

SESSION WEEKLY



HEROES FOR HIRE

A GREEN THUMBS UP

BILLS, HILTY, HOSCH LEAVE THE HOUSE

EARLIER 'FISH' OUT

HF2983 - HF2998

A NONPARTISAN PUBLICATION
MINNESOTA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES • PUBLIC INFORMATION SERVICES
VOLUME 29, NUMBER 10 • APRIL 6, 2012

Flashback to 1992 and 2002

LeVander remembered

Flags over the State Capitol were lowered in memory of Harold LeVander who died March 30 at the age of 81. The Republican was elected in 1966 to become Minnesota's 32nd governor.

During his single term, he assisted in establishing the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, the Department of Human Rights and the Metropolitan Council. He is most remembered for governing when the state's sales tax was adopted — despite his veto of the tax on two occasions.



Gov. Harold LeVander

He did not seek re-election when his term expired in 1971.

— Session Weekly April 3, 1992

Criminals would pay for time behind bars

Criminals who are sentenced to serve time in county jails would be required to pay for time they spend behind bars.

During debate on the House floor on HF2841, sponsored by Rep. Maxine Penas (R-Badger), some lawmakers worried that the bill would affect family members of inmates more than the convict.

Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) said the family of the convicted person may have to rely on social services if the family's money goes to the county to pay for jail time.

The bill also requires inmates to make other payments such as fines and child support payments before money would be taken for the jail time.

— Session Weekly April 5, 2002

Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society

Contents

- FIRST READING:** Minnesota's veterans do battle with rampant unemployment • 3-4
- AT ISSUE:** Ag policies seek to protect garden and landscape consumers • 10
- AT ISSUE:** Omnibus game and fish bill contains earlier opener provision • 11
- AT ISSUE:** Vikings stadium debate kicks off • 12
- AT ISSUE:** Voters to decide on photo ID • 13
- PEOPLE:** Bills seeks to serve Minnesota in Washington D.C. • 18
- PEOPLE:** Hilty leaves his mark as renewable energy advocate • 19
- PEOPLE:** Shifting priorities cause for Hosch to step down • 20
- BILL INTRODUCTIONS:** HF2983-HF2998 • 21
- RESOURCES:** Members planning to leave the House • 22
- RESOURCES:** Roster of state officers and agencies • 23
- INDEX:** Birding in Minnesota • 24

SESSION WEEKLY

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

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

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

On the cover: Rep. David Dill, *far left*, speaks on the House floor during session April 2. Now that all committee deadlines have passed, most of the work of the House shifts to the floor.

— Photo by Paul Battaglia

Heroes for hire

Minnesota's veterans do battle with rampant unemployment

By Nick Busse

When the 2,700 members of Minnesota National Guard's 34th "Red Bulls" Infantry Division return home from Kuwait later this month, they will have many things to look forward to. Unfortunately, for approximately 19 percent, a job isn't one of them.

"The job market was bad when they left; a lot of them were 18 to 23 or 24 years old, many of them had been in college or in school," said Jim Finley, director of veteran employment services for the Department of Employment and Economic Development. "When they left, they were unemployed, and when they come back obviously they're going to be unemployed."

The Red Bulls aren't alone. Minnesota's

unemployment rate for post-9/11 military veterans is estimated to be 23 percent — the third-highest in the United States. Throw in older veterans and the picture looks only marginally better: a total of 9.4 percent of the state's veterans are unemployed, compared to just 5.7 percent for all Minnesotans.

It's not just young soldiers, either. Bruce Olson, a 53-year-old former Red Bull, returned home from a 22-month long

deployment in 2007 and spent almost a full year looking for work. Even now, he says he's making ends meet with temp jobs. Back when he returned from Iraq, Olson said he feels the Guard didn't do much to help him find work.

"They could have done more to help you when you come back looking for a job," Olson said. "They can't cover everybody, but I think they could've done more to help us."

The situation has not gone unnoticed by state officials, who have begun a coordinated effort to combat the problem. Now, lawmakers and Gov. Mark Dayton are looking at providing additional pathways for veterans back into the state's workforce.

Rep. Carolyn McElfatrick (R-Deer River) sponsors HF2909 that would expand the state's underutilized GI Bill program so that it would fund apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs for post-9/11 veterans. The program currently only subsidizes postsecondary education. Dayton proposed a similar expansion in his supplemental budget request.

"With the drawdown, there will be even more men and women returning, and it's important that we plan in advance as much as possible to provide for re-entry into civilian life and quality jobs," McElfatrick said at a March hearing.

The stigma of war

On the face of it, veterans would seem to possess many qualities that an employer should want in an employee: self-discipline, teamwork, leadership skills and the ability to work under pressure, to name a few. So why is it so hard for veterans to find jobs?

Part of the reason simply boils down to bad timing. The current generation of veterans left for their overseas deployments amid the worst job market in decades. Many of them joined the service straight out of college or high school, without ever gaining any entry-level work experience in the civilian world. Finley said these young veterans return home with huge gaps in their civilian resumes.

"You've got a group of people back home in Minnesota who have not been in Kuwait with you; they've not made this sacrifice. And they've been looking for jobs. They've



Photo courtesy of the Minnesota National Guard

Marvin Hamilton, right, a Target Corporation executive and former U.S. Army officer, speaks to a group of Minnesota National Guard soldiers in Kuwait. Hamilton was part of an "Employment Resource Team" that visited the troops in March to prepare soldiers to look for jobs after their deployment ends.

First Reading continued on page 4

First Reading continued from page 3

been honing their interviewing skills, they've been perfecting their resumes, and that's who you're going to compete with," Finley said.

But the problem goes deeper than just the competitive job market. Col. John Morris, state chaplain for the Minnesota National Guard, says veterans are up against a stigma that exists in the minds of many employers and human resources professionals: namely, that veterans returning from combat zones are damaged.

"There's two big messages out there: one is 'Thank a veteran,' and the other is, 'All the veterans have post-traumatic stress disorder and are potential walking time-bombs,'" Morris says.

For employers, Morris says it often comes down to a simple equation. If there's one job opening and many candidates, why should an employer take on the risk of hiring a veteran? He says employers who haven't served in the military themselves can't see the inherent value in the kind of skills, training and experiences that veterans possess.

"I don't think it's malicious; I think we have a constant drumbeat that comes through the media, and we have a lack of understanding of us because most people have never been us," he said.

From combat to careers

In March, Minnesota quietly made military history when it sent a team of soldiers, government officials and corporate executives into a combat zone to train the Red Bulls on how to get civilian jobs once they return home. The so-called "Employment Resource Team" coached the troops on strategies to look for jobs, improve their resumes, hone their interview skills and network with potential employers.

Finley and Morris, both of whom were on the team, said the training sessions were a hit with the Red Bulls.

"Target, Best Buy and U.S. Bank stepped up to the plate and provided us hiring executives," Finley said. "These guys at this level are not available to soldiers or the general public to tell them the tricks of the trade... But this group of a thousand soldiers in Kuwait heard all of this stuff. It was incredibly valuable."

The Employment Resource Team represented a first-of-its-kind effort, but it's



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Bruce Olson, a veteran of the Minnesota National Guard's "Red Bulls" infantry division, has struggled to find a permanent job since his 22-month long deployment in Iraq ended in 2007.

far from the only strategy the state is using to put veterans back to work.

DEED employs its own small army of veteran employment representatives to help veterans look for jobs, apply for benefits and seek educational and job training opportunities. Each of the state's 49 workforce centers has a representative assigned to it.

"Our only purpose in life is to assist other service members in their job search,"

Finley said. "All my staff, including me, are all veterans. Most of us are disabled veterans. We've been through our own reintegration, so we know where these guys are at. We know some of the obstacles because we've had to deal with them."

Finley said the Dayton administration has made veteran employment a top issue. A series of workshops are being planned in which state officials will meet with employers to assess local workforce needs and develop customized training that can help put veterans in high-demand jobs. He said the proposed legislation to expand the GI bill would also go a long way toward opening new opportunities for veterans.

In the long run, Morris says the state needs to find ways to guide what he calls the

"next Greatest Generation" into productive careers.

"Let's challenge them to fill those critical needs, and let's counsel them, show them where the needs are going to be, and let's point them toward the Minnesota schools that can prepare them to get there," he said.

McElfrick's bill awaits action on the House floor. Sen. Mike Parry (R-Waseca) sponsors the companion, SF2488, which awaits action by the full Senate.

Need a job? Want to hire a veteran? The Department of Employment and Economic Development encourages you to check out positivelyminnesota.com/veterans. The website contains a number of resources to help connect veterans to employers and vice versa.

HIGHLIGHTS

MARCH 29 - APRIL 5, 2012

Editor's note: The following Highlights are coverage of select bills heard in House committees or divisions and other House activities held March 29-April 5. Designations used in Highlight summaries: HF-House File; SF-Senate File; Ch-Chapter; and *- the bill version considered by the House or the bill language acted on by the governor.

Lawmakers are taking a break to commemorate Easter and Passover. There will be no Session Weekly published April 13. The next scheduled Session Weekly publication date is April 20.

Business & Commerce

Annuity assurance proposed

Customers generally purchase annuities to ensure a monthly payback during retirement. However, with the increasing number of baby boomers reaching retirement age, regulators see the need for more uniform regulation to make sure products are well-suited to the customer.

Rep. Joe Hoppe (R-Chaska) sponsors HF1134, which, as amended, was passed by the House 125-6 April 2. It now awaits action by the full Senate. Sen. Roger Chamberlain (R-Lino Lakes) is the Senate sponsor.

Hoppe said the bill would enact a model regulation adopted by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners, and would make Minnesota's law "the strongest in the country — one that will be model legislation for other states."

According to the nonpartisan House Research Department, the bill's focus is on requiring that an annuity product recommended to a consumer by an insurance agent be suitable for that consumer. It adds a new requirement that the insurance company independently review the agent's suitability determination.

— L. SCHUTZ

Derivative transactions authorized

Signed by the governor

Derivative transactions will be allowed at state charter banks and holiday closures for financial institutions have been clarified.

Each is part of a new law signed March 30 by Gov. Mark Dayton.

Derivative transactions involve investments that have no value in themselves, but derive value from other investments. Derivatives may be based in a variety of assets, such as

mortgage loans. Financial institutions could bundle 1,000 of those loans together and sell shares to investors.

Proponents said banning derivative transactions would put state charter banks at a disadvantage to other banks, which may make these transactions. Opponents expressed concern that derivatives pose a potential danger to Minnesotans, who may make investments that are actually worth much less than they seem, as was the case leading up to the recession.

The new law also allows banks to close on Mondays following Sunday holidays. Banks may also close on Saturdays if the preceding Friday or following Sunday or Monday is a holiday.

Rep. Diane Anderson (R-Eagan) and Sen. Dan Sparks (DFL-Austin) sponsor the law. Clarification of bank operating hours is effective March 31, 2012, while the provision addressing derivative transactions takes effect Jan. 21, 2013.

HF2227/SF1735*/CH142

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Sump pump installation changes

Signed by the governor

Minnesota's plumbing code will broaden to allow licensed waterproofing contractors to install a sump pump in an existing single-family dwelling.

Gov. Mark Dayton signed the new law April 4 to address code inconsistencies between cities and counties as it relates to sump pump installation. Sponsored by Rep. Tim Sanders (R-Blaine) and Sen. John Pederson (R-St. Cloud) it takes effect Aug. 1, 2012.

"Basically what it is saying is that you don't need a full-blown license to do the work," Sanders said.

HF2354/SF1993*/CH159

— L. SCHUTZ

Travel insurance gets new definitions

Signed by the governor

To adapt to the changing modes of travel and traveler expectations, changes need to be made to state statute regarding travel insurance.

Signed by Gov. Mark Dayton April 4, and effective July 1, 2012, a new law "modernizes the definition of travel

insurance and regulates how travel agents disseminate travel insurance information," according to Rep. Jenifer Loon (R-Eden Prairie), who sponsors the law along with Sen. David Brown (R-Becker).

Of note, the new law clarifies that travel insurance does not include major medical plans, which provide comprehensive medical protection for travelers with trips lasting six months or longer, including those working overseas as an expatriate or military personnel being deployed.

HF2544/SF2069*/CH157

— L. SCHUTZ

Civil Law

Legal framework for receiverships

Signed by the governor

The process where a court orders an outside party to take custodial responsibility of another's property is called receivership.

It's a common law process that goes back about 500 years or so; however, there is no guidance in state law regarding the practice.

Rep. Joe Hoppe (R-Chaska) and Sen. Dave Thompson (R-Lakeville) sponsor a new law, signed by Gov. Mark Dayton March 30, which lays out a framework for receiverships. It takes effect Aug. 1, 2012.

The law also makes limited changes to statutes by clarifying receivership requirements in an effort to provide transparency to the rules and requirements.

Court-appointed receiverships can be used to protect real estate, liquidate fraudulently operated businesses or seize assets being withheld in a divorce.

HF382*/SF352/CH143

— L. SCHUTZ

If you will be visiting the Capitol in the near future, call the Capitol Historic Site Program at 651-296-2881 to schedule a tour.

Consumers

Defensive driving bill discount

Signed
by
the
governor

At age 55, people are eligible to take a defensive driving class managed by the Department of Public Safety. If a driver successfully completes the course, he or she receives a certificate from the department authorizing a discount. To maintain the discount, drivers must renew their certificates every three years.

A new law signed March 30 by Gov. Mark Dayton will allow those qualified to take a four-hour refresher course instead of retaking the full eight-hour course for certificate renewal. Rep. Jenifer Loon (R-Eden Prairie) and Sen. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd) sponsor the law, which is effective March 31, 2012.

HF2441/SF1542*/CH141

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Omnibus liquor bill passed

College football fans might be able to purchase alcohol at the University of Minnesota's TCF Bank Stadium.

A portion of the omnibus liquor bill would authorize sale of alcohol during intercollegiate football games at the stadium. Alcohol would be available to the general public as well as those seated in suites.

Sponsored by Rep. Joe Atkins (DFL-Inver Grove Heights) and Sen. Chris Gerlach (R-Apple Valley), HF2784/SF2392* also includes provisions relating to farm winery licenses, wine tastings, liquor store clothing sales and out-of-state craft brewers. The House passed the bill as amended 107-16 March 30. The Senate passed it 58-4 two days earlier. A conference committee will next review it.

An avid fan and alumnus of the university, Atkins said the bill was a fair compromise to bring alcohol to the stadium.

The bill received criticism from some lawmakers. Rep. Mike Benson (R-Rochester) said the change could harm a family-friendly dynamic at Gopher games. "It doesn't take very much before a person's tongue is loosened and the kind of comments that come from that lack of inhibition make for a terrible experience."

Members also heard a series of amendments, including two similar measures unsuccessfully introduced by Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa) and Rep. John Kriesel (R-Cottage Grove) that

would authorize liquor stores to operate on Sundays.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn (DFL-Mpls) unsuccessfully offered two amendments intended to reduce binge drinking among minors. Her amendments would allow those under age 21 to drink at on-sale locations with guardians and those ages 19-20 to drink at on-sale locations independently.

"I continually pride myself on being the legislator with the wettest voting record and the driest lifestyle," she said.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Education

Dayton vetoes school shift plan

Vetoed
by
the
governor

Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed a contentious bill April 5 that seeks to repay money owed to the schools.

Education funding was withheld by the state to balance its budget and help end the 2011 state government shutdown. Lawmakers agree that money must go back to the schools, but have different ideas on where it should come from.

Both bodies passed the bill April 2; the House 75-56 and the Senate 35-28. Rep. Pat Garofalo (R-Farmington) and Sen. Gen Olson (R-Minnetrissa) sponsor the bill.

Following the February budget forecast, the state owes \$1.8 billion in aid payment. The bill sought to repay \$430 million of that, leaving \$1.5 billion in aid still owed to schools. The state also owes \$550 million in property tax shift, which the bill did not address.

The repayment plan divided members of the House because it would draw from the \$1 billion the state is expected to have in reserve. Republicans praised the bill because it pays off the debt with existing money. DFLers accused the majority of political posturing by attempting to drain the account the state uses for fiscal emergencies.

Dayton echoed that concern in his veto letter. He cited data from Minnesota Management & Budget, which anticipates a difficult fiscal year 2013 for the state.

"Raising the reserve fund would put the State's newly-achieved fiscal stability at unacceptable risk... Just getting out of a deep budgetary hole is no reason to cut corners now," Dayton wrote.

He acknowledged that the proposed plan

"has superficial appeal," but supports another plan DFLers unsuccessfully offered during the bill's floor debate. As an alternative to tapping the reserve fund to repay schools, the minority caucus had previously proposed a tax increase for corporations who keep money in overseas accounts.

HF2083*/SF2492/CH154

— E. SCHMIDTKE

School annexation requirements

Residents of a northeast Edina neighborhood live within the Hopkins school district, which means their children must ride the bus further than if they were able to attend school in Edina. Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina) sponsors HF2939, which would ease the process for residents like these to become part of their hometown school districts.

The House passed the bill 73-57 March 29 and sent it to the Senate, where it awaits action by the Senate Education Committee. Sen. Geoff Michel (R-Edina) is the Senate sponsor.

Currently, for the neighborhood to be annexed into the Edina district, it would have to receive approval from both the Hopkins and Edina school boards. Under the bill, neighborhoods that want to change districts would only need approval from the annexing district. This proposed change would only apply to those who live in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Republicans spoke in support of the bill, saying that it would allow increased local control for families whose property taxes fund schools their children are unable to attend.

"This is a bill that smells a heck of a lot like freedom. It allows parents to petition their government to find the right place for their kids to go to school," said Rep. Kelby Woodard (R-Belle Plaine).

DFLers voiced opposition, saying that the bill would bypass the jurisdiction of local school boards. They also warned that the bill could have broad-reaching negative consequences.

"The point is this could really set in motion a bad situation where you have districts directly or indirectly trying to raid one another's tax bases," said Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park). He worried that could create unnecessary conflict between neighborhoods.

Rep. Tom Anzelc (DFL-Balsam Township) spoke as the sole DFLer to support a "yes" vote.

"These are two silk stocking districts and I've learned that wealth always prevails. I am

sure these parents and citizens and school boards and, at the end, the county board will figure this out," he said.

— E. SCHMIDTKE

School bus crossing arm requirement

Signed
by
the
governor

Future school buses used in the state will need to have an extra safety device.

Sponsored by Rep. Larry Howes (R-Walker) and Sen. Pam Wolf (R-Spring Lake Park), a new law will require all school buses used in the state that are manufactured after Jan. 1, 2013, to be equipped with a crossing control arm on the front right bumper that automatically expands out whenever the bus is stopped and the flashing red lights are in use.

It costs about \$300-\$350 for a new bus to have the approximately 8-foot arm, a small price to help keep children safe, supporters say. If an elementary school student is too close to a bus, the driver may not see them over the hood.

Howes said many buses in the Twin Cities metropolitan area already have such a crossing arm, partially because districts require them in bus operator contracts, but it is rare in northern Minnesota.

The law, signed March 29 by Gov. Mark Dayton and effective Aug. 1, 2012, also provides permissive authority for the placement of cameras on buses, modifies color requirements and allowed equipment around the flashing signal lamps and eliminates minimum seat depth and seat back height requirements because those are addressed in federal law. This will raise the minimum seat back height from 20 to 24 inches.

HF392*/SF992/CH137

— M. COOK

Flexibility for adult basic education

Signed
by
the
governor

Adult basic education programs will no longer face funding penalties for an interruption of their services due to factors outside of their control, like construction or

weather.

These education programs help adults become literate and obtain skills needed for employment. They also work with students so they may earn their high school diplomas or equivalency certificates.

To receive state funds, adult basic education programs must be in contact with students for a certain number of hours. When a disruptive force like a natural disaster occurs, the program could become inaccessible to students for

CADILLAC CAPITOL

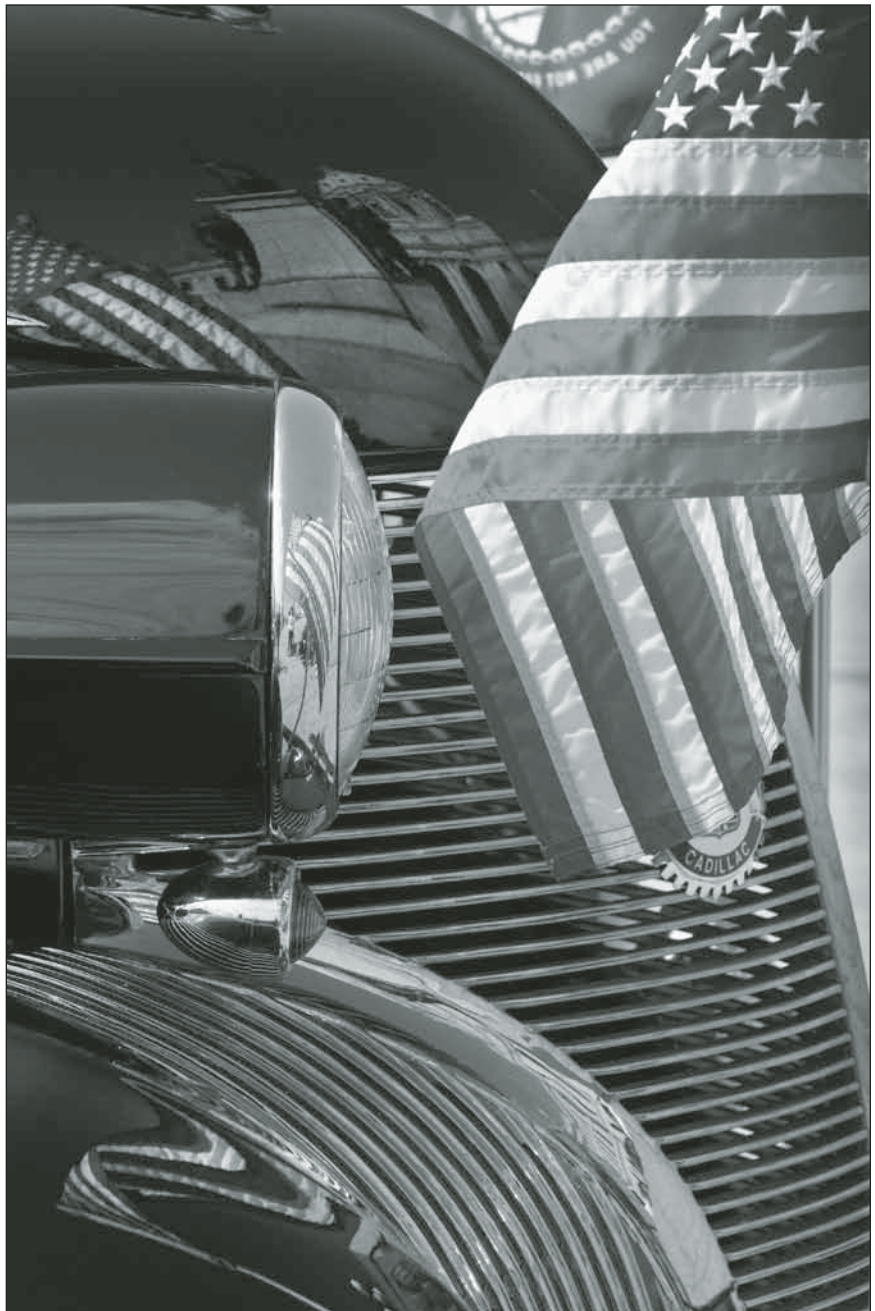


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

The State Capitol is reflected in the chrome and finish of a 1939 Cadillac. More than 25 classic automobiles were on display April 3 on the Capitol Mall as part of Minnesota Street Rod Association's "Run to the Hill."

a limited amount of time. Under the new law, signed March 30 by Gov. Mark Dayton, adult basic education programs can make adjustments to the scheduled hours they spend instructing learners, without facing penalties.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) and Sen. Carla Nelson (R-Rochester) sponsor the law, which is effective for fiscal year 2013 and later.

HF2291*/SF2346/CH145

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Buying lunchroom equipment

Signed
by
the
governor

Schools will no longer need approval from the Department of Education to purchase lunchroom equipment with surplus funds from their food service fund.

Gov. Mark Dayton signed into law March 29 a plan to simplify the buying process for districts.

School administrators brought forth a concern that making updates to lunchrooms was too cumbersome under the previous law. The new law is effective for purchases made on or after July 1, 2012.

Rep. Mike LeMieur (R-Little Falls) and Sen. Paul Gazelka (R-Brainerd) sponsor the law.

HF2376*/SF1971/CH138

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Continuing education for principals

Signed
by
the
governor

Retired principals serving as substitute or assistant principals for 15 days or fewer will not be subjected to continuing education requirements typically required of the position, under a new law signed March 29 by Gov. Mark Dayton.

Supporters said the law, effective March 30, 2012, is intended to streamline the process for temporary principals working in a limited capacity.

Rep. Carlos Mariani (DFL-St. Paul) and Sen. Terri Bonoff (DFL-Minnetonka) sponsor the law.

HF1524*/SF1932/CH139

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Prone restraint use reauthorized

Signed
by
the
governor

School staff with specific training may physically restrain out-of-control students with special needs. The technique, called “prone restraints,” involves holding a student face-down until the situation becomes manageable.

Gov. Mark Dayton renewed the authorization for qualified staff to use this technique through the upcoming school year, with the requirement that the Department of Education gather data on its use. In Minnesota, prone restraints may only be used with the minimum amount of time and the force it takes to ensure the student or another person will not be injured.

The new law, signed April 2 and effective the next day, states that the department must examine this information with the intent of eventually replacing the practice with a safe alternative.

Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls) and Sen. Pam Wolf (R-Spring Lake Park) sponsor the law.

HF2293/SF1917*/CH146

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Textbook aid expanded

Signed
by
the
governor

State aid for textbook purchases made by schools now may extend to software and other educational technology.

The law, sponsored by Rep. Denise Dittrich (DFL-Champlin) and Sen. Benjamin Kruse (R-Brooklyn Park), will allow districts flexibility in using those funds for materials other than traditional books.

The statute requires that these materials, as currently required of books, must be secular, non-ideological and neutral in tone. Gov. Mark Dayton signed this into law March 30. The new law takes effect July 1, 2012.

HF2078/SF1990*/CH144

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Increased PSEO opportunities

An omnibus bill that would, in part, expand opportunities for students to take college courses through the Postsecondary Enrollment Options program was approved by the full House April 2.

Sponsored by Rep. Pat Garofalo (R-Farmington), the bill provides for a variety of changes to statewide education.

Besides expanding postsecondary options, the bill would ban public school employees from using school resources to engage in political activities. It also addresses early graduation achievement scholarships for high school students and establishes a task force that would examine methods of incorporating career and technical education into high school curriculums.

Passed 78-54, HF2949 awaits action on the Senate floor where Sen. Gen Olson (R-Minnetrista) is the Senate sponsor.

Members heard a series of amendments, including one unsuccessfully offered by Rep. Nora Slawik (DFL-Maplewood), that sought to strike a controversial portion of the bill to set aside \$250,000 of a \$4 million early childhood education scholarship fund created by the Legislature last session. The money would create need-based grants for a parent-child home program, which critics say only serves to defund similar programs that also help low-income children.

Slawik said that she hoped to strike that language because the grants may be paid to a variety of child care providers, regardless of quality standards. She also spoke against the requirement that the grants be divided evenly between Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Garofalo called on members to vote

against Slawik’s proposal, which he called an “anti-rural amendment.”

The amendment divided members along party lines, as did the larger bill.

“It’s full of mandates, it cuts education funding and it does so in a way that particularly destabilizes our schools and opportunities for our children,” said Rep. Jim Davnie (DFL-Mpls).

Garofalo refuted this claim, saying that “if there was ever a white flag of surrender from the Democratic Party, I think we just saw it.”

— E. SCHMIDTKE

Elections

Primary could move to June

The state’s primary elections could move from August to June — a change that supporters say would encourage greater public participation and align Minnesota more closely with other states.

Rep. Kurt Daudt (R-Crown) successfully offered the provision as an amendment to HF2545/SF2296*. It passed on a 66-65 vote. Rep. Tim Sanders (R-Blaine) and Sen. Roger Chamberlain (R-Lino Lakes) sponsor the bill.

In 2010, Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed a law moving the state primary from September to August. The September primary date was seen as disadvantageous to military and overseas voters, and the change had overwhelming bipartisan support in the Legislature.

As amended, the bill would designate the first Tuesday following the third Monday in June as the date for the state’s primary elections. Primary elections currently take place on the second Tuesday in August.

Supporters include Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park), who said the change would bring more voters to the polls. He also said putting an end to the “intra-party squabbles” of the primary earlier in the process would focus more attention on the general election.

“I think the earlier you go, the better it’s going to be,” Simon said.

However, Rep. Rick Hansen (DFL-South St. Paul) said making the general election season longer would only increase the costs of campaigns. Rep. Sarah Anderson (R-Plymouth) called the amendment “self-serving” and said an earlier primary would favor incumbents.

UROBOT



PHOTO BY PAUL BATTAGLIA

Dario Canelon, from the Center for Distributed Robotics at the University of Minnesota, operates a scout robot during a demonstration at the annual "Support the U" rally in the Capitol Rotunda March 30. The center works to automate tasks that may be inconvenient or dangerous for people.

The House passed the amended bill 78-51. It now returns to the Senate, where a different version passed 60-1 on March 19.

Other election changes in the bill include:

- eliminating a requirement that absentee ballots be rejected if the voter fails to write in the date on the envelope;

- banning political party units from punishing non-endorsed candidates from running for office by imposing financial penalties (successfully offered as an amendment by Rep. Ryan Winkler (DFL-Golden Valley)); and
- a technical change necessary to accom-

modate the date for this year's Republican National Convention (successfully offered as an amendment by Sanders).

— N. BUSSE

Employment

E-Verify new state employees

A federal system that checks whether employees are eligible to work in the United States might be checking all new state employees.

Rep. Ernie Leidiger (R-Mayer) sponsors HF1976 that would require new hires in all three branches of state government to submit to a check through the E-Verify system, which is run by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The House passed the bill 77-53 April 2. It now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Al DeKruif (R-Madison Lake) is the sponsor.

E-Verify cross-checks data from federal agencies to determine whether someone is a U.S. citizen or is otherwise authorized to work legally in the country. Supporters say it's a useful tool to ensure that jobs only go to legally eligible workers.

"Since the state government is one of the largest employers in the state, we should set the example," Leidiger said.

Opponents cite recent state and federal studies demonstrating inaccuracies in the system. They say it sometimes produces "false positives" that accidentally screen out workers who are perfectly legal.

"This current E-verify system has too many problems with it right now," said Rep. Mike Nelson (DFL-Brooklyn Park). He also cited a letter from Minnesota Management & Budget Commissioner Jim Schowalter, who expressed concerns about the system's accuracy.

Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park) said he thought E-Verify is "generally a good idea," but said the bill should include due process provisions for eligible workers who are accidentally screened out by the system.

Simon also noted that the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce opposes the bill because it prefers a federal solution to immigration issues as opposed to a piecemeal state-by-state approach.

— N. BUSSE

Public employee labor contracts

When union contracts expire in the public sector, the contract terms continue in effect.

A green thumbs up

Ag policies seek to protect garden and landscape consumers

By SUE HEGARTY

Shopping for spring gardens and landscape materials would be easier under provisions included in the omnibus agriculture and rural development policy bill.

Sponsored by Rep. Paul Anderson (R-Starbuck), the House passed the bill 102-20 March 30. The Senate passed the bill 59-3 on April 4. Sponsored by Sen. Doug Magnus (R-Slayton), the bill was amended by Sen. Gen Olson (R-Minnetrissa) to designate Lester soil as the state soil. The bill was returned to the House for concurrence, but it opted to bring the differences to a conference committee.

HF2398 would require nursery stock to be labeled so that consumers could know if the plant is appropriate for Minnesota weather extremes.

A “non-hardy” label would mean a plant that cannot be expected to survive or produce flowers in certain growing zones.

Similarly, nursery stock collected from the wild would be labeled as wild stock when sold. Buyers would also be able to read how many seeds are contained in vegetable and flower seed packets, instead of the packet’s net weight.

Where there are plants you can usually find plant pests and weeds, both of which are addressed in the bill.

The definition of “infested” would be modified to help the Department of Agriculture regulate nursery stock growers and retailers. A plant would be considered infested if it contains or harbors enough plant pests to threaten other plants.

Pests, particularly the emerald ash borer found in Minnesota trees, have resulted in

quarantines that restrict the movement of firewood. Hennepin and Ramsey counties, along with the southeastern corner of the state, are subject to quarantine restrictions. The bill would also require wrappers on firewood sold or distributed in Minnesota to include the county and state where the wood was harvested.

Weeds, particularly noxious ones on public land, are also targeted.

A county would be able to fine public land owners up to \$1,000 per violation if landowners fail to control noxious weeds on their property. Farmers brought the issue forward because of the vast amounts of state-owned land in northern Minnesota that abuts cropland. Thistles, labeled as noxious weeds, would need to be sufficiently eradicated on public right-of-ways, wildlife management areas, state parks and other publicly owned property or counties could assess the state a fine.

The bill would expand the Agriculture Department’s nursery and plant inspection and enforcement powers to include its Wholesale Produce Dealer, Grain Buyer/ Grain Storage and Warehouse oversight responsibilities. The department could enter sites, inspect and sample products, issue commissioner’s orders, and pursue administrative and criminal penalties for failure to follow the law.

Other provisions would:


- allow about \$150,000 remaining from a 2010 Lutheran Social Services disaster relief and mental health appropriation for flooded rural communities to be used in more counties;
- exempt feed distributors who produce and use their own feed from being charged an inspection fee on the portion they use themselves;
- remove a requirement to submit several reports to the Environmental Quality Board and legislative committees;
- enable a joint powers agreement for the collection of household hazardous waste disposal; and
- allow some pesticide dealers to be exempted from showing the gross sales fee paid on the sale of agricultural pesticides.

The bill also contains HF1347, sponsored by Anderson, which would establish the Dairy Research, Teaching and Consumer Education Authority as a public entity. The authority would meet at least quarterly to focus on dairy systems that:

- produce high quality, nutritious dairy products to promote human health and fitness;
- optimize animal welfare;
- sustain natural resources; and
- sustain profitability in all segments of the dairy industry.

The authority, which would be governed by a board of directors, could arrange for development of a research facility with barns, milking parlor, classrooms, a lab, visitor’s center, student housing and a dairy retail store. Funding could be obtained through grants and gifts.

Some members have said that the existing Agricultural Utilization Research Institute, which has facilities located in Crookston, Marshall and Waseca, is similar in design and could be tasked with the same objectives.

Another section would move enforcement of food safety regulations into a new chapter of law and would grant authority for the Department of Agriculture to issue civil penalties, in addition to criminal or administrative penalties. 

Reel out those fishing rods

Omnibus game and fish bill contains earlier opener provision

By **BOB GEIGER**

Mother's Day and the state fishing opener may not conflict this year, even though they are scheduled the same weekend.

The omnibus game and fish bill passed April 3 by the House would start the fishing season a week early this year, if it is signed into law.

Sponsored by Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar), HF2171 also includes a Minnesota wolf-hunting season that coincides with the start of the deer hunting season. The bill awaits action by the Senate, where Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria) is the sponsor. If the Senate fails to pass the identical bill, a conference committee would be needed to work out the differences.

Rep. David Dill (DFL-Crane Lake) offered the amendment that would jump-start Minnesota's 2012 fishing season, which is officially scheduled to start May 12, with a "bonus week" starting May 5. The shift would only apply for this year.

"(Because of unseasonably warm temperatures) the fish have done most of the work that they must do to make other fish," said Dill. "The fish already are moving out (into deeper water). This is a bonus week. We have a constitutional amendment that says we have the right to hunt and fish."

Culling the wolf, stopping the carp

The late-2011 removal of wolves from the federal Endangered Species List resulted in the transfer of management of Minnesota's estimated population of 3,000 wolves to the state on Jan. 27, 2012. Under the bill, up to 400 wolves could be taken during the first season, which could begin the same day as the deer hunting season.

Prospective wolf hunters would pay a \$4 fee to enter a lottery that would pick up to 6,000 hunters for the season.

A large part of the floor debate was devoted to a series of amendments that would have changed or deleted a section of the bill that could require publicly owned shooting ranges to host youth firearms safety tests four times a year.



PHOTO BY PAUL BATTAGLIA

Rep. Tom Hackbarth sponsors the omnibus game and fish bill.

Rep. Ann Lenczewski (DFL-Bloomington) contends that requirement represents an unfunded mandate to local governments and creates taxpayer-funded competition for privately owned shooting ranges.

"This is real government-creep into private enterprise," said Rep. Bev Scalze (DFL-Little Canada). "Why would we want to interfere with small business?"

Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls) expressed concern that the bill contains zero funding to defend Minnesota's western border from the invasive Asian carp.

"South Dakota is home to Asian carp," said Wagenius. "It's the same carp that are coming up the Mississippi River. We are working hard, particularly on the Legacy bill to defend against that. But what we are not doing is working on the carp coming in from South Dakota."

She referred to \$12.2 million in that bill to, in part, erect barriers on the Mississippi River to block the carp from advancing further

north. Asian carp barriers are limited to the Mississippi River in the Legacy bill, rather than the Missouri River and tributaries that extend toward the Minnesota-South Dakota border.

"If this goes to conference committee, we really need to worry about this because the Senate has no carp language in its bill," Wagenius said.

Other provisions in the bill include:

- expanding the Department of Natural Resources' mission to include recruitment of new anglers and hunters and keep existing participants, including women and minorities;
- allowing electronic sales of hunting and fishing licenses during a government shutdown (the DNR estimates \$2.2 million in license sales were lost during the July 2011 state shutdown);
- setting a \$26 wolf hunting fee and establishing a wolf management and monitoring account funded by wolf license fees to provide wolf management, research, damage control, enforcement and education;
- establishing a "walk-in access program" to provide public access to private land for hunting;
- allowing bear hunters to leave hunting stands in the wild overnight if the owner's address, driver's license and DNR license numbers are attached;
- allowing road crews to trap beaver whose dams are causing damage or threaten to damage public roadways;
- providing for state authorities to drain shallow lakes to manage invasive species;
- allowing use of snowmobiles with metal traction devices on paved public trails unless they are specified as closed trails by a local government or DNR; and
- specifying that holders of commercial licenses to transport minnows must ship them in tagged containers and be kept separate from minnows from Minnesota. It also requires a \$1 million bond be provided in case a licensee is convicted of letting invasive species into Minnesota waters. 🐟

Stadium debate kicks off

Supporters hope late-session game plan provides new home

By **MIKE COOK**

An audible was called in the debate for a stadium to house the Minnesota Vikings. Supporters are betting that the change is a winning game plan.

However, the backup funding plan has received a less-than-enthusiastic welcome from many legislators and the governor.

Nonetheless, the bill has begun to barrel its way toward the goal line.

Sponsored by Rep. Morrie Lanning (R-Moorhead), HF2810 calls for a \$975 million fixed-roof stadium to be built on the Metrodome site. The team would cover \$427 million of construction costs; the state \$398 million; and Minneapolis \$150 million. The team has played in the downtown Minneapolis stadium since 1982, but team officials say the facility is antiquated and does not provide the needed revenue to remain competitive, nor does it offer a top-notch fan experience.

Without much discussion, the House Commerce and Regulatory Reform

Committee approved the bill on a split-voice vote April 2 and sent it to the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee for referral to the House Government Operations and Elections Committee. A number of other committee stops would be necessary before the bill could potentially reach the House floor. A companion, SF2391, sponsored by Sen. Julie Rosen (R-Fairmont), awaits action by the Senate Local Government and Elections Committee.

Rep. Terry Morrow (DFL-St. Peter), co-sponsor of the bill, said time is of the essence. "I do believe the team will leave if something is not done." He also noted that more than \$800 million in income tax over 30 years from players, staff and visiting players would disappear if the Vikings left.

Lanning said Minnesota would lose business from out-of-state visitors who make up 40 percent of game attendees.

He stressed that no statewide income or sales tax increases would be used for stadium funding. However, increased gambling revenue from electronic pull tabs, electronic bingo and sports tip boards could be part of the solution a win-win in the eyes of supporters.

Under the bill, charities would receive more money from the games and pay lower taxes on their proceeds. The state also would get more revenue, which would be used to fund its share of the stadium.

It is estimated that \$88 million in new annual tax revenue would be generated by tip boards, electronic pull tab and electronic bingo games. The first \$72 million

would be split between charities' tax relief and the state to pay off stadium bonds. Tip boards are expected to generate \$16 million annually for the state.

Lanning said \$42 million per year will be needed to pay debt service on the bonds. If the numbers come in as projected, the excess \$10 million would be put in reserve in case revenues down the road do not meet projections.

Gov. Mark Dayton initially offered charities \$10 million in tax relief, a number the charities said was not enough.

Dayton has expressed concern that the sports-themed tip boards may not be legal under federal law, something that could not be refuted with certainty by supporters. Under federal law, gambling on sports is illegal except in states that were grandfathered in, such as Nevada and New Jersey.

King Wilson, executive director of Allied Charities, said the proposed tip boards would be legal because they would be strictly based on numbers, and not dependent on a specific team's score. For example, he said a player with 1 and 6 on their board would win no matter which team won, say, 21-16 or 26-21.

The bill contains four back-up proposals in case, as some Legislators predict, electronic gambling devices do not meet revenue estimates:

- a 10 percent tax on stadium luxury boxes and suites;
- a sports-themed lottery game;
- redirecting excess Hennepin County taxes that now go towards Target Field; or
- a 10 percent admissions tax.

Lanning said these "blink-on, blink-offs" could raise a combined \$7 million to \$10 million annually toward debt service.

Rep. Jenifer Loon (R-Eden Prairie) wondered why the admission tax was low on the list, when game attendees would be the most enthusiastic about the plan.

"The Vikings don't particularly like the admissions tax idea," Lanning said.

Rep. Sheldon Johnson (DFL-St. Paul) questioned if things like stadium naming rights and potential personal seat licenses would be counted toward the team contribution. Team officials said they would.

"If this is the people's stadium, shouldn't the people get that revenue?" Johnson said.

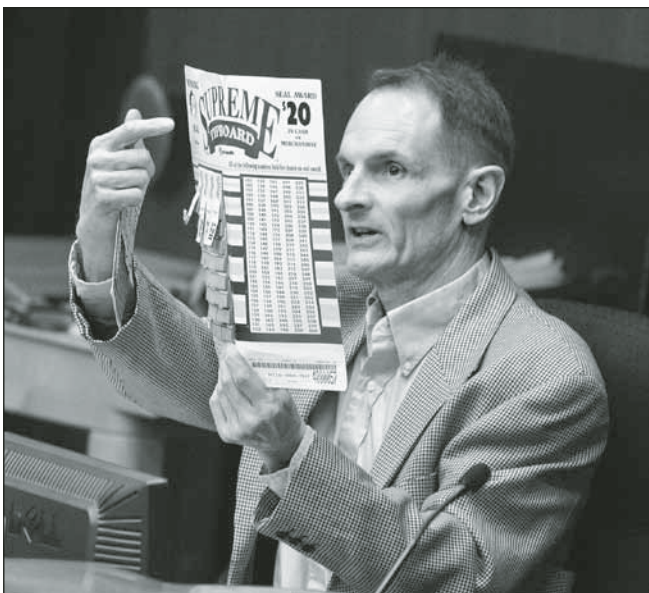


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

King Wilson executive director of Allied Charities, shows members of the House Commerce and Regulatory Reform Committee an example of tip board numbers during discussion of a bill that help would provide funding for a new stadium to house the Minnesota Vikings.

Voters to decide on photo ID

Fate of constitutional question now rests in the people's hands

By NICK BUSSE

Lawmakers have spent years debating the pros and cons of requiring photo identification for voting. The debate is now over for the Legislature; the voters themselves will have the final say.

On April 4, the House and Senate gave the final OK to a proposed constitutional amendment that would require all voters in the state to prove their identity using an approved form of photo ID. Minnesotans will be asked to vote on the measure on this November's ballot.

The Legislature passed a statutory voter ID requirement in 2011, but Gov. Mark Dayton vetoed it. Putting the question on the ballot allows the Legislature to bypass the governor's desk.

Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake), who sponsors the law with Sen. Scott Newman (R-Hutchinson), said it's fitting that an issue so crucial to the integrity of Minnesota's election system be put directly to the voters.

"This is a momentous day here in Minnesota

that we listened to the people, and we give the people the opportunity to vote on this constitutional amendment, as the constitution gives the right to do so," she said.

It will be the second constitutional amendment to be placed on the ballot: last year, lawmakers passed a proposed constitutional amendment that would define marriage as strictly between one man and one woman.

Passing a photo ID requirement has long been a top priority for Republican lawmakers, who say it's needed to ensure the integrity of the state's elections. DFLers argue the state's election system is already secure, and that there is no evidence to suggest that voter identity fraud is a problem in Minnesota. They say a photo ID requirement would make

voting more difficult for certain groups, like poor people and the elderly.

In keeping with the bill's history as a partisan lightning rod, the final House and Senate votes landed squarely along party lines. No DFLers voted for the bill, and only one Republican, Sen. Jeremy Miller (R-Winona), voted against it.

The bitterly partisan track record of the bill was noted by many

DFLers, who argued that changes to the state's founding document should only be made with bipartisan support.

"We will have placed, for the first time in our history, a purely, 100 percent partisan constitutional amendment on the ballot and started a political arms race when it comes to constitutional amendments. That's going to be the legacy of this bill," said Rep. Steve Simon (DFL-St. Louis Park).

Opponents also echoed criticisms made by the Office of the Secretary of State, saying the language of the proposed amendment is unclear and could make same-day registration and absentee voting illegal. Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina) said those claims are patently false, and that photo ID opponents have been deliberately spreading misinformation. He noted that other states with photo ID laws have no documented instances of voter disenfranchisement.

"I think this generalized concept that this is somehow going to result in chaos is simply a scare tactic," Downey said.

House Majority Leader Matt Dean (R-Dellwood) said the bill's opponents have tried to unnecessarily complicate what is ultimately a straightforward issue.

"The issue is a very, very simple issue: Are you who you say you are when you go to vote? It's a pretty simple issue and it's a pretty simple question," Dean said. He called the bill a "common sense piece of legislation that half of the other states are already doing."

The question that will appear on the ballot reads as follows:

"Shall the Minnesota Constitution be amended to require all voters to present valid photo identification to vote and to require the state to provide free identification to eligible voters, effective July 1, 2013?"

A majority of voters would have to approve the amendment in order for it to take effect. The next Legislature would then be tasked with passing an enabling law spelling out the details of how the photo ID requirement would be implemented.


HF2738*/SF1577/CH167 



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer discusses the voter ID constitutional amendment during floor debate March 20.

In practice, this can result in employees getting automatic wage or benefit increases even while their unions and employers are negotiating the terms of the next contract.

On a vote of 68-63, the House passed a measure March 29 that would preclude this from happening.

Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa) sponsors HF1974 that would provide that public-sector union contracts do not continue in effect after they've expired.

Supporters include school boards and other local government units, who say the measure would put them in a better position to negotiate with the unions. They argue that unions have little incentive to come to the bargaining table when the terms of the old contract remain in effect, providing the workers with automatic compensation increases.

Opponents say that the opposite is true: if the contract terms did not continue in effect, then government entities would have too much leverage over the unions during contract negotiations, creating an unfair playing field.

"What we're doing here is messing in public employee labor law and the negotiations between the state and public employees," said Rep. Mike Nelson (DFL-Brooklyn Park).

The bill now awaits action by the full Senate. Sen. Mike Parry (R-Waseca) is the Senate sponsor.

— N. BUSSE

Env. & Natural Resources

House passes Legacy funding

Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species could find it tougher to spread north into Minnesota waters.

The Legacy funding bill approved 101-28 by the House April 4 includes \$7.5 million to construct fish barriers in the Mississippi River. Another \$4.7 million is included in the bill to provide research funding and staff to the University of Minnesota to conduct aquatic research.

Sponsored by Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City), HF2430/SF2493*, as amended, now returns to the Senate, where Sen. Bill Ingebrigtsen (R-Alexandria) is the sponsor. The Senate, which passed the bill 63-0 March 22, did not concur with the House amendments April 5. A conference committee has been requested to work out the differences.

"This bill makes the first significant



PHOTO BY PAUL BATTAGLIA

Rep. Dean Urdahl outlines the Legacy funding bill April 4 on the House floor.

progress in figuring out how to stop invasive species," said Rep. Jean Wagenius (DFL-Mpls).

The anti-Asian carp language is one part of the \$105.1 million going to four funds created by the 2008 Legacy Amendment: Outdoor Heritage, Clean Water, Parks and Trails, and Arts and Cultural Heritage. However, the parks and trails section did not receive any funding.

Garnering the most funding for fiscal year 2013 is \$97.4 million for the Outdoor Heritage Fund, including the Asian carp funding. Other appropriations are \$6 million to the Clean Water Fund and \$1.7 million to the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Despite passing by a comfortable margin, House members debated numerous amendments, including one by Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Savage) to use \$30 million in Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund money annually for seven years to restore the State Capitol.

Buesgens said that could save the state \$116 million in debt service on the proposed \$221 million project. "I think we all agree that this building needs to be fixed up and repaired," he said.

However, using Legacy funds to pay for an entire project challenges the mission of the amendment which is to supplement, not substitute, conventional financing of state projects.

"If this isn't Minnesota's history and cultural heritage, I don't know what is," Buesgens said. The amendment failed 77-52.

The bill also includes almost \$30 million to buy land, including \$14 million for the Mississippi Northwoods Habitat Complex and \$13.8 million to pay for Phase IV of the Reinvest in Minnesota/Wetlands Reserve.

All that spending to buy public land didn't escape the eye of Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa), who noted that governments already own nearly 8.5 million acres of land in the state.

"The definition of socialism is when the state owns the capital. And we continue to march continually toward putting this government into ownership," Drazkowski said.

— B. GEIGER

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

Permitting bill signed into law

Signed
by
the
governor

Environmental permitting for Minnesota projects will speed up after Gov. Mark Dayton signed a new law April 2 that streamlines the process and creates a “permit applicant professional” to submit applications to state agencies.

“This is an historic day in the state of Minnesota,” said Rep. Dan Fabian (R-Roseau), who sponsors the law with Sen. Bill Ingebriksen (R-Alexandria). Added Dayton: “We want to make sure the state is viewed as an ally rather than an adversary” during the permitting process.

Effective April 3, 2012, the law requires the commissioner of the Pollution Control Agency to notify project applicants if permits are complete or incomplete within 30 days. If incomplete, the PCA must detail application deficiencies and how they can be solved. The law requires all environmental permits to be issued or denied within 150 days.

Another nuance in the law is the creation of a multi-agency entity, “Minnesota Business First Stop,” to coordinate federal, state and local government programs related to air, water and land resources.

Additionally, an alternative environmental review program involving the Department of Natural Resources and PCA would be able to process up to three projects without environmental assessment worksheets. The projects are designed to extract iron ore in northern Minnesota.

HF2095/SF1567*/CH150

— B. GEIGER

Health & Human Services

EMS technical bill passed

Several definitions having to do with emergency medical services would be updated to conform to federal terminology, under a bill passed 129-0 by the House March 29.

HF2128, sponsored by Rep. Duane Quam (R-Byron), also would require ambulances to be equipped with a two-way radio that is programmed and operating, and would expand the types of conduct for which the Emergency Medical Services Regulatory Board can take disciplinary action. In addition, the bill specifies that education standards must meet the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration’s

National EMS Education Standards.

The Senate passed a different version of the bill 64-0 April 3. A conference committee has been appointed to work out the differences. Sen. Gretchen Hoffman (R-Vergas) is the Senate sponsor.

— S. HEGARTY

Automated drug dispensing passes

Nursing homes would be able to distribute medications using an automated system designed to deter pharmaceutical waste and save money, under a bill passed 130-0 as amended by the House April 3.

HF2626/SF2173* would expand a pilot program statewide that uses managing pharmacies to fill automated drug dispensers. Rep. Kathy Lohmer (R-Lake Elmo) and Sen. Benjamin Kruse (R-Brooklyn Park) are the sponsors.

As amended by the House to exempt rural areas of the state where pharmacies are not in close proximity to nursing homes, the Senate re-passed the bill 64-0 April 4. It awaits action by the governor.

As amended, the bill would allow for issuance of a restricted limited service pharmacy license in health professional shortage areas, such as the Littlefork Medical Center in Koochiching County.

Automatic drug dispensers are refilled daily, resulting in fewer medication errors, reduced drug waste from blister packs and improved control over prescription drugs, Lohmer said.

“Remote dispensing is a step forward to getting pharmaceutical waste out of the environment and saving taxpayer dollars,” said Rep. Melissa Hortman (DFL-Brooklyn Park).

— S. HEGARTY

Treatment options expanded

Signed
by
the
governor

Parents of children who are deaf, deaf blind or hard-of-hearing and who need mental health treatment will have more options for where they can seek treatment for their children.

Current law limits public health cost reimbursement for the specialized mental health services to facilities located in Minnesota or in bordering states.

Sponsored by Rep. Kathy Lohmer (R-Lake Elmo) and Sen. Michelle Benson (R-Ham Lake), a new law will allow parents of deaf, deaf blind or hard-of-hearing children who need mental health treatment to seek residential treatment in any state that meets a set of criteria.

Signed April 2 by Gov. Mark Dayton and effective Aug. 1, 2012, the new law requires the chosen facilities to meet the following criteria: be located in a state that is a member of the Interstate Compact on Mental Health; accept clients who use American Sign Language as their first language; and be licensed by the state in which it is located.

Proponents said the additional options will save public money, too, because of lower residential treatment rates in other states.

HF2253*/SF1861/CH148

— S. HEGARTY

Pregnancy grant eligibility expands

Newer facilities that offer “alternatives to abortion” programming will be eligible to apply for state grants to counsel pregnant women.

Signed April 4 by Gov. Mark Dayton, the new law is retroactive to Feb. 1, 2012.

Previously, grants were available to programs in place by July 1, 2004, but several new ones have started since then, according the House sponsor, Rep. Larry Howes (R-Walker).

Other criteria require an applicant to be a private, nonprofit organization and to provide the services to pregnant women free of charge. Services may include medical care, parenting education, housing assistance, adoption services and child care assistance.

Sen. John Carlson (R-Bemidji) is the Senate sponsor.

HF2676*/SF2330/CH152

— S. HEGARTY

Local Government

Scaled-back land use bill

The House passed a dramatically scaled-back version of a bill that addresses land use disputes between local governments and developers.

The amended version of HF389*/SF270, sponsored by Rep. Mike Beard (R-Shakopee), would require local governments to give greater public notice before adopting interim ordinances that can halt developments for one to two years.

Earlier versions of the bill proposed much tighter restrictions on adoption of the ordinances, which are also known as “land use moratoria.” Rep. Mike Nelson (DFL-Brooklyn Park) successfully amended

the bill, with Beard's support, to remove a number of provisions that were opposed by counties and townships.

Under the new language, the local elected body would have to provide a 10-day notice before holding a public hearing at which an interim ordinance could be adopted. Beard said the proposal represents a compromise that he and the bill's proponents worked out with representatives of local governments. He called it "about as good a consensus as we can find on this bill."

The House passed the bill 76-53. It now goes to the Senate, where Sen. Ray Vandever (R-Forest Lake) is the sponsor.

Supporters claim interim ordinances can be misused in order to arbitrarily delay development projects and wear the developers down financially. Opponents say they provide local officials with a tool to protect their communities from potentially harmful new kinds of land uses.

The issue has recently gained publicity because interim ordinances have been used to halt a number of proposed frac sand mining operations in southeastern Minnesota.

The bill would also prohibit municipalities from requiring land dedication or fees in development contracts that are not authorized by statute or mutually agreed upon by all parties to the development.

— N. BUSSE

Public Safety

Notifying an abuse victim's parents

Signed
by
the
governor

An extra phone call will need to be made when a child is a crime victim.

Sponsored by Rep. Bruce Vogel (R-Willmar) and Sen. Gary Dahms (R-Redwood Falls), a new law will add to the custody order in a divorce agreement so that each party must "notify the other party if the minor child is the victim of an alleged crime and shall provide the name of the investigating law enforcement officer." It will also require law enforcement to immediately notify a local welfare agency if the child is a victim of neglect, physical abuse or sexual abuse outside the family.

Signed April 4 by Gov. Mark Dayton, the law takes effect July 1, 2012.

"The (law) stems from an incident where we had a young child, 6 years old, who was abused by a neighbor child who was also a minor," Vogel said. "When they went to contact the father he said he didn't want to press charges; therefore, law enforcement let the case go, didn't follow up in notifying the mom. This was a divorce case and the child was staying with the dad at the time this happened."

The mother did not find out until four years later when her son told a social worker. She subsequently spoke with a county investigator who informed her that her ex-husband was informed, and that state statute was followed because they contacted "a parent."

Parents who are under a protective order or in the Safe at Home program will have the notification provided through a third party so as to avoid direct contact with their former spouse.

HF1899/SF2297*/CH153

— M. COOK

Fireworks expansion bill reignites

Minnesotans looking to buy some fireworks may be able to stay within the state's borders.

"Sometimes you just got to ignite the light and let it shine," Rep. John Kriesel (R-Cottage Grove), the sponsor of HF1774, said April 3 on the House floor.

"Current Minnesota law allows for the use of party poppers, snappers, toy smoke devices, snakes glow worms or sparklers. This bill expands legal fireworks in Minnesota to include bottle rockets, firecrackers and other fireworks classified by the American Pyrotechnics Association as consumer fireworks," Kriesel said. "This bill does not make cherry bombs or M-80s legal, or the consumer use of large display fireworks like

Military & Vet. Affairs

Honor guards given equal priority

Signed
by
the
governor

Honor guards are paid up to \$50 each time they provide services, such as playing "Taps," at the funeral of a military veteran.

Effective July 1, 2012, the veterans affairs commissioner cannot prioritize these payments based on whether the honor guard units are sponsored by organizations that have charitable gambling operations. Previously, when funding ran low, honor guards that were sponsored by charitable gambling organizations could see their payments delayed until the end of the year due to permissible language.

The new law, sponsored by Rep. Dean Urdahl (R-Grove City) and Sen. Mike Parry (R-Waseca), was signed by Gov. Mark Dayton April 2.

HF1903*/SF1814/CH149

— S. HEGARTY



PHOTO BY PAUL BATTAGLIA

Jacob Gould and his sister, Emily, listen April 4 as their mother, Sarah Corder Guggisberg, answers a reporter's question after Gov. Mark Dayton signed "Jacob's Law" into effect. The law says that both parents must be notified if their child is suspected of being the victim of an alleged crime.

you see at your community Fourth of July celebrations.”

Local governments would be permitted to charge an annual license fee to stores wanting to sell consumer fireworks, but they couldn't, among other things, regulate structures where fireworks could be sold.

However, after more than an hour of floor discussion the bill was re-referred to the House Government Operations and Elections Committee so local units of government could discuss local control issues.

Approved by that committee April 5 on a split-voice vote, the bill awaits action by the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee. A companion, SF1694, sponsored by Sen. Michael Jungbauer (R-East Bethel), awaits action on the Senate floor.

During the floor debate, supporters spoke of Minnesotans crossing into neighboring states to spend their money for fireworks.

Rep. Steve Drazkowski (R-Mazeppa) said there's a seasonal store across the bridge from Wabasha that's open three or four months a year "only to collect money from Minnesotans that are coming over to buy their fireworks and head back."

Among arguments made by opponents was the dangers of fireworks, especially to children, and that fire and police chiefs have expressed fear about an expansion.

"I think this bill is just a terrible idea," said Rep. Tina Liebling (DFL-Rochester). "What about the personal responsibility of somebody who injures somebody else, somebody who's a complete and total bystander, somebody whose parent didn't agree to them using the firework? This is a ridiculously reckless bill."

"We can't wrap our world in bubble wrap. We can't protect everybody," said Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph).

— M. COOK

Inmate gardening program

Signed by the governor

Part of the omnibus corrections law signed April 4 by the governor is a provision calling for the Corrections Department to establish an inmate gardening program at each correctional facility where space and security allows.

"The produce is to be used for feeding the offenders; excess produce would be donated to food shelves or charities," said Rep. Glenn Gruenhagen (R-Glencoe), who sponsors this provision in the House as HF467.

"Some of the results of this in other states is they see lower recidivism rates with gardening programs, it also saves thousands of dollars — some states save several million dollars — in food costs to the prisoners," Gruenhagen said, adding inmates have sought a gardening program for many years.

Rep. Carly Melin (DFL-Hibbing) said it's important to teach prisoners skills to help reduce recidivism when they are released. "We're taking a step in the right direction here."

- Other provisions in the omnibus law:
- will allow victims who want to be informed when their offender is released from prison or a secure hospital to be notified electronically;
 - allow the Department of Corrections' Fugitive Apprehension Unit to apply for a search warrant;
 - bar offenders convicted of murder, manslaughter, criminal sexual conduct, assault, drive-by shooting, assault, robbery, arson and other specified crimes from participating in the Challenge Incarceration Program; and
 - eliminate an annual performance report from the Department of Corrections,

instead reverting back to a biennial report. This is expected to save the department approximately \$8,000.

The Challenge Incarceration Program and biennial report provisions are effective April 5, 2012; the remainder Aug. 1, 2012.

Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Vernon Center) and Sen. Warren Limmer (R-Maple Grove) sponsor the law.

HF2415/SF2084*/CH155

— M. COOK

Transportation

Commodities definition addressed

Signed by the governor

Properties and equipment can be defined as commodities when it comes to extended vehicle combinations on state roads.

Sponsored by Rep. Ron Shimanski (R-Silver Lake) and Sen. Al DeKruif (R-Madison Lake), the law adds property and equipment to the types of transport allowed for vehicle combinations that can exceed the general maximum combined length of 75 feet.

The new law is needed because many Minnesota State Fair vendors transport their equipment and property using twin trailers. Last year, the fair board was informed by the State Patrol that the contents did not fall under the definition of commodities, which are authorized to be transported in Minnesota.

Signed March 30 by Gov. Mark Dayton, the law is effective March 31, 2012.

HF2793*/SF2426/CH147

— M. COOK

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175 State Office Building 296-2146
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House Index

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G-17 Capitol 296-4791

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130 Capitol 201-3400

Wanting to go to Washington

After one term, Bills seeks to serve Minnesota in the nation's capitol

By **MIKE COOK**

Two years ago, Rep. Kurt Bills (R-Rosemount) was teaching economics full-time to teenagers.

The freshman representative still starts most weekday mornings talking financial matters in a first-hour advanced placement class at Rosemount High School before spending the rest of his day in or near the State Capitol. However, if things go well this fall, Bills will no longer be teaching in the south suburb or driving to St. Paul.

Bills has his sights set on another dome — one in Washington, D.C. He is leaving the Minnesota House in hopes of joining the U.S. Senate.

"It's a great lesson to everybody. No matter what party you are or what is your political ideology, get involved," Bills said.

The change would be a tremendous jump for someone that had not served on a governmental body until elected to the city council in 2008.

It was a student asking him what today's youth should do about the economy that sparked his interest in running for office. "That

one kid's question got me going, and now I'm going to keep going until I'm done, and then I will be an economics teacher again," he said. "Whether it's two months, nine months, six years or 12 years, I cannot wait until I'm back fully in the classroom again. I cannot wait to bring this knowledge back to help kids."

The nation's economic future is a primary motivation for Bills' desire to move up the political ladder. He believes today's young people deserve answers to questions that have arisen from our nation's continually increasing debt.

"You need to reform bureaucracy and spending, you need to talk about entitlement reform," he said. "You can't keep putting things off."

A self-described citizen-legislator, Bills is in a contest for the Republican Party nomination with Army National Guard Capt. Pete Hegseth and former Rep. Dan Severson (R-Sauk Rapids). Bills said he'll abide by the mid-May party endorsement and not look back. Nor will he use his current House seat as a backup should he not be the chosen Senate candidate.

"I'm going all in," he said. "I'm a teacher and I have a job as a teacher, that's what I do for a living. This is where I'm trying to serve the people, and I'll try to do that. If it works out, it works out, and if it doesn't, it doesn't."

Whoever gets the nomination is expected to square off against Sen. Amy Klobuchar in the general election. Many so-called "experts" have said the Democrat is nearly unbeatable.

Bills doesn't buy that. He's running with the message of "Facing the Giants."

"She's not the giant. Our deficits, entitlement reform, monetary policy, the way we've handled our money, that's the giant," Bills said. "From what I've seen, she's a very caring person ... but the main issue I have is that she has not been a voice willing to talk about these issues that I see facing the kids in my classroom."

One of the most important things Bills said he learned in the House is that things are not as partisan as it may seem to the outside world.

"There are people willing to work on things; there are people willing to compromise and get things done. I've learned how to talk to people both within my own party and the other party," he said. "I've learned there's the textbook how a bill becomes a law and then there's how a bill becomes a law. These are all things I can take back to my classroom and teach kids how the process works."

Among his accomplishments in St. Paul, Bills lists a bill passed March 28 by the House that would ban public school employees from using district resources to promote any political candidate or cause. "It's not hindering anyone's free speech. You can still privately on your time contact your legislator; you can still work for any cause you want," he said.

He's also proud of this year's bill to create a veteran's hiring tax credit for employers, and the creation of an early graduation achievement scholarship program that made it into last year's omnibus education law.

Bills advice to his successor is simple: be willing to listen and learn. 🙏



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Rep. Kurt Bills said, foremost, he's a teacher; but it's important for everyone to be involved in the political process.

Hilty: 'It's time'

Pragmatic legislator best known as renewable energy advocate

By SUE HEGARTY

As a freshman legislator, Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson) looked up to his mentor, former Rep. Henry Kalis (DFL-Wells). When Kalis announced he was leaving, Hilty was really disappointed and asked him why.

Kalis replied, "You just know when it's time."

After 16 years of serving his constituents, Hilty has decided "it's time."

He'll return home to the 120-acre property and machine shop where he and his wife operated a small business manufacturing children's bedroom furniture. The business has since closed but the building is still there, and would make a suitable man-cave for tinkering.

"It has 16 years of deferred maintenance," he said.

He's also looking forward to spending more time with the grandchildren, including a 9-month-old granddaughter who lives nearby.

Hilty originally settled in Minnesota to attend the University of Minnesota, where he intended to earn a Ph.D in American Studies. There he read American psychologist and philosopher William James' work about the philosophy of pragmatism. James influenced how Hilty approached his work in the House.

"I've always tried to be pragmatic and focus on results, and not so much on the theater part of politics," he said.

He recalled how Rep. Mary Murphy (DFL-Hermantown) handed him a bill to create the Agate and Geological Center at Moose Lake State Park and said to him, "This is yours now."

"We did manage eventually to cause that to happen," he said.

Opened in 2003, the center contains a multi-purpose classroom, nature store gift shop, restrooms and an exhibition hall that showcases Minnesota's gemstone, the Lake Superior Agate.

But Hilty is probably best known for his leadership on policies that seek to reduce

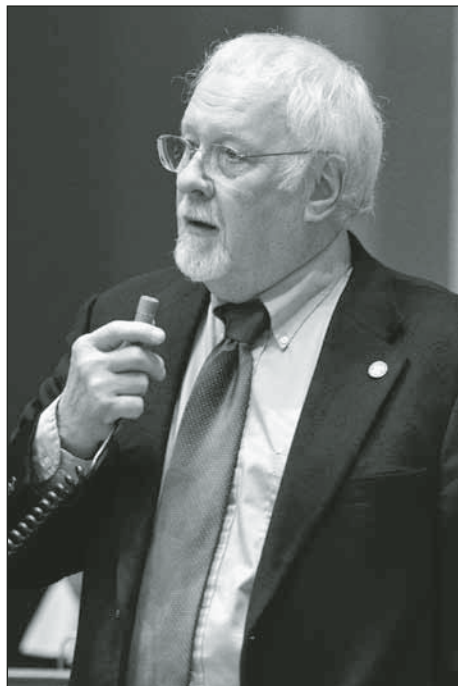


PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

After 16 years of serving his constituents, Rep. Bill Hilty is leaving the House. He plans to spend more time with his grandchildren.

greenhouse gas and carbon monoxide emissions and to promote more efficient uses of energy. He's proud to have helped pass the renewable energy standards, and then became the sponsor of the Next Generation Energy Act. He's a strong advocate for increased production of wind energy and counts on fellow DFL proponents to continue his work.

He has high regard for those who can juggle a family, career and the so-called part-time job of a legislator. His advice to his successor is to "find out how much the job pays and make sure you can afford to do this," he said. "I'm somewhat serious about that."

"I was at a point in my life and business career that it was possible to do this, but really, 10 years earlier there was no way possible for me to serve in the Legislature. That has to be true for innumerable people," he said.

When former Rep. Becky Lourey (DFL-Kerrick) left her House seat to run for

the Senate, Hilty, who had been Lourey's campaign manager, was urged to replace her in the House. It was a period when there was national pressure to deregulate the electric utilities.

"I did not want that to happen," he said.

During Hilty's eight terms in office, the DFL has been both the minority and majority party. There are very obvious differences, particularly as a minority legislator.

"It's very frustrating to have things that you think should happen and you have no prospect of accomplishing," current term included, he said. Even more frustrating are attempts to undo many of the provisions he helped put into place, he added.

Besides energy policy, he's been very interested in election issues and said Minnesota is a national leader in election laws.

"Now that is poised to go down the drain and that's kind of discouraging," he said, referring to a proposed constitutional amendment to require voters to present photo identification before being allowed to vote.

Another thing that has changed during his time in office is the decorum, he said. "When I started here there was a lot more attention to respect for the process."

More recently, he believes finance bills have not been fully vetted in committee hearings and have passed out of committee before the issues were resolved.

"There was a greater sense of common purpose that I don't think we have anymore," he said.

Perhaps one of the greatest philosophical mysteries yet to solve is how the Legislature can return to those bygone days when there was less polarization.

"When you have conflicting goals and values it's very difficult to bridge those gaps," he said. If the next freshmen class wants some philosophical advice, they can find him Up North bouncing his granddaughter on his knee. 🐾

A family man heads home

Shifting priorities cause for Hosch to step down

By Nick Busse

Mondays are a bittersweet affair for Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph). The excitement he feels at the start of another week at the Capitol is tempered by the heart-wrenching ritual — familiar to many rural lawmakers— of saying goodbye to his family.

“I’ve got a 4-and-a-half-year-old and a 16-month-old at home, and I miss them,” Hosch said.

This year, the ritual became too much to bear. His children are getting old enough to ask questions about why daddy’s not home

more often, and the weight of their questions is crushing. After one particularly tearful goodbye at the start of this year’s legislative session, Hosch decided it was time to step down and focus on his family.

“It’s not for a lack of passion or a lack of love for the job,” Hosch says. “I still want to fight the fight; I just have to fight it in a different way.”

Hosch was just 27 when he first arrived at the Capitol, having already served four years as mayor in his hometown of St. Joseph. He’s spent most of his adult life in

public office, during which time he also completed a master’s degree, married his wife Holly, had two children (Garrett and Gavin) and co-owned a construction business.

In short, it has been a busy life. In spite of this, Hosch said he’s loved serving in the Legislature.

“I believe in what happens down here. I believe in good public policy,” he said.

Of all the bills he’s sponsored, Hosch said the one he’s most proud of allowed for extended orders of protection for people in abusive relationships.

Although it was a “smaller bill” that didn’t get much attention, he said it involved one of this favorite parts of the job — constituent work.

“That came out

of a direct constituent issue, in which a constituent was dealing with trying to serve their ex with a fourth order for protection, and I’ve come into contact with a lot of people who have been impacted by that bill,” Hosch said.

Hosch thinks the nitty-gritty of solving constituents’ problems is some of the most important work legislators do. He said he’s proud to represent one of the most conservative districts of any DFL House member, and attributes his success to the work that he and his staff have done directly addressing the concrete needs of the people in his district.

“That is where you can see a difference being made, where somebody calls you up with a problem or a frustration, needing help, whether it be navigating government or getting an answer on an issue,” he said.

Asked about advice to his successor, Hosch has plenty: work hard for your district; always be open to others’ ideas; and don’t stake out a final position on an issue until you’re ready to vote on it. Above all, he said lawmakers should always focus on people and ideas over partisanship.

“Don’t allow partisanship to define people here. We may have disagreements, but those disagreements shouldn’t be perceived as being personal,” he said.

Hosch said the thing he’ll miss the most about the Legislature is the friends he’s made. He said the hectic and often tumultuous legislative session breeds unique friendships.

“It’s hard to explain, because you go through so much down here,” he said. “We’ve gone through special sessions, government shutdowns, late night budget negotiations with a lot on the line, and you share an experience with people that builds a bond and builds friendship.”

Hosch isn’t sure what comes next for him. He said it’s likely he’ll continue to work on public policy again in some form or fashion. But in the meantime, he plans on taking a well deserved vacation from public office.

“My children have yet to watch a parade from the curbside where they can run after candy being thrown their way,” he wrote in a letter to his constituents. “It is time to take a break from electoral politics and focus on catching candy.” 🍬



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Eight years in the House is enough for Rep. Larry Hosch, who is not seeking re-election. With a young family, Hosch wants to step back and focus on his family.

BILL INTRODUCTIONS

MARCH 30 - APRIL 5, 2012
HOUSE FILES 2983 - 2998

Friday, March 30

HF2983-Simon (DFL)

Government Operations & Elections

Polling place roster use of photographs required and money appropriated.

HF2984-Simon (DFL)

Government Operations & Elections

Elections; criminal penalty modified for deceiving another person with the intent to prevent the person from voting in an election.

HF2985-Dettmer (R)

Taxes

Estate taxation federal exemption amount conformed.

HF2986-Crawford (R)

Civil Law

Polling place challengers immunity from civil liability provided.

HF2987-Dettmer (R)

Environment, Energy & Natural Resources Policy & Finance

New school building construction on a landfill site prior review required.

Monday, April 2

HF2988-Hackbarth (R)

Government Operations & Elections

Housing and vacant building fees and charges limited, hazardous buildings municipal ordinances preempted and Citizen Housing Review Board created.

HF2989-Dettmer (R)

Taxes

Forest Lake and Forest Lake Economic Development Authority tax increment financing authorized and authority extended.

HF2990-Hilty (DFL)

Taxes

Agricultural property tax classifications modified to include trees grown for sale as Christmas trees.

HF2991-Davids (R)

Education Finance

Rushford-Peterson school district money appropriated for a new school to replace an aged school extensively damaged by flood water.

Wednesday, April 4

HF2992-Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

Retail property excluded from the areawide pool, and the 1971 base value subtraction eliminated.

HF2993-Lenczewski (DFL)

Taxes

National Football League stadium alternative backup financing provided for.

Thursday, April 5

HF2994-Kriesel (R)

Government Operations & Elections

State lottery director authorized to adopt rules for electric scratch ticket devices.

HF2995-Mahoney (DFL)

Government Operations & Elections

Vikings stadium; National Football League stadium in Minnesota provided for, Minnesota Stadium Authority established, Metropolitan Sports Facilities Commission abolished, local tax revenue use provided for, electronic pull-tabs and bingo authorized, state appropriation bonds issued, and money appropriated.

HF2996-Peppin (R)

Jobs & Economic Development Finance

Minnesota Small Business Trademark Protection Act enacted, and dispute settlement conference provided for.

HF2997-Murdock (R)

Commerce & Regulatory Reform

Preneed group life insurance and graded death benefit policy provisions modified.

HF2998-Crawford (R)

Jobs & Economic Development Finance

Endow Minnesota program established, and matching grants authorized and tax credits provided to encourage contributions.

SILHOUETTES



PHOTO BY ANDREW VONBANK

Sunlight creates silhouettes of excited visitors in the State Capitol Rotunda March 29.

Members not returning to the House

Some to step down, some step aside, some hope to move on

Following this year's redistricting, all House and the Senate members are up for election. However, several House members have announced their intention to run for a different office, while others have announced their retirement, and two lost the endorsement to a fellow party member after they were pitted against each other in newly drawn districts. Here is an unofficial listing of members, as of April 4, who won't be returning to the House.

House members who have announced they will not seek re-election:

Rep. Mark Buesgens (R-Savage)
Rep. Denise Dittrich (DFL-Champlin)
Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville)
Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson)
Rep. Larry Hosch (DFL-St. Joseph)
Rep. Kate Knuth (DFL-New Brighton)
Rep. John Kriesel (R-Cottage Grove)
Rep. Pat Mazorol (R-Bloomington)
Rep. Mark Murdock (R-Ottertail)
Rep. Nora Slawik (DFL-Maplewood)

Seeking Senate seats:

Rep. Bruce Anderson (R-Buffalo Township)
Rep. Bobby Joe Champion (DFL-Mpls)
Rep. Connie Doepke (R-Orono)
Rep. Keith Downey (R-Edina)
Rep. Kent Eken (DFL-Twin Valley)
Rep. Mary Kiffmeyer (R-Big Lake)
Rep. Lyle Koenen (DFL-Clara City)
Rep. Branden Petersen (R-Andover)
Rep. Bev Scalze (DFL-Little Canada)
Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake)

U.S. Senate hopeful:

Rep. Kurt Bills (R-Rosemount)

Lost endorsement to fellow party member:

Rep. Marion Greene (DFL-Mpls)
Rep. Ron Shimanski (R-Silver Lake)

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700 State Office Building296-2868

Office of the Legislative Auditor

140 Centennial Office Building296-4708

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72 State Office Building296-9002

Regent Candidate Advisory Council

Trustee Candidate Advisory Council

Compensation Council

Subcommittee on Redistricting

Great Lakes Commission

Salary and Budget Review Subcommittee

Subcommittee on Employee Relations

Foreign Delegations Liaison

Legislative Commission on Health Care Access

Legislative Commission on Metropolitan Government

Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy

Joint House-Senate Subcommittee on Claims 296-1121

Administrative Rules Subcommittee 296-1121

Revisor Subcommittee 296-2778

Geographic Information Services

55 State Office Building296-0098

Electronic Real Estate Recording Commission

72 State Office Building296-1121

Fiscal Services Office

45 State Office Building296-8890

Office on the Economic Status of Women

95 State Office Building296-8590

Legislative Advisory Commission

400 Centennial Office Building 201-8011

Legislative Audit Commission

140 Centennial Office Building296-4708

Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources

65 State Office Building296-2406

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

55 State Office Building296-2750

Legislative Energy Commission

72 State Office Building296-9002

Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council

95 State Office Building 297-7141

Mississippi River Parkway Commission

72 State Office Building296-1121

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Employment and	
Economic Development	651-259-7114
	800-657-3858
Enterprise Technology.....	651-296-4466
Explore Minnesota Tourism	
	651-757-1845
	800-657-3535
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Health	651-201-5000
	888-345-0823
Higher Education Services	651-642-0567
	800-657-3866
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	800-657-3769
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	800-657-3704
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Iron Range Resources	218-735-3000
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	800-342-5354
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Metropolitan Council.....	651-602-1000
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	888-646-6367
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	800-657-3864
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	800-652-9094
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	800-657-3676
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MINNESOTA INDEX

Birding in Minnesota

Year the Common Loon was named the Minnesota State Bird.....	1961
Approximate number of loons in the state.....	12,000
Alaska ranks No. 1 for its number of loons; Minnesota's rank.....	2
Approximate maximum speed, in mph, at which a loon can fly.....	7
Approximate life span of a loon, in years.....	30
Year of first recorded loon nest sighting found near Deer River.....	1930
State's first recorded cardinal sighting.....	1875
Bird species identified through the Minnesota Breeding Bird Atlas Project.....	241
Earliest reporting date to see 100 species.....	Jan. 10, 2001
Length number of days before an American Robin leaves the nest after hatching.....	14-16
Days for an American Crow.....	28-35
Weeks for a Bald Eagle.....	8-14
Cups of sugar to every one cup of water needed to make a nectar recipe used to attract hummingbirds.....	1/4
Recorded bird species that migrate through Minnesota.....	250
Recorded migrating raptor sightings from 1991-2010 from Duluth's Hawk Ridge.....	82,000
April dates for owl monitoring project at Hawk Ridge.....	1-15
Number of volunteers last year helping to conduct the survey.....	168
Routes monitored.....	108
Recorded owl sightings.....	313
Highest number of species sighting, Barred Owl.....	55
Great Horned Owl sightings.....	38
Number of pelicans that have been known to nest in the Lac qui Parle Wildlife Management area.....	10,000
Audubon Chapters in Minnesota.....	9
Number of areas in Minnesota sanctioned by Audubon Society as Important Bird Areas.....	42
Dates for Urban Birding Festival of the Twin Cities.....	June 15-17

— L. SCHUTZ

**Sources: Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Ornithologists' Union,
Audubon Minnesota, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory.**