchers when he served on a demonstration project a few years ago.

"When I left there two years ago, there were 3,500 people who were still on the waiting list," Hayden told the House Housing Finance and Policy and Public Health Finance Division March 10. The division held the bill over for possible omnibus bill inclusion. There is no Senate companion.

Hayden said 54 percent of homeless adults report that they have been diagnosed with mental illness. "Stable housing is necessary for recovery," he added.

The Housing Finance Agency is expected to receive \$5.27 million in the next biennium for the Bridges rental housing program, which provides rent assistance to persons with serious and persistent mental illness. The bill would

raise the base funding to \$8.67 million. Subsidies would go to people with mental illness who are on Section 8 housing voucher waiting lists.

Nicole Jarousek said the program has allowed her to pay her bills, including rent, while she waits for Section 8 housing. After finding herself homeless four times in one year, she now lives close to relatives in a 700 square-foot apartment in Stillwater.

— S. HEGARTY

HUMAN SERVICES**Cancer facility moratorium extended**

Signed
by
the
governor

The current moratorium on construction of new radiation oncology facilities has been extended from Aug. 1, 2011, to Aug. 1, 2014, in the Twin Cities metropolitan area and several

regional centers in Greater Minnesota.

Signed March 11 by Gov. Tim Pawlenty, the law takes effect Aug. 1, 2009.

"The Legislature has made the decision, on repeated occasions, that limiting the expansion of these machines is the right public policy for us to be pursuing," said Rep. Paul Thissen (DFL-Mpls), who sponsors the law with Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls).

But opponents, including Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth), said the law is about a fight between two oncology groups. He said both do a good job, but one wants to keep the other out of business.

HF177/SF162*/CH6

— L. SCHUTZ

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

County offices appointed

It's become an almost perennial issue at the Legislature: whether to let counties appoint, rather than elect, certain offices.

Specifically, county auditors, treasurers and recorders could be appointed rather than elected, under the provisions of HF1278. Sponsored by Rep. Phil Sterner (DFL-Rosemount), the bill was approved March 9 by the House Local Government Division.

It would allow counties to make the positions appointed by a vote of at least 80 percent of the county board members; however, the boards would have to give public notice of the change, and residents would have 60 days to file a petition for a reverse referendum to keep the positions elected.

Supporters say many counties have trouble finding qualified candidates for the positions who are willing to run for office. They point out that numerous counties have already received permission from the Legislature to make the positions appointed.

"What we're really trying to do is just kind of put this issue to rest, so that future counties, if they decide to go down this route, don't have to seek special legislation; they can just go through the local process," said Joe Mathews, policy analyst for the Association of Minnesota Counties.

Opponents to the bill worry local governments would be less accountable to voters, and that it ignores differences between counties.

"I'm always hesitant when we take a situation and find a solution that's just kind of a blanket solution that really takes the rights away from a lot of voters," said Rep. Rob Eastlund (R-Isanti).

The bill now goes to the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. Sen. Sandy Pappas (DFL-St. Paul) sponsors the companion, SF1125, which awaits action by the Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee.

— N. BUSSE

Mandate relief bill approved

With the state facing an estimated \$4.6 billion budget shortfall, cities and counties are likely to face another round of cuts in local government aid. A bill working its way through the House would help them by removing some costly mandates.

HF1195, sponsored by Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead), represents the results of a House working group on local government

mandate relief. Among other changes, the bill would:

- eliminate property tax levy limits;
- impose a two-year moratorium on new maintenance of effort (MOE) requirements on local governments;
- provide a mechanism for cities and counties to reduce their library spending MOE requirements; and
- eliminate truth-in-taxation public hearings and newspaper notice requirements.

The bill would also establish a Legislative Commission on Mandate Reform to make recommendations to the Legislature on reforming or eliminating other mandates on local governments. It would expire in 2013.

The bill was approved March 9 by the House Local Government Division and March 11 by the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee. It now goes to the House Taxes Committee. There is no Senate companion.

At the March 11 hearing, Lanning characterized the bill as the first step in a bipartisan effort to reduce mandates that have driven up the cost of local government over the years.

Opponents, however, took issue with several provisions.

Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Delano) questioned the necessity of the proposed commission, arguing that lawmakers already have the power to lift mandates.

"I don't know how you create more efficiency in government by creating more government," Emmer said.

Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake) expressed concern about the proposal to eliminate truth-in-taxation hearings. She said the hearings would be even more important if the Legislature were to repeal levy limits.

— N. BUSSE

Measuring local performance

Rep. Paul Marquart (DFL-Dilworth) says Minnesota has no standard set of measures it can use to evaluate the performance of cities and counties, and he sponsors a bill to change that.

HF1201 would establish a Council on Local Results and Innovation to develop minimum standards for measuring the performance of local governments. Approved March 11 by the House State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee, the bill now goes to the House Taxes Committee.

The council would be charged with establishing approximately 10 measures to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness. The standards would be voluntary; however, cities and counties that choose to adopt them would

be eligible for per capita reimbursements and be exempted from levy limits and truth-in-taxation hearing requirements.

Marquart said lawmakers currently have little understanding of how effectively local government aid payments, which he said account for 9 percent of the state budget, are being used by cities and counties.

"As a state and as policymakers, we really do not know what we're getting for those dollars going out," Marquart said.

Local governments that participate in the program would have to publish results annually for their residents, and also file reports with the Office of the State Auditor. Council members would include the state auditor, representatives from the League of Minnesota Cities and Association of Minnesota Counties, and eight members appointed by chairs of legislative committees with jurisdiction over property taxes.

Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Jordan) said he is concerned that the 10 performance measures might someday evolve into 10 performance mandates on local governments. He added that local governments might be better off each having their own approach, rather than "one umbrella of mandated performance measures or standards."

The bill was also approved March 9 by the House Local Government Division. There is no Senate companion.

— N. BUSSE

RECREATION

Money for Como

Gorillas at the Como Zoo could have more room to roam.

Sponsored by Rep. Alice Hausman (DFL-St. Paul), HF820 would provide \$11 million in bond proceeds for construction and infrastructure improvements at the St. Paul zoo.

Michelle Furrer, campus manager for the Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, told the House Cultural and Outdoor Resources Finance Division March 9 the money would protect jobs of people currently working on the Polar Bear Odyssey exhibit that is expected to open in the spring of 2010. Upon its completion, those workers would immediately start work on the zoo's next project, Gorilla Forest.

Both projects will provide habitats suitable for the animals. The Polar Bear Odyssey will emulate a Hudson Bay ecosystem complete with a stream, rocky cliffs and evergreen preservation. The exhibit has also received a major endorsement by Polar Bears International.

Gorilla Forest would allow gorillas to live in more of a family atmosphere. At 10,000 square

feet, the space is two-and-a-half times larger than the current outdoor space. The smaller space of 2,000 square feet would be used for mothers with babies. Visitors will be able to see eye-to-eye with the gorillas. The project will provide 1,000 jobs.

The bill was approved and now awaits action by the House Capital Investment Finance Division. A companion, SF869, sponsored by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), awaits action by the Senate Environment, Energy and Natural Resources Budget Division.

— S. HEGMAN

Money for hockey arenas

More grant money could be available for hockey rink construction and rehabilitation around the state.

Sponsored by Rep. Sandra Peterson (DFL-New Hope), HF948 would provide \$6 million in bond proceeds for grants to public ice facilities. The House Cultural and Outdoor Resources Finance Division approved the bill March 9. It now moves to the House Capital Investment Finance Division.

Currently there is no money in the Mighty Ducks ice facilities fund for the state's public ice facilities. Grants from the fund would be capped at \$400,000 for new rinks and \$200,000 for rehabilitation and renovation.

The Mighty Ducks grant program was established in 1995 to help communities renovate or construct ice rinks. Between 1995 and 2004, the Minnesota Amateur Sport Commission awarded in excess of \$18 million to help create 61 new sheets of ice. However, the last grants were given in 2004, Peterson said.

The New Hope Ice Arena serves 475 youth in hockey programs from several communities, which is just one example of why Minnesota has the largest amateur hockey program in the country and the largest girls' hockey program in the country, Peterson said. It received a \$250,000 grant in 1999 for a second sheet of ice.

A companion, SF778, sponsored by Sen. Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope), awaits action by the Senate State Government Budget Division.

— S. HEGMAN

SAFETY

Driving diversion program possibility

John Choi estimates that about one-third of the 15,000 cases prosecuted each year by the St. Paul City Attorney's Office are related to driving without a valid license.

Some of these people want to get valid, but for various reasons, such as limited finances, they are unable to do so, said Choi, the city

attorney. A bill sponsored by Rep. John Lesch (DFL-St. Paul) could help.

Held over March 10 by the House Public Safety Policy and Oversight Committee for possible omnibus bill inclusion, HF589 would create a pilot diversion program for people who have been charged with driving after suspension or revocation, but have not yet entered a plea.

A companion, SF847, sponsored by Sen. Yvonne Prettner Solon (DFL-Duluth), awaits action by the Senate Finance Committee.

"The most important part of this bill is the carrot, which is the individual who would be diverted into this program would get a valid license," Choi said. "We typically tell the individual, 'You need to get yourself valid, you need to pay the fines and good luck.'"

Participants would need to maintain insurance, make regular payments toward the outstanding fines and complete a class that will teach things like life and financial management skills. There would be no expense to the taxpayer because offenders would pay for program costs, which could be done in installments.

Five cities would be eligible to take part in the pilot program: Duluth, St. Paul, South St. Paul, West St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights. If successful, it could be expanded.

"It's a long-term solution to get people out of the revolving door of having a driving-after-suspension citation, because if they simply pay the citation, they get suspended again. And they continue to drive because they continue to need to get to work, to pick up the kids, or get groceries, so they'll get another driving after suspension citation. This will teach them how to get out of the system and stay out of it," said Kori Land, city attorney for the three Dakota County cities asking to be part of the program.

— M. COOK

TAXES

Accountability for new sales tax

An Office of Accountability may be established to track revenues and expenditures generated by the Outdoor Heritage Legacy Act, the three-eighths of 1 percent dedicated sales tax that is to be collected beginning July 1.

HF1086, sponsored by Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls), would require the office to create an Internet site where the public could view revenues and expenditures from all four accounts in the act. The House Environment Policy and Oversight Committee approved the bill as amended March 10 and referred it to the House Finance Committee.

A companion, SF995, sponsored by Sen.

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

Rep. Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley), the committee chairman, noted that only three of the four funds receiving the tax revenue were written into the bill. He successfully amended it to include the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund. The other three include the Clean Water Fund, Parks and Trails Fund and the Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council.

Some of the provisions of the bill require:

- all money be spent in Minnesota;
- recipients display a sign acknowledging that the funds were used from the act; and
- the Legislative Coordinating Commission to replace the Department of Natural Resources as administrative support for the council, a 12-member board that will decide how to spend 33 percent of the tax revenue.

"I think it's a good bill," said Rep. Al Juhnke (DFL-Willmar). "We do need to have some way to coordinate all this and make sure that everyone is utilizing the funding appropriately."

Lance Ness, president of the Fish & Wildlife Legislative Alliance, said he has concerns about expanding the administrative arm for the funds.

"With me, (the interest groups) weighed in on their thoughts that this money should be going on the ground and less used for administration," added Rep. Denny McNamara (R-Hastings).

Wagenius said she had not heard from interest groups, but "we want Minnesotans to know that we are spending their money as wisely as we can. I think we all want them to be able to see what they're getting for their dollar," she said.

— S. HEGARTY

Revenues down, worries up

Growth in the state's revenues over the next 25 years is expected to slow.

That was the news State Economist Tom Stinson gave to the House Taxes Committee March 10.

"Revenues are not going to grow fast enough to keep up with health care spending," he said while presenting only the revenue side of the February Forecast to the committee, something he said he's never done before.

He said the state's economy is growing a little more slowly than the U.S. economy, and its outlook worsened dramatically between the November 2008 and February 2009 forecasts. On just the revenue side, when the Legislature adjourned last May, the state had a projected \$625 million deficit for the current biennium. For the 2010-11 biennium, the revenue deficit

is projected to be \$4.46 billion; this is due, in part, to a \$2.45 billion expected decline in income tax collections.

“Just this amount of change since we adjourned, I just find amazing,” said Chairwoman Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington).

Stinson said a change of this magnitude has never happened, although in the early 1980s, he said things deteriorated very quickly and enormously, caused by two recessions and a change in the inflation rate.

The state’s revenue has declined because of several factors:

- we are in a recession;
- the state’s employment and wages are declining;
- nonwage income is declining, i.e. income from stock investments;
- taxable purchases are declining;
- corporate profits are declining; and
- the state’s General Fund is receiving a smaller percentage of the motor vehicle sales tax.

“What we need to recognize is that what this recession means is that business receipts are going to be less than in 2008,” Stinson said. “This is not something we’re used to seeing.”

It is also predicted that jobs are going to decrease by 3 percent in Minnesota in 2009 and another 1 percent in 2010.

“You can come at this from every angle,” Lenczewski said. “We have a huge problem. It doesn’t matter what the political approach is. This deficit is helping us all get a little taste of reality.”

— S. HEGMAN

Tax analysis based on Suits

The state’s tax system became more regressive between 2004 and 2006, and it’s all based on Suits.

The Suits Index, named for economist Daniel Suits, calculates a single number that measures tax policy progressivity. The approach basically compares the cumulative share of income received by taxpayers — ordered from lowest to highest — to their cumulative share of taxes paid. From 2004 to 2006, this number for Minnesota dropped from minus-0.024 to minus-0.053, which Paul Wilson, director of tax research for the Department of Revenue, said is a big change. He presented the 2009 Minnesota Tax Incidence Study to the House Taxes Committee March 11.

With the index, the further below zero a number is, the more regressive it is. In a regressive tax system the poorest people pay the most tax relative to income, the wealthiest pay the least.

“It takes a lot to move the Suits Index,”

Wilson said. “The point is that it’s hard to explain this. We have more work to do.”

The new methodology for the motor vehicle registration tax can account for minus-0.004, but it is unknown about the remainder. Wilson said there was no policy change large enough to explain a change like this.

Minnesota’s Suits Index was better, or more progressive, in recession years like 1990 and 2002, Wilson said because “everyone is hurting so income grows more equally.” And in “boom” years, like 1998 and 2006, income distribution grew more unequal, causing more regressivity.

This is the 10th mandated, nonpartisan biennial study conducted by the department. Wilson said no other states do studies like this on a recurring basis. The 2009 study looked at data from 2006 and projected out to 2011.

The study used a sample of 105,000 households; weighted to represent 2.45 million households. It’s then divided into 10 income groups.

Between 2006 and 2011, not much changed, Wilson said. The 2011 projection is based on current law and the November 2008 forecast. The big change in 2011 is that state taxes go down and local taxes go up, he said.

— S. HEGMAN

Putting tax on interest

Businesses receiving interest higher than 15 percent of the principal balance from consumers on loans could see a new tax.

Sponsored by Rep. Tom Rukavina (DFL-Virginia), HF716 would enact a 30 percent tax on interest earned in excess of 15 percent. The bill was laid over for possible omnibus bill inclusion by the House Taxes Committee March 9.

According to the Department of Revenue, the 30 percent tax would be imposed on interest earned by a business that engages in loaning money, credit or goods. The bulk of the tax would be collected on the outstanding balances of credit extended to consumers by credit card companies. The bill also applies to short-term loans made by pawn shops and other similar short-term loan operations. The tax is in addition to the corporate franchise and individual income tax.

“I think this is a terrible bill,” said Rep. Paul Kohls (R-Victoria). He added that the bill said nothing about its effect on mortgages and said it would further dry up credit markets.

Some members voiced concerns about the percents chosen.

“Why would you choose 15 percent and 30 percent?” asked Rep. Laura Brod (R-New Prague). “I’m concerned we’re going to dry up the credit market more than it already is.”

Rukavina said he was carrying the bill for

Sen. Julianne Ortman (R-Chanhassen), who sponsors SF507, the bill’s companion. “She picked the numbers. And I am concerned about people hurting in this economy.” That bill awaits action by the Senate Taxes Committee.

Chairwoman Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington) said the bill could be designed any way the committee would want it to address concerns.

— S. HEGMAN

Tax preparer changes

People who enter into tax refund anticipation loan agreements could have a business day to change their mind.

That is one provision in HF722, sponsored by Rep. Paul Thissen (DFL-Mpls), which contains a number of new standards for tax preparers.

“This is a bill to expand on some legislation that we passed in 2003 that set the first standards in the country for tax preparers,” he said. “This is building on some things we’ve learned since then, some of the abuses, in some sense, that go on with some of the tax preparation services. We’re trying to tighten that up.”

Approved March 11 by the House Civil Justice Committee, the bill was sent to the House Taxes Committee. A companion, SF616, sponsored by Sen. Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope), awaits action by the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Ron Elwood, staff attorney with Legal Services Advocacy Project, said that even with the disclosures and other things currently in place, some people still do not realize the monetary advance is actually a loan.

“We figured to be fair to the offering, which is for people who really want the money immediately, we thought 24 hours would be at least some cooling off period, but not too much,” he said. “We thought it balanced the interests of the business and the client.”

In addition, a written agreement would be required for those entering into a refund anticipation loan agreement. Failure to do so could result in a \$1,000 administrative penalty.

Other changes include:

- preparers advertising in a foreign language must also provide forms or disclosures in that language; and
- an expansion of the taxpayer standards of conduct, including that no preparer shall fail to safeguard and account for all money handled for the client, shall fail to act in the client’s best interest or establish an account in the preparer’s name to receive a client’s refund through direct deposit, unless the client’s name is also on the account.

— M. COOK

Airport terminal funding sought

People clearing security at Duluth International Airport best hope they do not need to use a restroom before boarding an aircraft. Doing so means leaving the gate area and having to go through the screening process once again to return to the gate area.

Sponsored by Rep. Thomas Huntley (DFL-Duluth), HF83 would provide \$4.9 million in bonding proceeds for a new airport terminal on a current short-term parking lot. "Our current terminal presents a number of Homeland Security and (Federal Aviation Administration) issues, and is not well-equipped to process passengers, nor accommodate them once they pass through security screening," Huntley said. "The building was designed long before Sept. 11, and it really can't be adapted to the current way we need to treat people in an airport."

The bill was held over March 5 by the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division for its possible bonding recommendations to the House Capital Investment Finance Division.

A companion, SF36, sponsored by Sen. Tom Bakk (DFL-Cook), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Committee.

Current funding calls for federal dollars to make up about one-half of the \$64.9 million project. Proponents seek \$16.6 million in state bonding between this year and next; the Duluth Airport Authority is to fund \$7.8 million; and \$7 million is to come from the State Airports Trust Fund.

"This project is also on the list for federal stimulus money," said Brian Ryks, executive director of the authority. "We think we're positioned well to get some stimulus money."

He said the project would create more than 200 construction jobs. Federal money was received last year for planning, and the shovel-ready project is to be bid May 7.

Ryks said the airport has a \$1.3 billion regional economic impact, and statistics show that many regional travelers drive to the city, and spend the night before hopping on their flight.

— M. Cook

Little Crow Transit Way study

Long-term regional transportation plans include a rail or rapid bus transitway extending northwest and southwest from the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City) seeks bonding for a route going west to Willmar.

Held over March 10 by the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division for possible inclusion in its bonding recommendations to the House Capital Investment Finance Division, HF1210 seeks \$500,000 for preliminary engineering, environmental analysis and land acquisition for the Little Crow Transit Way. The line was named in statute last year.

A companion SF1178, sponsored by Sen. Terri Bonoff (DFL-Minnetonka), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Budget and Policy Division.

"This would just explore the need," Urdahl said. "As I envision it right now, it would affect Hennepin, Wright, Meeker and Kandiyohi counties, and later on to points west perhaps." He has not committed to bus or rail transit, just whatever would be the best option.

Urdahl said 64 percent of Meeker County workers leave the county for their job, with most driving to the Twin Cities metropolitan area along Highway 12. "That is becoming more and more congested, and the outlook is that it will continue to have that situation as we go through the years."

Phillip Qualy, state legislative director of the United Transportation Union, said a second rail line could be added between Delano and Minneapolis on existing right of way. "The existing road bed from abandoned track is still there; the bridges; the viaducts; and infrastructure is still in place."

— M. Cook

Airport expansion money sought

A late-2003 study indicated that the St. Cloud Regional Airport is the likeliest reliever facility to Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport because of its location, accessibility and the region's population growth.

However, the study also spoke of a lack of infrastructure. That resulted in an update of the airport's master plan to provide better accommodations.

Sponsored by Rep. Larry Haws (DFL-St. Cloud), HF851 would provide \$2 million in bonding to purchase land adjacent to the facility, provided an equal amount of nonstate money is part of the package. St. Cloud Mayor Dave Kleis said that would be a half-cent regional sales tax increase approved by voters.

"We may not need it tomorrow. We may not need it in 10 years, but this is property that needs to be acquired as soon as possible to ensure this airport can grow," said Airport Director Bill Towle.

"This is really essential to making sure we have a buffer zone, so we don't have economic development infringing," added Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids).

The bill was held over March 5 by the House Transportation Finance and Policy Division for its possible bonding recommendations to the House Capital Investment Finance Division.

A companion, SF1013, sponsored by Sen. Tarryl Clark (DFL-St. Cloud), awaits action by the Senate Transportation Budget and Policy Division.

Two years ago, the airport received a similar, locally matched \$4 million bond amount. Towle said that money would nearly be spent when the acquisition of five more parcels is completed. A planned crosswind runway would use some of the acquired land.

"Right now, St. Cloud has one air carrier or large aircraft runway. It's 7,000 feet, and we don't have a second runway that can handle that kind of traffic," Towle said. He said a second runway would help attract air service to the region. Long-term plans include a parallel runway to the existing landing strip.

He also noted if the lone runway is closed for whatever reason — maintenance, snow removal — there is not a runway that can be used for the larger aircraft.

— M. Cook

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Monday, March 9

HF1405-Hilstrom (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Tax data disclosed to law enforcement authorities.

HF1406-Dill (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Lawful gambling tax provisions modified.

HF1407-Hackbarth (R)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Right of citizens to keep, bear and use arms for certain purposes is fundamental and shall not be infringed, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1408-Eken (DFL)
Finance
Small power producer grant program created.

HF1409-Loon (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Hennepin County; eligible employee permitted to apply for disability by waiving minimum service requirements.

HF1410-Thissen (DFL)
Civil Justice
Attorney fee determining amount factor provided.

HF1411-Downey (R)
Finance
Early, community and adult education programs funding provided.

HF1412-Cornish (R)
Finance
Waldorf; wastewater treatment infrastructure funding provided.

HF1413-Dettmer (R)
Finance
Athletic scholarship conditions set.

HF1414-Bigham (DFL)
Finance
State grant program eligibility changed.

HF1415-Downey (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Public value impact statements required for certain legislation.

HF1416-Atkins (DFL)
Taxes
Class rate on certain recreational property reduced.

HF1417-Loon (R)
Taxes
Subtraction for health insurance premiums allowed.

HF1418-Nelson (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Plumbing regulated.

HF1419-Hilstrom (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Plumbing inspector qualifications required.

HF1420-Nornes (R)
Commerce & Labor
Racetracks allowed outside of the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area and racetracks allowed to operate card clubs.

HF1421-Scott (R)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Speed limit provisions amended.

HF1422-Bigham (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Financial Oversight Council changed to an advisory board.

HF1423-Winkler (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Municipalities required to utilize state cooperative purchasing.

HF1424-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Public health improvement account created, statewide health improvement program provisions modified and health impact assessment program established.

HF1425-Sailer (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Renewable energy standard technology options modified for certain public utilities.

HF1426-Hilty (DFL)
Taxes
Fire and ambulance special taxing district established.

HF1427-Lanning (R)
Taxes
Border city enterprise allocations increased.

HF1428-Eastlund (R)
Civil Justice
Marriage dissolution grounds modified and two-year waiting period required.

HF1429-Eastlund (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
County boards permitted to decrease their compensation at any time; limitations on salary changes for city council members modified.

HF1430-Peterson (DFL)
Finance
Working Family Resource Center grant provided.

HF1431-Hortman (DFL)
Taxes
Tax increment financing and transit improvement area provisions amended.

HF1432-Rosenthal (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Children aging out of foster care provisions modified; Runaway and Homeless Youth Act modified.

HF1433-Simon (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Workers compensation self-insurance group security requirements regulated and exceptions provided.

HF1434-Johnson (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Mass transit zone for utility reinvestment and cost recovery created.

HF1435-Knuth (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Noise abatement requirements on highway construction projects modified.

HF1436-Slocum (DFL)
Finance
Fort Snelling Museum and Visitor Center improvement pre-design authorized.

HF1437-Seifert (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Federal government memorialized to halt its practice of imposing mandates upon the states for purposes not enumerated by the Constitution of the United States and affirming Minnesota's sovereignty under the 10th Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

HF1438-Hausman (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Transit vehicle and supply purchasing and other activities related to transit centralized.

HF1439-Juhnke (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Appraisal management companies' registration and regulation provided.

HF1440-McNamara (R)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Financial assurance required for nonferrous metallic mineral mining defined.

HF1441-Brynaert (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
State measures of student achievement growth established.

HF1442-Olin (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Crime of fleeing a peace officer modified.

HF1443-Hornstein (DFL)
Taxes
Teleworking credit created and sales tax exemption provided for telework expenses.

HF1444-Koenen (DFL)
Taxes
Education subtraction and credit to broadband subscription expenses expanded.

HF1445-Knuth (DFL)
Finance
Solar energy projects at regional parks grant program established for solar energy projects in metropolitan parks and state parks and recreation areas.

HF1446-Welti (DFL)
Finance
University of Minnesota agricultural research and extension funding provided.

HF1447-Otremba (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs
Veterinarian education loan forgiveness program established.

HF1448-Mullery (DFL)
Civil Justice
Information released to health care agents and access granted to health care agents.

HF1449-Lesch (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Criminal intelligence data clarified under the Data Practices Act.

HF1450-Hilstrom (DFL)
Civil Justice
Civil commitment venue clarified.

HF1451-Eastlund (R)
Finance
Budget reserve established, reserve amount set, reserve full funding provided and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1452-Liebling (DFL)
Taxes
Exemption provided for pollution control machinery and equipment providing energy to health care facilities.

HF1453-Faust (DFL)
Taxes
Pine County; tax increment financing provisions modified.

HF1454-Huntley (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Uniform formulary exception document development required.

HF1455-Murphy, M. (DFL)
Finance
Duluth; airliner maintenance, repair and operations facility funding provided.

HF1456-Eken (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Discrimination by delivered fuel vendors against customers receiving fuel assistance prohibited.

HF1457-Johnson (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Unfunded mandates affecting local governmental units eliminated.

HF1458-Johnson (DFL)
Finance
Ramsey County; Juvenile Delinquent Alternatives Initiative funding provided.

HF1459-Johnson (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Swift and Certain Sanctions Act established for persons on supervised release.

HF1460-Johnson (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Earned compliance credit program established for persons on supervised release.

HF1461-Lesch (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Training and public awareness initiatives on human trafficking provided.

HF1462-Jackson (DFL)
Civil Justice
Family Reunification Act of 2009 enacted and certain child placement procedures changed.

HF1463-Davnie (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Various filings and fees regulated and terms defined.

HF1464-Nelson (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Commuter Rail Corridor Coordinating Committee membership modified.

HF1465-Nelson (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Railway walkway requirements modified.

HF1466-Nelson (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Switching yard lighting required.

HF1467-Nelson (DFL)
Finance
Rail safe technology federal grant application directed.

HF1468-Knuth (DFL)
Taxes
Arden Hills; tax increment financing district creation authorized.

HF1469-Johnson (DFL)
Finance
St. Paul; commercial and industrial energy efficiency improvement demonstration program funding provided.

HF1470-Howes (R)
Finance
Hackensack; water treatment facility funding provided.

HF1471-Slawik (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Financial institution ability to make payday loans eliminated.

HF1472-Slawik (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Hospital information clarified to sexual assault victims.

HF1473-Seifert (R)
Finance
Wind energy and ethanol fuel training facility construction authorized.

HF1474-Paymar (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Prisoners facing civil commitment allowed to elect to remain confined in state correctional facilities beyond their scheduled release date.

HF1475-Hayden (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Minnesota Family Investment Program eligibility and waivers addressed for human trafficking victims.

HF1476-Atkins (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Exclusive liquor stores allowed to sell multiple use bags.

HF1477-Liebling (DFL)
Taxes
Rochester; tax authority increased.

HF1478-Sailer (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Distributed energy resources regulated.

HF1479-Kahn (DFL)
Taxes
Refundable credit provided for payment of principal and interest on student loans.

HF1480-Haws (DFL)
Finance
Transportation funding oversight and distribution provided, Department of Transportation required to meet programmatic investment percentages

and a minimum guarantee of state highway and bridge funding for all state transportation districts.

HF1481-Persell (DFL)
Finance
Remer; sewer extension funding provided.

HF1482-Thissen (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Medical Assistance claims and liens provisions modified.

HF1483-Koenen (DFL)
Finance
Morton; wastewater treatment facility funding provided.

HF1484-Kath (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Educator re-licensure refocused on performance; legislative auditor's recommended Q-Comp revisions implemented.

HF1485-Kath (DFL)
Finance
Waseca; wastewater treatment system and plant funding provided.

HF1486-Brod (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Administration commissioner required to review the privatization potential of state agency services and to prepare a database of all state-owned assets.

HF1487-Olin (DFL)
Taxes
Income tax credit provided for bovine testing.

HF1488-Gottwalt (R)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Towing of vehicles unlawfully parked in valet parking zones authorized.

HF1489-McFarlane (R)
Commerce & Labor
Notice of sale and postponement of mortgaged properties required.

HF1490-Davnie (DFL)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division
Motor carriers of railroad employees regulated.

HF1491-Hayden (DFL)
Finance
Homeless programs funding provided.

HF1492-Simon (DFL)
Taxes
Hopkins; tax increment financing district duration extended.

HF1493-Lillie (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
State parks and trails funding provided, planning and report required.

HF1494-Simon (DFL)
Civil Justice
Wrongful death actions by domestic partners provided.

HF1495-Kelly (R)
Finance
Goodhue Pioneer Trail funding provided.

HF1496-Kelly (R)
Finance
Red Wing; biosolids processing facility funding provided.

HF1497-Kelly (R)
Finance
Red Wing; intermediate care facility rate increase provided.

HF1498-Hilstrom (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Department of Corrections required to annually report on felony DWI offenders.

HF1499-Mullery (DFL)
Finance
Summer youth employment program funding provided.

HF1500-Westrom (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Special town meetings required upon petition of electors.

HF1501-Westrom (R)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Central Lakes Region Sanitary District restructured as an elected body or alternatively dissolved.

HF1502-Atkins (DFL)
Finance
Mississippi River Regional Trail connection funding provided.

HF1503-Abeler (R)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Massage therapist licensure and fees established, penalties provided.

HF1504-Johnson (DFL)
Civil Justice
Reproduction of pornographic works involving a minor maintained by a government entity or court in connection with a criminal proceeding prohibited.

HF1505-Paymar (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Sex trafficking criminal penalties increased; crime of violence definition extended to include sex trafficking.

HF1506-Sanders (R)
Taxes
Deed tax exemption provisions modified.

HF1507-Sanders (R)**Taxes**

Mortgage tax exemption provisions modified.

HF1508-Sanders (R)**Taxes**

Mortgage tax exemptions extended to include first-time homebuyers.

HF1509-Hilstrom (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Challenge Incarceration Program expanded.

HF1510-Zellers (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Noncommercial alcohol use provisions in unlicensed public facilities clarified.

HF1511-Atkins (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Lawful gambling provisions modified.

HF1512-Atkins (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Electronic bingo authorized, pull-tab dispensing devices modified, clarifying and conforming changes made.

HF1513-Sailer (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Local public pension plan employees and officers required to report unlawful actions.

HF1514-Hausman (DFL)**Finance**

Human trafficking victims toll-free hotline funding provided.

HF1515-Abeler (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Children's therapeutic services modified, programs exempted from licensing requirements.

HF1516-Thissen (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Long-term homeless supportive services funding provided.

HF1517-Hosch (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Local units of government authorized to impose administrative fines.

HF1518-Champion (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Commissioner of public safety authorized to gather, compile and publish data on human trafficking every three years.

HF1519-Kahn (DFL)**Finance**

Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board funding provided and fund carryover authorized.

HF1520-Falk (DFL)**Finance**

Rural health care purchasing alliance funding provided.

HF1521-Liebling (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Earned release dates for imprisoned offenders provided, qualifying offenders required to be placed on enhanced re-entry supervised release, and law requiring short-term offenders to be incarcerated in local correctional facilities repealed.

HF1522-Hayden (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Treatment of income for determining county reimbursement for foster care, examination, or treatment provisions modified.

HF1523-Haws (DFL)**Finance**

Confinement fee modified for booking a person at a county or regional jail.

HF1524-Falk (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

MinnesotaCare; supplemental hospital coverage authorized.

HF1525-Winkler (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

School districts required to comply with the Schools Interoperability Framework specifications.

HF1526-Mahoney (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

State Building Code municipal enforcement provisions modified.

HF1527-Kahn (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities early separation incentive programs authorized.

HF1528-Kahn (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System tenured faculty permitted to elect defined benefit plan retirement coverage.

HF1529-Mullery (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Attorney or agent fees dollar limitation removed.

HF1530-Hornstein (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Metropolitan Airports Commission required to prohibit outsourcing of certain jobs.

HF1531-Loeffler (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Whistleblower protection provided to state employees.

HF1532-Kalin (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Secretary of State filings, forms, records, submissions, motions and orders regulated.

HF1533-Sailer (DFL)**Energy Finance & Policy Division**

Energy; cost recovery for utility's renewable facilities and high-efficiency utility rate options provided.

HF1534-Downey (R)**Finance**

Federal stimulus funds acceptance and expenditure conditions provided.

HF1535-Hausman (DFL)**Finance**

Metropolitan Transit functions transferred, Minnesota Transit Authority established, sales tax increased and proceeds allocated to the authority, certain local sales tax authority abolished.

HF1536-Nelson (DFL)**State & Local Government****Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

University of Minnesota; enacting of ordinances authorized and criminal penalties provided.

HF1537-Mullery (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Property; public use definition modified.

HF1538-Mariani (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Educational innovation fostered to improve student and school performance.

Thursday, March 12**HF1539-Rosenthal (DFL)****Environment Policy & Oversight**

Public water temporary drawdown provided.

HF1540-Hilstrom (DFL)**Finance**

Court papers per page filing fees added and Supreme Court fees directed to increase.

HF1541-Hilstrom (DFL)**Finance**

Court filing fees and criminal surcharge amount amended.

HF1542-Hilstrom (DFL)**Finance**

Public defender funding provided, public defender fee established for

licensed attorneys and a public defender fee account in the special revenue fund established.

HF1543-Slawik (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Family day care background checks required and criminal history data access allowed.

HF1544-Reinert (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

St. Louis County; consumptive use of water approved for snowmaking.

HF1545-Ruud (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Alternative mechanism provided for prompt payment of emergency room and ambulance charges incurred by patients enrolled in very high deductible health plans.

HF1546-Rosenthal (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Domestic assault requirement that a previous conviction be against a family or household member to enhance a conviction eliminated.

HF1547-Hortman (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Municipality design-build method of contracting pilot program created.

HF1548-Gardner (DFL)**Taxes**

Homeowner property taxes limit established as a percentage of household income, and market value homestead credit reduced.

HF1549-Mahoney (DFL)**Finance**

Pine Island; water and sewer infrastructure grant provided.

HF1550-Persell (DFL)**Finance**

Cass Lake; infrastructure improvement funding provided.

HF1551-Persell (DFL)**Finance**

Cass Lake; street and infrastructure improvement funding provided.

HF1552-Persell (DFL)**Finance**

Star Lake Board grant funding provided.

HF1553-Persell (DFL)**Finance**

Local government renewable energy grant funding provided.

HF1554-Winkler (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Isolation and quarantine provisions and mass dispensing of medication provisions modified.

HF1555-Holberg (R)
Civil Justice

Electronic licensing data maintained by the commissioner of natural resources classified.

HF1556-Bigham (DFL)
Finance

Film production jobs program funding provided.

HF1557-Nelson (DFL)
Civil Justice

Time limit provided for appealing decisions of a governing body or board of adjustment to district court, posting of bond for an appeal to Court of Appeals required and public participation in government actions clarified.

HF1558-Olin (DFL)
Finance

Water quality permit compliance grants provided.

HF1559-Beard (R)
Finance

Airport and air navigation facility improvement project funding provided.

HF1560-Atkins (DFL)
Finance

State grant program modified.

HF1561-Huntley (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Hennepin County; special transportation services pilot program established and advisory committee established.

HF1562-Huntley (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Community-based residential service proposal process request required.

HF1563-Huntley (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

MinnesotaCare application coordinator assignment required.

HF1564-Huntley (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

State health care program affordability and eligibility increased, Minnesota Health Insurance Exchange established, payment reform continued, affordability standard created, and goals for universal coverage and a contingent individual responsibility mandate established.

HF1565-Kelly (R)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Goodhue County; nursing facility beds consolidated and relocated to a new site.

HF1566-Dittrich (DFL)
Taxes

Mortgage registry tax payments modified.

HF1567-Huntley (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Electronic prescription drug program technical changes made.

HF1568-Holberg (R)
Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division

Expedited town road extinguishment provision clarified.

HF1569-Hansen (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections

Joint and survivor annuity authorized for a divorced spouse of a deceased retiree who elected single life annuity.

HF1570-Reinert (DFL)
Finance

Libraries authorized to charge fees to nonresidents.

HF1571-Abeler (R)
Finance

Governor's budget for health and human services established, various health care provisions amended, Protecting Children and Strengthening Families Act and Northstar Care for Children established, fees increased and work groups created.

HF1572-Falk (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Health care purchasing alliance stop-loss fund repealed in 2007 reenacted, existence and adjusting eligibility extended.

HF1573-Murphy, E. (DFL)
Finance

Day training and habilitation transportation rates increased.

HF1574-Koenen (DFL)
Taxes

Utility property class rate increased.

HF1575-Mahoney (DFL)
Finance

Matching grant program established.

HF1576-Newton (DFL)
Finance

K-12 schools water ecology pilot project funding provided.

HF1577-Newton (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Nursing homes and home care licensure requirements added.

HF1578-Hilstrom (DFL)
Finance

Public defender representation co-payment amended.

HF1579-Otremba (DFL)
Agriculture, Rural Economies & Veterans Affairs

Dog food fee incidence changed.

HF1580-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance

Mountain Iron; road construction funding provided.

HF1581-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance

Buhl; sewer and water improvement funding provided.

HF1582-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance

Buhl; road construction funding provided.

HF1583-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance

Gilbert; wastewater treatment facility improvement funding provided.

HF1584-Gardner (DFL)
Taxes

Home heating fuel exemption modified.

HF1585-Sailer (DFL)
Taxes

Abandoned personal property provisions modified.

HF1586-Urdahl (R)
Finance

Grove City; new mechanical sewage treatment facility funding provided.

HF1587-Torkelson (R)
Finance

Minnesota Inventors Congress funding provided.

HF1588-Koenen (DFL)
Finance

Minnesota River Basin floodplain management funding provided.

HF1589-Urdahl (R)
Taxes

Rural county economic growth provided by allowing a credit against the income tax of an employer for the creation and retention of certain jobs, report required.

HF1590-Urdahl (R)
Finance

Howard Lake; Annadale/Maple Lake wastewater treatment plant funding provided.

HF1591-Urdahl (R)
Finance

Forest City; unsewered collection and treatment project funding provided.

HF1592-Urdahl (R)
Finance

Darwin; sewage collection system rehabilitation and expansion funding provided.

HF1593-Urdahl (R)
Finance

Eden Valley; rehabilitation and construction of sewage collection system funding provided.

HF1594-Davids (R)
Finance

Chatfield; ISD 227; Potter Center for the Arts funding provided.

HF1595-Kalin (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Licensing disqualifications modified.

HF1596-Olin (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight

Marijuana plant possession crime established, and marijuana sale and possession amounts modified.

HF1597-Lillie (DFL)
Finance

Ramsey County; Silver Lake Trail funding provided.

HF1598-Lillie (DFL)
Finance

Maplewood; Gerten Pond funding provided.

HF1599-Lillie (DFL)
Finance

Ramsey County; Phalen Chain of Lakes funding provided.

HF1600-Lillie (DFL)
Finance

Ramsey County; Keller Regional Park funding provided.

HF1601-Otremba (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Prenatal and maternity health insurance benefits waiting periods prohibited, pregnancy eliminated as a preexisting condition, parenting support grant program established, and various adoption provisions provided.

HF1602-Abeler (R)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight

Chiropractic clinic owner's surviving spouse permitted to retain the deceased spouse's business interest in the clinic.

HF1603-Johnson (DFL)
Finance

St. Paul; Warner Road bridge improvements funding provided.

HF1604-McFarlane (R)
Finance

Tamarack Nature Center funding provided.

HF1605-Kalin (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division

Conservation investment's incentive rate plans regulated.

HF1606-Eken (DFL)
Finance

Buffalo River watershed water quality pilot project funding provided.

HF1607-Rukavina (DFL)
Finance
Utility extensions funding provided from Virginia to Gilbert.

HF1608-Lieder (DFL)
Finance
Local roads and bridges funding provided, fracture-critical bridges grants authorized.

HF1609-Smith (R)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Forensic Laboratory Advisory Board duties and responsibilities modified, investigation report's public availability clarified, Department of Administration required to provide office space and services to the board.

HF1610-Davnie (DFL)
Taxes
Taxation; levy limits abolished.

HF1611-Smith (R)
Finance
Court designated judgments and awards interest rates modified.

HF1612-Knuth (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Minnesota Naturalist Corps established, state park naturalists, information centers and kiosks funding provided.

HF1613-Bigham (DFL)
Taxes
South St. Paul; tax increment financing district established.

HF1614-Thissen (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Community solutions grants for high priority community issues designated, Commission on Innovation established.

HF1615-Sanders (R)
Commerce & Labor
Petroleum standards updated, biodiesel blends and fuels standards established.

HF1616-Simon (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
State primary moved from September to June, state partisan primary ballots required to designate candidates receiving a certain level of support at state party endorsing conventions as endorsed.

HF1617-Mullery (DFL)
Finance
Grants funding provided to encourage women to enter nontraditional careers.

HF1618-Persell (DFL)
Finance
Beneficial reuse of wastewater grants funding provided.

HF1619-Atkins (DFL)
Commerce & Labor
Minnesota No-Fault Automobile Act's funeral and burial expense benefits increased.

HF1620-Atkins (DFL)
Civil Justice
Recovery for loss of society, affection, and companionship of a child or parent authorized.

HF1621-Davnie (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Schools required to develop a plan and comply with requirements on using restrictive procedures for children with disabilities.

HF1622-Mack (R)
Finance
Small business growth acceleration program modified, qualifying company definition modified, companies required to match contributions, money appropriated.

HF1623-Kalin (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Energy storage equipment and its installation in publicly owned buildings included in the definition of a qualifying solar electric project.

HF1624-Brown (DFL)
Finance
Shooting Star Trail funding provided.

HF1625-Davnie (DFL)
Taxes
Car sharing organizations exempted from rental car fee in lieu of registration tax.

HF1626-Sailer (DFL)
Finance
Solar energy projects installation in public buildings grants provided.

HF1627-Kahn (DFL)
Civil Justice
Cost of care requirements modified when a child is in a trial home visit.

HF1628-Kahn (DFL)
State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections
Campaign contribution limits and certain filing requirements modified, expenditures limited, political contribution and refund provisions modified.

HF1629-Demmer (R)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Shining artificial lights restrictions and conforming penalties modified.

HF1630-Kalin (DFL)
K-12 Education Policy & Oversight
Schedule established for aligning assessments to academic standards.

HF1631-Morrow (DFL)
Finance
Minnesota Valley Regional Rail Authority loan forgiveness required.

HF1632-Severson (R)
Civil Justice
Board of Judicial Standard's composition and powers modified, and presumptions in ascertaining legislative intent modified.

HF1633-Clark (DFL)
Energy Finance & Policy Division
Energy facility definition amended.

HF1634-Clark (DFL)
Finance
Minneapolis; Minnesota African American History Museum funding provided.

HF1635-Dettmer (R)
Higher Education and Workforce Development Finance and Policy Division
Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system human resources systems improvements provided.

HF1636-Clark (DFL)
Public Safety Policy & Oversight
Human trafficking victims' housing and support services provided and money appropriated.

HF1637-Clark (DFL)
Finance
Minnesota Housing Finance Agency authorized to issue a modified amount of nonprofit housing bonds, portion of bonds issued dedicated to permanent supportive housing for victims of human trafficking.

HF1638-Magnus (R)
Taxes
Federal taxable income provisions modified.

HF1639-Morrow (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Minnesota sex offender program provisions modified, additional oversight and client grievance process established, supervision system access authorized, and vocational work program modified.

HF1640-Liebling (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Prescription drug academic detailing program established and money appropriated.

HF1641-Liebling (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Gifts from drug or medical device manufacturers or distributors to physicians and formulary committee members banned.

HF1642-Gardner (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Medical assistance health opportunity account demonstration project established.

HF1643-Gardner (DFL)
Finance
Referendum revenue modified.

HF1644-Clark (DFL)
Civil Justice
Gender-neutral marriage laws provided.

HF1645-Clark (DFL)
Finance
Youthbuild programs expanded.

HF1646-Huntley (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Prescription drug prior authorization required for medical assistance payment.

HF1647-Huntley (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Prescription drug coverage eliminated from prepaid medical assistance program contracts.

HF1648-Sailer (DFL)
Environment Policy & Oversight
Video display device manufacturer and retailer reporting requirements amended, and recycled electronic product amounts limited that can be applied to future recycling obligations.

HF1649-Dill (DFL)
Finance
Lake County; Clair A. Nelson Memorial Forest funding provided.

HF1650-Demmer (R)
Finance
Lake Zumbro design and restoration engineering funding provided.

HF1651-Davids (R)
Finance
Spring Valley; new community theater facility funding provided.

HF1652-Davids (R)
Finance
Preston; historic grain elevator funding provided.

HF1653-Bly (DFL)
Finance
Contract alternative school funding extended.

HF1654-Pelowski (DFL)
Civil Justice
Electronically stored personal notes excluded from government data.

HF1655-Mullery (DFL)
Civil Justice
Marriage evaluation study group provided.

HF1656-Bigham (DFL)
Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight
Required behavioral health coverage specified for children and young adults who have autism spectrum disorder.

HF1657-Paymar (DFL)**Finance**

Departments of Public Safety and Corrections funding provided.

HF1658-Westrom (R)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

County officer appointment law authorization repealed.

HF1659-Solberg (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Human service authority established, county aid established, and workgroup created.

HF1660-Eken (DFL)**Finance**

County cooperative weed management funding provided.

HF1661-Loeffler (DFL)**Taxes**

Elderly living facilities provided as exempt from property taxation, and an exemption provided for the purchase of materials and supplies used in the construction of elderly living facilities from sales taxation.

HF1662-Doepke (R)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Wayzata; land conveyance modified.

HF1663-Jackson (DFL)**Taxes**

Green Acres and agricultural property tax provisions modified, land conservation property tax program established.

HF1664-Mullery (DFL)**Taxes**

Occasional sales tax exclusion provision modified to omit watercraft.

HF1665-Swails (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Education; best practices center for shared services established.

HF1666-Hayden (DFL)**Finance**

High-risk adults demonstration project funding provided.

HF1667-Mariani (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Instruction of students temporarily placed outside of their district provisions modified.

HF1668-Murphy, E. (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Advanced practice registered nurses practice requirements modified.

HF1669-Gunther (R)**Finance**

Jobs, economic development, housing, and Minnesota Heritage funding provided, programs established and modified, activities and practices

regulated, and accounts, assessments, and fees provided.

HF1670-Mariani (DFL)**Housing Finance & Policy & Public Health Finance Division**

Municipality rent control provisions modified.

HF1671-Carlson (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Labor or employee organizations provisions modified.

HF1672-Davnie (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Intersection gridlock prohibited, petty misdemeanor penalty imposed.

HF1673-Wagenius (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Conservation easement management account established, contributions required.

HF1674-Hausman (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Disposition of receipts to the parks and trails fund provided, grant program established, money appropriated.

HF1675-Atkins (DFL)**Environment Policy & Oversight**

Pollution Control Agency directed to adopt rules to limit emissions of high global warming potential gases.

HF1676-Morgan (DFL)**Taxes**

Credit reimbursements protected for cities that are net contributors to fiscal disparities from unallotment and aid cuts.

HF1677-Simon (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Safe at Home program applicability specified, eligibility requirements modified, violation or refusal to recognize a designated address remedy provided, and public release of certain court records prohibited.

HF1678-Nelson (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Workers' compensation provisions modified.

HF1679-Davids (R)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Adoption records and original birth certificates access provisions modified.

HF1680-Clark (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Minnesota Legislature resolved to apologize on behalf of citizens of the state to all persons with mental illness and development and other disabilities who have been wrongfully committed to state institutions.

HF1681-Ruud (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Direct-to-consumer genetic testing disclosures required.

HF1682-Mahoney (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Department of Labor and Industry's duty to assist employees and employers to deal with the workers' compensation system clarified.

HF1683-Obermueller (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Statutory warranties; notice and opportunity to repair certain conditions provided.

HF1684-Holberg (R)**Civil Justice**

Background check notice and copy required, and terms defined.

HF1685-Davnie (DFL)**Commerce & Labor**

Unreimbursed expense wage deduction regulated.

HF1686-Gottwalt (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Minimum wage for tipped employees modified, and tip credit provided.

HF1687-Gottwalt (R)**Commerce & Labor**

Prevailing wage provisions modified.

HF1688-Liebling (DFL)**Public Safety Policy & Oversight**

Court authorized to offer or agree to continuance for dismissal.

HF1689-Holberg (R)**Civil Justice**

Data privacy provisions amended.

HF1690-Champion (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Determination modified when a party prevails on a claim removed from conciliation court to district court for the purposes of recovering district court costs.

HF1691-Liebling (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Conciliation court alternative dispute resolution program provided.

HF1692-Morrow (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Dispute arbitration provided, and Uniform Arbitration Act adopted.

HF1693-Morrow (DFL)**Transportation & Transit Policy & Oversight Division**

Environmental impact statement completion required.

HF1694-Norton (DFL)**Finance**

Vinland Center for rehabilitation services funding provided.

HF1695-Ruud (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Home visitors allowed to be employment and training providers for certain MFIP participants.

HF1696-Doty (DFL)**State & Local Government Operations Reform, Technology & Elections**

Limitations on salary changes for city council members modified.

HF1697-Davnie (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Tenant rights clarified with respect to property subject to a mortgage foreclosure.

HF1698-Davnie (DFL)**Civil Justice**

Rehabilitation provided for housing that is vacant and abandoned as a result of the foreclosure crisis; health, safety and welfare of the community protected through appropriate police powers, and legal process provided to appoint receivers for abandoned properties and recovery of funds expended to bring the property up to code.

HF1699-Persell (DFL)**Higher Education & Workforce Development Finance & Policy Division**

Oriented strand board facilities required to be kept in salable operating conditions for one year after closing, and maintenance plan required.

HF1700-Dettmer (R)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Alternative dispute resolution process and due process hearing guidelines modified for children with disabilities.

HF1701-Newton (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

School district obligations clarified to children with disabilities.

HF1702-Davnie (DFL)**K-12 Education Policy & Oversight**

Grants authorized for the concurrent enrollment programs in the same manner as advanced placement and international baccalaureate programs.

HF1703-Huntley (DFL)**Health Care & Human Services Policy & Oversight**

Health care eligibility provisions amended for medical assistance, MinnesotaCare, and general assistance medical care, and Drug Utilization Review Board established.

HF1704-Huntley (DFL)**Finance**

Withhold created to managed care plan payments for prepaid medical assistance and general assistance medical care.

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MAJORITY LEADER: ANTHONY "TONY" SERTICH
MINORITY LEADER: MARTY SEIFERT

MINNESOTA INDEX

Health boards

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Number of licensed professional counselors in the state..... | 539 |
| Number of licensed professional clinical counselors..... | 12 |
| Alcohol and drug counselor licenses granted in 2008..... | 1,757 |
| Number of complaints to Board of Behavioral Health and Therapy in 2008..... | 153 |
| Date the Board of Medical Practice was established..... | 1887 |
| Overall number of medical practice licenses held in state..... | 23,365 |
| Number of licenses granted in 2008..... | 1,666 |
| Number of complaints to the Board of Medical Practice in 2008..... | 868 |
| Year the Board of Chiropractic Examiners was established..... | 1919 |
| Number of new chiropractic licenses issued in 1998, 2008..... | 1,767; 2,548 |
| Number of the newest type of license (animal chiropractor) issued last year..... | 5 |
| Complaints received in 2008 to the Board of Chiropractic Examiners..... | 167 |
| Number of licensed/registered dentists..... | 15,791 |
| Complaints filed with the Board of Dentistry in 2008..... | 237 |
| Number of Minnesotans ages 16-64 with a disability..... | 342,254 |
| Percent of Minnesotans with disabilities who are employed..... | 47 |
| Percent of Minnesotans with no disabilities who are employed..... | 81 |
| Percent of Minnesotans with disabilities at or below poverty level..... | 20 |
| Requests for technical assistance from the Disability Council in 2005, 2008..... | 8,776; 24,384 |
| Biannual number of licenses issued by Emergency Medical Services Board..... | 30,000 |
| Number of licensed marriage and family therapists in 2006, 2008..... | 902; 1,080 |
| Registered nurses, as estimate, licensed during fiscal years 2008-2009..... | 79,000 |
| Overall number of licensed optometrists for fiscal year 2008..... | 1,004 |
| Those who were newly licensed..... | 74 |
| Licensed pharmacists in the state in 2008..... | 19,554 |
| Disciplinary issues ordered..... | 11 |
| Number of licensed veterinarians in 2008..... | 3,046 |
| Those who were newly licensed..... | 161 |
| Social workers licensed in 2008..... | 10,314 |
| Those who were newly licensed..... | 925 |

— S. HEGARTY

Source: House Housing Finance and Policy and Public Health Finance Division Budget Book. Numbers reflected were as of June 30, 2008 unless otherwise noted.

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