

Minnesota  
House of Representatives  
Legislative Information  
Manual  
2003-2004

First Edition  
December 2002

Photo by Tom Olmscheid

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# Minnesota House of Representatives Legislative Information Manual 2003-2004

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First Edition  
December 2002

Compiled and prepared by  
the House Public Information Services Office.

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# State Government Structure

## Background

The Minnesota Territory was organized under an 1849 Act of Congress authorizing its people to form a constitution and a state government. A state constitution was adopted and state officers were elected in October 1857. Minnesota was admitted to the Union on May 11, 1858.

## Constitution

The Minnesota Constitution provides the basis for the state's government. All actions of the government must comply with the provisions of the constitution. Any proposed changes to the constitution must be approved by a majority of both houses of the Legislature and submitted to the people for their approval. Under the Minnesota Constitution, the powers of government are divided into three separate and distinct branches — legislative, executive, and judicial.

The constitution is printed in the Minnesota Legislative Manual (Blue Book), published by the Office of the Secretary of State. Individual copies of the constitution may be obtained from the Chief Clerk's Office.

## Legislative Branch

The legislative branch consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The 134 House members are elected to a two-year term; the 67 senators to a four-year term, except in the year preceding redistricting (which takes place after each census), when their term of election is two years.

The Legislature is responsible for making new law, changing or abolishing old law, establishing a state budget and tax policy, proposing changes in the state constitution, electing regents of the University of Minnesota, and overseeing the work of the government. In addition, the Legislature has a number of

judicial functions. Each house may punish its own members for "disorderly or contemptuous" behavior, and with a majority vote, can unseat a member.

The House of Representatives has the power to impeach the governor, secretary of state, treasurer, auditor, attorney general and the judges of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, and district courts. The Senate conducts proceedings to determine if a conviction is warranted.

## Executive Branch

The executive branch of government consists of the governor, lieutenant governor, secretary of state, auditor, treasurer, and attorney general. These are the constitutional officers. The primary function of the executive branch of government is to carry out the day-to-day operation of state government. The work is divided among the six constitutional officers, 20 departments and more than 200 boards, committees, councils, and authorities under the broad guidance of the governor.

As the chief executive of the state, the governor has a number of specific powers and functions. The constitution charges the governor with the responsibility of preparing for the Legislature an annual report on the general condition of the state. In addition, by statute, the governor must submit a proposed budget to the Legislature within three weeks of the first Monday of January in odd-numbered years.

Traditionally, the governor presents his or her legislative priorities to the Legislature at the beginning of each session in an address and in a written report.

## Judicial Branch

The main functions of the judicial branch are to resolve disputes between private parties and to hear criminal prosecutions. In the course of performing these duties, the judiciary has the power to rule that

a law enacted by the Legislature is unconstitutional; therefore, invalid.

Minnesota's judicial branch is comprised of three levels of courts: the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, and district courts.

### The Supreme Court

The Minnesota Supreme Court, comprised of a chief justice and six associate justices, is the final authority in Minnesota's judicial system. The Supreme Court has administrative power over the judges and personnel of the lower courts and regulatory authority over all attorneys in the state. Its other chief responsibility is hearing appeals of decisions made by the Court of Appeals. It also serves as a reviewing body for decisions of the Minnesota Tax Court and Workers' Compensation Court of Appeals. In addition to hearing appeals, the Supreme Court is responsible for overseeing the machinery of justice in the state, for regulating the practice of law, and making recommendations to improve the judicial system.

### The Court of Appeals

The 16 judges of the Court of Appeals hear appeals from all the trial courts and from proceedings under the Administrative Procedures Act, including unemployment decisions of the commissioner of economic security. The Court of Appeals' chambers are in the Minnesota Judicial Center, but the judges travel around the state to hear oral arguments in the same judicial district where the trial took place.

### The District Court

The district court is the trial court of general jurisdiction (meaning it has the power to hear any civil or criminal case) created by the state constitution. There are more than 254 district court judges among the 10 judicial districts. District courts hear civil actions, gross misdemeanors, and misdemeanor cases, as well as juvenile, family, and probate matters.

### The Conciliation Court

Conciliation courts hear civil disputes up to \$7,500, except for disputes over consumer credit transactions, which must be less than \$4,000 to be heard in conciliation courts.



# Before the Session

## Certificate of Election

Members' certificates of election are sent by the secretary of state or the county clerk directly to the chief clerk of the House or the secretary of the Senate, under a 1979 law.

The Chief Clerk's Office retains the certificate until the new member is sworn in. A 1981 law provides that the chief clerk return the member's certificate to the member at that time. A member can expect to receive the certificate a few days after being sworn in.

## Election of Caucus Leaders

Usually within a week or two after the general election, members who affiliate with each party get together on an informal basis to organize and elect leaders for their caucus. Each caucus can nominate a speaker-designate (the speaker is officially elected by the members of the entire House). The majority caucus also elects a majority leader and a majority whip, and the minority caucus elects a minority leader and minority whip. Selection of assistant leaders is done by each caucus, but the time and manner of this selection process varies from biennium to biennium and caucus to caucus.

The caucuses also meet periodically throughout the session, primarily to exchange information on various issues.

## House Rules and Joint Rules

The constitution provides for each house of the Legislature to establish its own rules of procedure. Each biennium, the House does this by adopting the Permanent Rules of the House.

The job of drafting permanent House rules is started prior to the beginning of the session by the Committee on Rules and Legislative Administration (Rules Committee). Early in the session, a set of rules is presented to the

entire House for adoption. Until the new rules are adopted, the House adopts the rules of the previous session as temporary rules. Proposed rules can be amended on the House floor.

In addition, Joint Rules of the Senate and the House are adopted. The Joint Rules apply when the House and Senate meet together in joint convention, in conference committees, and in procedural matters which must be the same in both houses.

## Selection of Committee Chairs, Assignments to Committees

The number of standing committees and their areas of responsibility are set each biennium by the speaker. Under the House rules, the speaker-designate submits this information to the leader of the minority caucus 30 days before a new session convenes.

The speaker names the chairs, vice-chairs, and members of each committee. Following the general election, each member may indicate which committees are preferred. The number of committee assignments per member can vary from session to session. Generally, members serve on three or four standing committees. Majority caucus members submit requests directly to the speaker-designate (the nominee elected by the majority caucus). The minority caucus members make their requests through the minority leader who submits recommendations for minority representation on the standing committees to the speaker-designate at least 15 days before convening a new session.

Committees are balanced with respect to party, occupation, and geographic area represented by the members of the House.

Due to scheduling conflicts, assignment to one committee may preclude another committee assignment.



# House Members' Rights

Members of the House of Representatives have many duties, responsibilities, and rights. Below is a sampling.

## Speech and Debate Privilege

The Minnesota Constitution provides that legislators may not be “questioned” in any other place for speech and debate in the Legislature. (Minnesota Constitution, Article IV, Section 10.) In general, the courts have held that the identically worded provision of the U.S. Constitution provides a relatively broad privilege for matters relating to legislative activities. For example, the privilege protects a legislator from liability for libel or slander for statements made in floor or committee debate. Similarly, the privilege prevents litigants from compelling a legislator to testify or provide documents relating to his or her legislative activities or duties (under most circumstances).

In order to qualify for the protection of the privilege, however, the legislator’s actions or conduct must fall within what the courts describe as the “legitimate legislative sphere.” Matters not directly or integrally related to the legislative process and activities are not privileged. For example, press releases and letters to constituents have been held not to be privileged. The exact scope and extent of the privilege will depend in each instance upon the particular facts and circumstances of the case.

To sum up this somewhat confusing and ambiguous issue: In general, the constitution protects a legislator from legal trouble for what he or she might say in official House debate. Legislators are not protected, however, from libel or slander or other problems that might arise from press releases or communications with constituents or other persons.

The issue does not often arise, but legislators should be aware of the possibility and try to understand the elements of protected and unprotected speech.

## Conflicts of Interest

A House member, required to vote on an issue that would substantially affect either his or her personal financial interests or a business he or she is associated with, must deliver to the speaker a *written statement* describing the issue and the nature of the potential conflict of interest. The House, at his or her request, may then excuse the member from voting on the question.

## Holding Other Offices

The state constitution provides that a legislator cannot hold any other state or federal office, except postmaster or notary public. A member who is elected or appointed to another office, must resign from the Legislature.

The Minnesota Supreme Court defines an “office” under this provision as a position in which the person has authority under law, either alone or with equals, to determine public policy or make a final decision not subject to another’s supervisory approval.

Court cases or attorney general opinions have indicated that legislators may not hold the following offices:

- city charter commission member
- city council member
- civil service board member
- municipal assessor
- county attorney
- park board member

## House Members' Rights

- county commissioner
- police chief
- county veterans service officer
- school board member
- county welfare board member
- state fair board member
- deputy registrar of deeds
- mayor
- deputy registrar of motor vehicles

Some positions which legislators may hold, according to the same sources, include:

- employment with any government unit where the individual does not make final decisions that are subject to no one else's review
- architect
- cashier
- engineer
- inspector or investigator for regulatory agency
- police officer
- attorney
- census supervisor
- instructor

### Notary Public Privilege

By law, all members during their term of office, are notaries. However, they may not receive any fee for notarizing documents. When acting as a notary, a House member must sign as follows:

"Rep. \_\_\_\_\_, District \_\_\_\_\_, Minnesota.  
;My term expires January 4, 2005."

Also, House Administrative Services and the Office of the Revisor of Statutes each have a staff member on hand to act as a notary. Some other departments may have a staff member who is a notary as well.

### Arrest Privilege

The state constitution provides that members cannot be arrested while the Legislature is in session or when they are on their way to or from the session, except in cases of felony, treason, or breach of the peace. This means the privilege applies to misdemeanors or gross misdemeanors, excluding what the courts consider a breach of the peace. (Examples: assault or threatened assault, breaking and entering, driving while intoxicated, speeding, violent verbal attacks, or other acts that cause serious alarm to people in the vicinity.)

The privilege only prevents detaining a member during session; it does not provide immunity from prosecution after the session ends. The protection is not automatic. A member can either assert the privilege in court or choose to waive it.

### Civil Liability Exemption

A member is not liable under state law in a civil law suit for any act done in the course of his or her official duties.

### Excused Court Appearances

A civil or criminal action in which a member is a party, attorney, or witness may not be tried while the Legislature is in session or during an interim hearing. A member cannot be required to appear as a witness in court proceedings held during the session or any interim hearing, unless the court orders the member to appear and the speaker of the House, or the entire House, consents to the order.

The member may waive these privileges. In the event of a waiver, the matter can be tried at times that will not conflict with the member's legislative duties.

### Criminal Offenses

It is a gross misdemeanor for anyone, by intimidation or otherwise, to prevent a member from attending a committee or floor session, casting a vote, or performing any official act.

It is a felony for anyone, by threat, deception, or other unlawful means, to attempt to influence a legislator in voting or performing any other official duty.

### Extra-Legislative Employment Rights

#### Private Employment

A member who has a permanent position with a private employer in the state at the beginning of the legislative session must be allowed to resume his or her old job or a position of similar seniority, status, and pay if he or she reapplies within 30 days after the end of the session.

A member of the Legislature must be restored to his or her job without loss of seniority. The returning member must be allowed to participate in insurance and other benefits provided to other employees. Retirement benefits may not be reduced because of time spent in legislative service. A member cannot be discharged without good cause for three years after being restored to the job, except in inverse order of seniority.

No employer or union can discharge or otherwise discriminate against a legislator who is an employee or member, in retaliation for statements made or beliefs held in his or her capacity as a member.

A member can sue an employer who fails to comply with these provisions. The court can order the employer to obey the law and compensate the member for any loss of wages or benefits caused by the employer's non-compliance.

## Public Employment

A legislator who is an employee or appointed officer of a municipality, school district, other political subdivision, or state-operated school is entitled to unpaid leave of absence during any or all of his or her term, with a right of reinstatement after the leave.

After the last legislative day in the calendar year, the member: 1) must be reinstated to the position he or she held before the beginning of the session, or 2) must be given a position of similar seniority, status, and pay, if available, as long as:

- the position has not been abolished;
- the member reapplies for the job in writing within 30 days after the last legislative day in the calendar year; and
- the request for reinstatement is made no later than 10 years after the leave was granted.

After reinstatement, the member has the same rights to accrued and future seniority status, efficiency rating, and benefits as if he or she were employed during the leave.

The member has no right to compensation for the period between the first and last legislative day in a calendar year and cannot be removed or discharged from employment for at least one year after reinstatement, except for cause after notice and hearing.

A member retains all pension rights accrued up to the time of taking leave. For purposes of determining pension-vesting rights, a member is treated as if he or she were at his or her extra-legislative job while on leave at the Legislature.

A member employed in the public sector is entitled to receive pension benefits for legislative service and for his or her other job. However, the member will not be paid benefits by both the Legislature and the other employer for the time he or she is on leave to serve in the Legislature.



# Getting Around

## Useful Information

The Capitol complex functions much like a small community. The following bits of information are designed to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

### Bike Racks

If you bike to work, there are bicycle racks on the north side of the State Office Building parking ramp and on the west side of the Transportation Building. You don't have to pay for ramp parking privileges to use the ramp bicycle rack. Call the Sergeant-at-Arms Office, (651) 296-4860, to arrange for key card access to the ramp.

### Bill Status

Contact the House Index Department, (651) 296-6646, or track bills on the Legislature's Web site (<http://www.leg.mn>).

### Building Maintenance

Contact Plant Management, (651) 296-6800.

### Bus Service to Downtown

A bus ride on the #16 to downtown St. Paul costs 50 cents all day. To go downtown from the State Office Building, catch the bus on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. (formerly Constitution Avenue). To return from downtown, catch the bus on Minnesota Street.

### Cash Machines

Automatic teller machines are located in the State Office Building (ground floor) and nearby in the Transportation Building (ground floor) and the Centennial Office Building (ground floor).

### Change Machine

Change for dollar bills can be obtained from a change machine in the vending area in the basement of the State Office Building.

### Day Care

If you have children or dependent adults in day care, you may be eligible for State of Minnesota Dependent Care Expense Account (DCEA). For further information, contact House Administrative Services, 198 State Office Building, (651) 296-6648.

### Dining

Cafeterias are located in most state buildings. The small State Office Building cafeteria is usually open only when the Legislature is in session. The Capitol Cafe in the State Capitol building offers breakfast and lunch year-round. A large, year-round cafeteria also is available in the Transportation Building.

Also, there are many restaurants within walking distance. On Rice Street, the Lagoon Vietnamese Restaurant, White Castle, and El Bravo Mexican Restaurant. On University Avenue, you will find McDonald's, Burger King, Mai Village, and other restaurants. There also are dozens of restaurants only minutes away in downtown St. Paul. Bus rides downtown cost 50 cents. You can catch the bus on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. (formerly Constitution Avenue).

### Duplicating

Duplicating services for House business are in the supply room at 35 State Office Building, (651) 296-8611.

### Employee Assistance

The Employee Assistance Program is a confidential counseling service designed to help state employees with problems, either in or out of the workplace. If you have

a personal or work-related problem that you do not care to discuss with anyone associated with the Legislature, contact the Employee Assistance Program at (651) 296-0765.

### Emergency

Contact Capitol Security, (651) 296-2100. If it is a medical emergency, call 911.

### Fire

In case of fire, an alarm will sound throughout the building, fire doors will close, and elevators will not operate. Evacuate the building via the stairways.

### Hair Stylist

House members and staff are just an elevator ride away from a barber. Capitol Barbers is in the basement of the State Office Building. Generally, it is open during business hours. The phone number is (651) 291-1600.

### Holidays

Below are some of the upcoming observed paid holidays for all eligible employees assigned to a Monday through Friday, five-day work week:

Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2003 - New Year's Day  
Monday, Jan 20, 2003 - Martin Luther King Day  
Monday, May 26, 2003 - Memorial Day  
Friday, July 4, 2003 - Independence Day  
Monday, Sept. 1, 2003 - Labor Day  
Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2003 - Veterans Day  
Thursday, Nov. 27, 2003 - Thanksgiving Day  
Friday, Nov. 28, 2003 - Day after Thanksgiving  
Thursday, Dec. 25, 2003 - Christmas Day

(For more information on holidays, see the *Legislative Plan for Employee Benefits and Policies*.)

### Insurance

See the *Legislative Plan for Employee Benefits and Policies*.

### Locker rooms

Showers and lockers are available in the State Office Building basement. Contact the Sergeant-at-Arms Office, (651) 296-4860, to reserve a locker.

### Mail

The House Post Office is on the ground floor of the State Office Building in Room 50. Drop-off baskets are located by each receptionist on the various floors. The post office handles both U.S. mail and Interoffice mail. Questions about proper mailing procedure should be directed to the House Post Office, (651) 296-9462.

U.S. Postal Service mail boxes are on the first floor of the State Office Building near the elevators. Pick-up times are 1:30 p.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Please note that both the State Capitol and State Office Building are public buildings and members of the public may wander into your work area. Remember to keep any stamps you have in a secure place to avoid theft.

The House Post Office does not sell stamps. You may purchase stamps, near the Capitol complex, at these locations: Main post office, Kellogg Blvd. and Jackson St., downtown St. Paul; Pioneer Station, 141 Fourth St. E. Rm 162; and Riverview Station, 292 Eva St.

### Meeting Rooms/Reservations

Contact the room scheduler, (651) 296-5408.

### Minnesota Memorabilia

Gifts with a Minnesota theme can be purchased at the Minnesota History Center, 345 Kellogg Blvd. W. (just across the I-94 freeway), and Minnesota's Bookstore, Ford Building, 117 University Ave. Postcards may be purchased at the Capitol building's first floor information center.

### Non-Smoking Policy

In accordance with Minnesota's Clean Indoor Air Act and public policy promoting a smoke-free work environment, the House of Representatives has prohibited smoking in the State Office Building and Capitol. Smoking includes the carrying of a lighted cigarette, cigar, or pipe and the use of any other smoking material.

Smoking is not allowed in the State Office Building parking ramp, nor is it permissible on the loading dock.

### Parking

For information about obtaining a parking spot for a fee, contact the Sergeant-at-Arms Office, (651) 296-4860. There is a ramp adjacent to the State Office Building as well as several nearby state-run surface lots. Monthly parking fees range from about \$18 to \$32 depending on whether you have a covered spot in the ramp or use a surface lot.

Handicapped parking is available on the lower level of the State Office Building parking ramp (use the call box at the ramp entrance to gain entry). Additional handicapped parking is located on the blue level of the Centennial Office Building ramp, on the entry level of the Administration Building ramp (two stalls), directly behind the Capitol (Lot N), west of the State Office Building (Lot F), and in most other lots in the Capitol complex.

### Phones

Telephone service and hardware questions should be directed to House Administrative Services, (651) 296-1239.

## Getting Around

### Press Conferences

Contact the room scheduler, (651) 296-5408.

### Publications

The House Public Information Services Office, 175 State Office Building, publishes educational literature, information on members, *Session Weekly*, a publication that outlines the status of bills and summarizes them for the general public, and its online companion *Session Daily*. The House of Representatives Committee Schedule is compiled by the public information office, and it is available in paper, e-mail, and Internet formats. The office also publishes directories of House and Senate members, as well as a summary of all new laws at the end of each legislative session.

### Purchasing

All purchase orders are issued by House Administrative Services. When goods or services are needed, all members and staff must complete a purchase requisition form and send it to the purchasing assistant in House Administrative Services. Contact House Administrative Services, (651) 296-1239, for a complete copy of the purchasing policy.

### Schedules

The House Public Information Services Office publishes committee and floor meeting schedules during the legislative session. Interim schedules are updated weekly or as necessary. And current schedules are always available online (<http://www.leg.mn>).

### Security and Escort Services

Members and staff who work late or feel uncomfortable walking to their vehicles may call Capitol Security to escort them to their vehicles within the Capitol area. The escort service is available 24 hours a day and can be reached by calling (651) 296-6741.

Capitol Security also provides bulletins or alerts about suspicious people and activities in and around the Capitol complex area.

Furthermore, a number of Capitol Security emergency call boxes are located outside throughout the Capitol area in case you need help. The emergency call

boxes also can be found in the tunnel system between many state buildings.

### Session Floor Passes

Contact the speaker's office, (651) 296-2273. See Permanent Rules of the House for rules of decorum, Article II.

### Shuttle Service

Meritex Enterprises, Inc., a real estate development company which owns state buildings on Lafayette Road including the Department of Human Services building, the Pollution Control Agency building, the Department of Natural Resources building, and the Department of Labor and Industry building, offers a free shuttle service to state employees. The Lafayette Park Shuttle Service makes stops at the State Office Building, the Department of Transportation building, the DNR building, the PCA building, the DHS building, the Capitol and state office buildings, the Department of Administration building, as well as other locations.

The 22-passenger shuttle, much like airport shuttles, is white with blue stripes and says "Lafayette Park Shuttle" on the side. On-call service times are 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m., 10:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., and 1:45 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. You must call (612) 275-3833 voice or (612) 640-5158 pager for service. You can also call a day in advance for pickup.

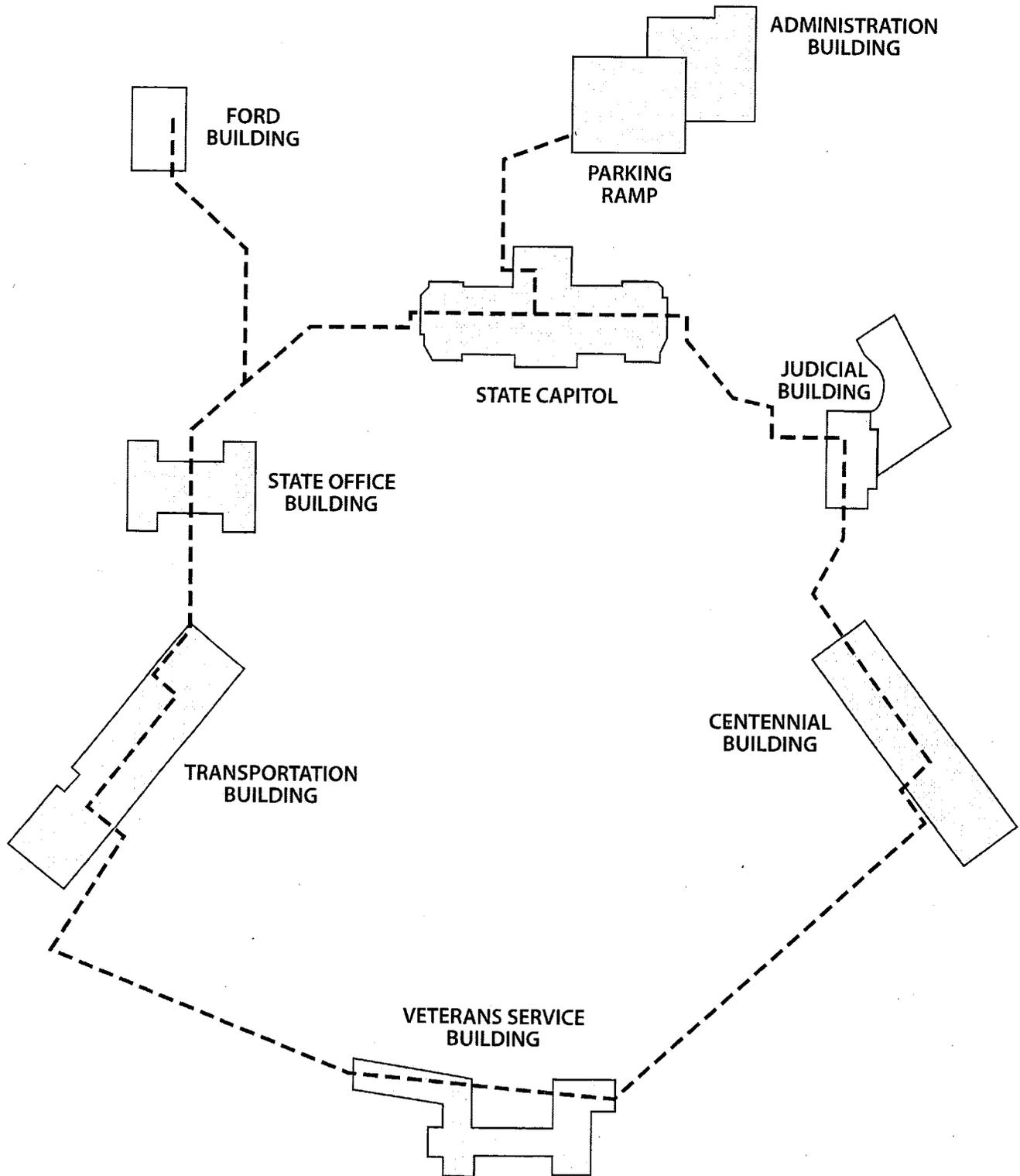
### Supplies

Office supplies may be obtained through the House Supply room, 35 State Office Building.

### Tunnel System

In cold, snowy, or rainy weather, it is often advantageous to use the tunnel system that connects various state office buildings. They generally open at 6 a.m. and close about 5 p.m. or 5:30 p.m., depending on the building. Buildings in the system include the Capitol, Judicial Center, Centennial Building, Veterans Service Building, Transportation Building, State Office Building, Ford Building, and the Administration Building. For a map of the tunnel system, see the following page.

# Capitol Complex Tunnel Layout





# The First Day

## Defining a Session

The term “session” has several meanings in the legislative process:

### Biennial Session

The period during which the Legislature meets, such as “The 83rd Session” (2003-2004).

### Regular Session

The annual meeting of the Legislature between the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January, and the first Monday after the third Saturday in May. (This time period occurs during the first year of a biennium in an odd-numbered year.)

The constitution states that “*the Legislature shall meet at the seat of government in regular session in each biennium at the time prescribed by law not exceeding a total of 120 legislative days.*”

### Special Session

The time period for convening called by the governor “under extraordinary circumstances” during an interim or after the expiration of 120 legislative days in a biennium or after the date prescribed by law for annual adjournment. The governor may not dictate the matters to be considered or the length of sitting.

### Daily Session

A meeting of either the House and Senate to transact certain business. (See Appendix: Glossary — Joint Convention.)

## Convening — Opening Ceremonies

In odd-numbered years, the legislative session convenes on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in

January at noon in the House chamber. The House is called to order by the secretary of state who presides over the meeting until a speaker is elected by the members. The secretary of state also appoints a member as chief clerk pro tem who first calls the roll by legislative district.

## Oath of Office

Immediately following the calling of the roll by district, the oath of office is administered to members-elect by a member of the judiciary. In taking the oath of office, the members of the Legislature agree to support the U.S. Constitution, the Minnesota Constitution, and to discharge faithfully the duties of office. Following the oath, the roll is called in alphabetical order. Below is the text of the oath:

*Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Minnesota, and that you will faithfully discharge the duties of the office to which you have just been elected to the best of your judgment and ability, so help you God?*

## Election of Officers

Following the second roll call, the secretary of state calls for nominations for speaker of the House. Upon election by a majority of all members present and voting, the speaker takes the chair.

Minnesota law provides that members elect the following House officers: chief clerk, first and second assistant clerks, index clerk, chief sergeant-at-arms, assistant sergeants-at-arms, chaplain, postmaster, and assistant postmaster, who, following their election, are sworn in.

Organizational resolutions and announcements by the speaker are next on the agenda.

## Selection of Permanent Desks

The selection of permanent desks is done by resolution under which the speaker directs each caucus leader to assign permanent desks to their members for the session.

## Committees

Committees meet on a regular basis according to a weekly schedule at least once or twice a week. The first few committee meetings bring members up to date on issues to be addressed in that particular committee.

The committee system is an extremely important part of the legislative process. In the early part of the legislative session, almost all of a legislator's work is done in committee, where a bill's fate is often decided.

After the first month of session, the committee load gets heavier as more bills are introduced and referred to committees. By the last month of the session, most committees have completed their work and the focus shifts more to floor action and conference committees.

Because there are usually more than 1,000 bills introduced each session, legislators serve on a limited number of committees. Most serve on three to five, which allows members to focus on just a few areas of public policy.

## A Legislative Day

Minnesota law defines a legislative day as one on which either the House or Senate is in session. A legislative day begins at 7 a.m. and continues until 7 a.m. of the following calendar day. The Legislature cannot meet in regular session after the first Monday following the third Saturday of May in any year.

## Daily Sessions

The convening time for daily sessions is set by the House rules. For the 2003-2004 session, the regular meeting time will be 3 p.m., unless otherwise ordered. Senate rules specify that the daily Senate session will be at 8:30 a.m., unless otherwise ordered.

The guidelines for procedure of the House session come from many sources — the constitution, *Minnesota Statutes*, House and joint rules, custom and usage, and finally, *Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure*. The most complete outline of House procedures is contained in the *Permanent Rules of the House* which includes the order of daily business, guidelines for debate and decorum, precedence of motions, and voting procedures. A copy of the rules will be provided each member soon after their final adoption. Otherwise, they are available from the Chief Clerk's Office.



# Legislative Procedure

## The Process

Every November in even-numbered years, about 2 million Minnesotans go to the polls to select peers to represent them in the Minnesota Legislature.

The new Legislature includes people from all walks of life and professions. The diverse group of men and women work together to set public policy.

## Ideas

Ideas for new laws and changes in existing law come from many sources. Legislators receive and evaluate thousands of facts, statistics, and expressions of opinion in the course of a two-year session.

Some legislators get ideas for new laws when they sample grass roots opinion and hear constituents' suggestions during campaigns. Some good suggestions come in a legislator's mail, from telephone calls, or in conversations with people in the district. Other proposals come from a lawmaker's experience on the job, at home, and in the community. New laws are proposed by special interest groups, individuals, and groups with special needs and problems. A significant number of proposals come from within the government itself. New legislators are sometimes surprised by the volume of proposals generated by various governmental units.

The governor presents ideas and priorities in messages to the Legislature. The other constitutional offices, state departments and agencies, local, regional, and county units, and legislative committees and study commissions all suggest new laws.

The fate of each idea is determined by the members who guide its journey through the Legislature, and by the legislators who judge its merits at each stage of consideration.

## Types of Legislation

The House deals with two major types of legislation: bills and resolutions.

### Bills

Bills are for the purpose of making new laws, or amending or repealing existing statutes and laws. House files (HFs) and Senate files (SFs) are introduced in their respective bodies. All bills have a title, enacting clause, and body.

The title of the bill tells what the bill is amending, repealing, or creating and provides references to the Minnesota statutes or laws that would be affected.

The enacting clause of the bill appears after the title and reads as follows: "BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA."

The body of the bill is the proposal itself which, if enacted, would amend or repeal existing laws or statutes or create new ones.

Committee proposals are bills which have been written by a committee. It may be a bill which is composed of numerous smaller bills that have been under consideration in the committee, or it may be a number of ideas which have been brought to the committee's attention through public hearings and constituent mail. The committee bill's author is the chair of the committee. Committee bills may be introduced and referred to another committee, but if no referral is made, the bill gets its first reading and is laid over one day. The next day, the committee bill receives its second reading and is placed on the General Register or the Consent Calendar if recommended by the committee. A notation on a bill such as "Adams for the Committee on Agriculture" shows the bill is the product of an entire committee (committee bill).

The words "by request" after the chief author's signature indicate the bill is introduced at the request

of a constituent, and it does not necessarily have the support of the sponsoring legislator.

## Resolutions

Resolutions are formal actions of the Legislature which express intent on the part of one or both bodies, but are not codified into Minnesota statutes upon passage.

A House resolution or Senate resolution is one which is acted upon by only one body and expresses the intent of the body.

A House concurrent resolution or Senate concurrent resolution is one which originates in the House or Senate respectively, is acted upon, and sent to the other body for approval.

Resolutions memorializing the president, Congress or federal agencies are treated in the same manner as bills: they are given a House file (HF) number or Senate file (SF) number, assigned to a committee, and given three readings in each house. Resolutions of this type are enrolled and printed in the *Session Laws of the State of Minnesota* (informally called "Session Laws") for the year in which they were passed, but not codified in the statutes.

*Unnumbered resolutions* are used when actions apply to a specific session and deal with internal operations of one house. Actions such as the allocation of stationery and stamps are usually proposed to the House in unnumbered resolutions.

A *Joint Resolution* is an action of the Legislature meeting in joint convention.

## The Drafting Process

A bill or resolution may be drafted by anyone — legislator, legislative staff member, state or local agency employee, private group, or an individual. But only a legislator can introduce a bill or resolution.

A member who wishes to have a bill drafted may bring that request to the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, to the House Research Department, or in some instances, to the member's own caucus staff. When a member requests a draft, he or she may provide whatever information is convenient for the member. It may be simply the description of a problem or it may be a prepared draft of new law, or it may be anything in between those extremes. Oral drafting requests are often sufficient, but supporting written material may be useful. Communication through an intermediary can cause delays so a member may find it convenient to work personally with a drafter. Drafting is done by the research department or the revisor's office without regard to party affiliation or member status. All drafting by these offices is done on a confidential basis.

Drafters are very conscious of the need to provide the member with what he or she wants and not to impose their own ideas on the work. They may ask questions to help with the drafting. Drafters, particularly those in the research offices, are always available to meet with constituents, interest groups, and lobbyists. Face-to-face discussion is frequently helpful to assure that the member's intentions are being carried out. The drafter will prepare as many preliminary drafts as the member finds useful. Depending upon the complexity of the proposed bill, drafting may take from one day to several weeks. After the bill is introduced, the drafter generally is available to prepare amendments or assist in any other useful way. House research staff members are assigned to staff legislative committees, and hence, are available for drafting amendments during committee deliberations. House Research Department staff members also prepare bill summaries for the committees.

A list of staff members with committee assignments and drafting specialties is circulated at the beginning of the session by the House Research Department and the Office of the Revisor of Statutes.

Before introduction, each bill or resolution must be submitted to the Office of the Revisor of Statutes for final preparation. The revisor's office serves both the House and the Senate and is responsible for the technical preparation of bills for introduction.

## Bill Introduction

In the House, the speaker assigns each bill and numbered resolution to one of the standing committees. The chief clerk then assigns each House file a number, which will identify it in its travels, much as a luggage tag might identify a suitcase even when the contents are rearranged, changed, or replaced with new items.

The Senate has traditionally used a somewhat different path to introduction. Generally, bills and resolutions are given a number and assigned to a committee by the Senate president through the administrative procedures of the secretary of the Senate.

## First Reading/Reporting

The state constitution requires that each bill be reported on three separate days in each body before votes for final passage can occur. These reports of the bill are called readings. A bill is given its first reading at the time it is introduced. Each reading is a signal that an action or series of actions have taken place. The constitution requires that a full day must pass between each reading, unless the constitutional rules and the rules of the body are suspended by a two-thirds vote of the House.

### The Committee

The committee is the heart of the legislative process where the most detailed work of the Legislature takes place.

It is the job of each committee to hold public hearings on bills, to put each bill it hears into its best form, and to recommend to the full body only those bills which the committee feels merit further consideration.

Many bills affect several aspects of life in Minnesota. These may be studied by more than one committee before returning to the House or Senate floor.

When a bill is referred to committee, copies are made available to legislators and the public.

The first time a bill can be amended (changed) or killed (voted down, tabled, or ignored) is in committee.

The committee has a number of choices for action. It may:

- recommend that a bill pass as introduced (with its original wording);
- recommend changes in a bill (amendments) to correct the wording, add or remove provisions, or design alternative language that may clarify, weaken, or strengthen a bill, and return it to the floor;
- delete everything after the enacting clause and insert a new bill. A “delete everything” amendment, in effect, creates a new bill, because everything after the enacting clause is stricken and replaced with new language\*;
- combine two or more bills on the same subject into a single bill, retaining one bill’s House file number;
- send detailed, complex, or controversial bills to a subcommittee which can hear public testimony, call in experts, suggest amendments, report back to the full committee, ignore a bill, table it, or vote it down;
- recommend that a bill pass, with or without amendments, and send it to another committee for further study;
- refer a bill to another committee or return it to the full House with no recommendations;
- write a committee bill based on the suggestions of one or more regular bills; or
- kill a bill by voting it down, tabling it, delaying action, ignoring it, or returning it to its author.

The chief author is the spokesperson for the bill in committee.

There may be a number of questions from committee members, so the chief author must have a good understanding of the bill. The chief author cannot rely on eloquence to steer a bill safely through the committee. The most effective presentation is a well-organized, concise recitation of the most appropriate information,

backed up by facts and statistics. Bill summaries are often prepared with staff aid. Staff may also be asked to speak or comment in committee.

Opponents and proponents of a measure may testify before the committee. Any citizen may express his or her views at these hearings. The chief author can invite witnesses to speak for the bill. Opponents may also organize interested people to testify. Legislators who serve on the committee can question the author and witnesses.

When time is limited, the committee chair may make up a list of people who have asked to speak and divide the time among the different points of view so a sampling of public opinion is heard.

After hearing from the author and any other citizens who wish to speak, the committee members try to reach a consensus. They must give careful scrutiny to the bills heard in committee and use their best judgment when weighing public testimony in attempting to make changes or retain original wording and in making recommendations on measures.

Since no legislator can study every bill that is introduced, a lawmaker relies on the committee process and the hard work and careful consideration of colleagues to determine which bills are most important, and in what form they will be taken up on the floor.

No committee hears every bill referred to it. Committee chairs schedule hearings on a bill after a request from the chief author has been received. In the past legislative session, less than 10 percent of the bills introduced became law and the majority of the proposals were eliminated in committee. To speak of percentages can be somewhat misleading because the total includes companion bills, bills dealing with several aspects of the same problem which may be combined into a single measure, and similar bills introduced by different authors in the same house.

Noncontroversial bills may pass in minutes. Some measures require weeks or months of committee and subcommittee study before a final recommendation is made.

Bills are seldom judged strictly on partisan lines. Coalitions form and shift, and a legislator often finds that an ally on one matter is a tough opponent on another, regardless of party affiliation.

Before a vote is taken, the chief author may survey committee members checking their positions, answering technical questions, and assessing the chance for an affirmative committee decision. Most of the “lobbying” on a bill involves educating committee members.

\* This type of amendment is used when there are substantial changes in a bill, making page and line number amendments cumbersome and unclear. Generally, it should be used only when absolutely necessary. Assistance in preparing a “delete everything” amendment is available through House Research or the Revisor’s Office.

Lobbyists on all sides of a question contact committee members, provide information and arguments to back up their points of view, and supply background data on their concerns.

Proponents and opponents may get together to discuss compromises that will satisfy most members, or the author may poll individual committee members on amendments to help move the bill through committee.

Votes in committee are by voice, unless a roll call is requested.

A majority vote is needed to amend a bill, or to change its status within the legislative process. Any motion to amend, adopt, or other action which results in a tie vote is defeated. A defeated motion may be reconsidered under the rules of committee procedure, though it is usually best to consult with the committee chair if a motion to reconsider is contemplated. (Members of the committee who do not support a committee action on a bill can submit a "minority report" which is taken up on the floor of the House before the report of the majority of the committee.)

If the committee cannot reach agreement, or does not hold hearings on a bill, the bill has ended its journey. (While it is technically possible to bring a bill to the full House without committee approval, this tactic is not frequently attempted, and is even less frequently successful.)

## Second Reading

Committee actions are recorded in the committee report compiled by the committee's legislative assistant, approved by the chair, and sent to the House floor for a second reading and adoption. Reports of committees are recommendations only until the report is adopted by a majority vote on the floor. Approval is normally routine. The committee report on a bill also includes a recommendation for placement of that bill on the Consent Calendar or the General Register.

### Consent Calendar

Committees can recommend that noncontroversial bills be placed on the Consent Calendar (pink) in the House. These bills bypass the General Register and are eligible for debate and possible amendment, third reading, and final passage in one day. They usually pass with little or no debate. (Ten representatives can object to Consent Calendar placement, automatically sending the bill to the General Register.) The Consent Calendar is taken up early in the daily session.

### General Register

Most bills are then placed on a list called the General Register (white), which is like a parking lot where bills wait to be taken up by the full House. (It does not include noncontroversial bills that are placed

on the Consent Calendar.) Bills are placed on the General Register in the order they receive a second reading. Each bill must be on the General Register, distributed to each member, and available to the public before it can be considered by the House on the Calendar for the Day or the Fiscal Calendar.

### Calendar for the Day

The Calendar for the Day (yellow) is a list of bills to be considered by the House that day.

The calendar is created by the Rules Committee, which selects bills from the General Register for consideration. The Rules Committee is required to set the list by 5 p.m. on the day before the bills are to be considered by the full House, but that requirement is lifted late in the legislative session.

The House must consider each item in the order that it was listed on the calendar. Bills on the calendar are eligible for debate and possible amendment.

There also is another method of getting a bill on the Calendar for the Day. If a bill sits on the General Register for more than 10 legislative days, a member can make a motion to place the bill on the calendar. To pass, such a motion requires the approval of three-fifths of the whole House.

### Fiscal Calendar

Any bill related to finances, taxes, or raising revenue that is on the General Register can be considered by the House at the request of the chair of the Ways & Means Committee or the Taxes Committee. Such bills are placed on the Fiscal Calendar (green), and from there, the bills are eligible for debate and possible amendment.

A chair is required to announce his or her intention to place a bill on the Fiscal Calendar by 5 p.m. on the day before the bill is to be considered by the full House, but that requirement is lifted late in the legislative session.

## Third Reading and Final Passage

Once all proposed amendments have been dealt with, the bill is given its third reading. The bill cannot be further amended without unanimous consent.

At this point, controversial bills may be debated at length, but usually the chief author briefly outlines the bill and stands for questions and a brief discussion. Unless there is controversy, the full House proceeds to a roll call vote.

All votes on final passage are recorded by name in the official record, the *Journal of the House*.

A majority vote of all elected members — not just a majority of those present — is required. In the House, 68 votes are needed; in the Senate, 34 votes.

Authorization of bonds backed by the full faith and credit of the state requires a three-fifths majority of

all members elected. In the House, 81 votes are needed; in the Senate, 41 votes.

### Preliminary Approval

Passage in one body of the Legislature marks the halfway point in a bill's legislative journey. A bill must pass both the House and Senate in identical form before it can become law. When one body of the Legislature passes a bill, it is transmitted by message (conveyed through an administrative procedure) to the opposite body, where it is again subject to the steps outlined above.

There are several ways to speed up consideration in the opposite house. Chief authors of companion bills can attempt to coordinate House and Senate action. The first bill to win final approval is transmitted to the opposite house. For example, if the Senate version of a bill passes first, the Senate file is transmitted to the House.

If the House companion bill is still in a House committee, the Senate bill will be referred to the House committee. The committee will then take up for consideration the Senate bill that was referred to the committee. Any subsequent committee action will be on the Senate bill, although the committee can (and often does) insert the House language.

### Comparisons/Substitutions

If the House companion is awaiting floor action on one of the agenda lists, the two bills are "referred for comparison" and they are read against each other and the differences are reported. This work is done in the name of the chief clerk by the revisor of statutes. Comparison reports are provided to the chief author, the majority and minority leaders, and their assistant leaders, and one copy is filed at the House Desk. The copy filed at the desk is available for inspection by any member of the House.

The chief clerk reports whether the bills were found to be identical or different, "identical with certain exceptions." If the bills are identical, the Senate bill will be substituted (take the place of the House companion) in a motion by the chief author. The House bill is then "indefinitely postponed" by the same motion. If the bills are found to be different, "identical with certain exceptions," the rules must be suspended to substitute the Senate bill with its differences for the House bill.

In either case, once the substitution is made, the House bill is indefinitely postponed.

In the House, the language of the bill that already has passed the Senate automatically takes the place of the language that was recommended by the House committee. If the chief author wants to go back to the House language, he or she makes a motion to amend

(generally in the form of a delete-everything amendment that the chief clerk routinely prepares) to substitute the House language for the language passed by the Senate.

In the Senate, the procedure is different. When a House bill is substituted for a Senate bill on the Senate floor, the Senate automatically places the Senate language back into the bill.

The Senate author must propose an amendment if he or she wishes to use the House language.

### Amended Bills

The House and Senate often pass the same bill in different versions.

When one house amends a bill that was approved by the other body, it sends the bill back to its house of origin. The house of origin must either accept all of the changes made by the other house, or refuse to accept them and by motion, send the bill to conference committee to work out a compromise bill that both bodies can accept.

### Concurrences

When the amended bill goes back to the house of origin, a copy of the amendments from the other body are given to the author for the author's information. One option the author has is to accept the other body's amendments (to concur in the amendments). Many times amendments in the other body are minor, non-controversial, or simply technical in nature. Sometimes the bill has left the house of origin with an amendment that the author did not want on, and it may have been taken off by the other body. And sometimes the bill is more to the author's liking as it passed in the other body.

The motion to concur is made by the author and must be approved by the body. Any member can make a motion to refuse to concur with the other body's amendments, and to appoint a conference committee to work out the differences. The motion to refuse to concur and to go to conference would be taken up first.

Assuming that the motion to concur prevailed, the bill would be given a third reading, as amended by the Senate, and the bill would be up for repassage.

### Conference Committee

When either the House or Senate refuses to accept the version of a bill as amended by the other body, a motion is made to refuse to concur with the other body's amendments and send the bill to a conference committee. That means the House and Senate each appoint three or five of its members to serve on the conference committee and negotiate a compromise bill.

In the House, the members are appointed by the speaker, and in the Senate by leadership of the majority caucus.

Conferees (conference committee members) are selected to uphold the position of their respective houses, but they have some latitude in trying to reach a compromise.

A bill's chance of passing usually increases as it moves through each step of the journey. But it may have rough going in conference committee. First, the bill is in conference committee because strong differences kept the two bodies from agreeing on the same version. Secondly, most conference committees work in the closing days of session, under great time pressure. Usually, time permitting, each side makes some compromises, and sometimes bills are re-written incorporating elements from each body's position.

House research and/or committee staff acting as advisors to the conferees often draft language for the conferees. The conference committee report itself, however, is prepared by the revisor of statutes. Any member of a conference committee may request the drafting of all or part of a conference committee report.

When a majority of the conferees have signed the report, it is returned to the revisor who makes final

checks, and returns it to the floor of origin for action (if the bill was a House bill, the conference committee report must be adopted and the bill repassed by the House first.) The revisor's staff will normally attend meetings of conference committees but, in any case, must be kept informed on the progress of the conference committee.

Conference committees are, in fact, joint meetings of separate committees; consequently, in conference committees, the committees from each house vote separately, and a majority vote of each committee is required to take any action. If the conference committee votes to adopt the report, the measure is then presented to the body. This is the compromise bill which has been agreed upon and, therefore, cannot be amended. The representatives and senators can either accept the report, give the bill its third reading as amended by conference and repass the bill, or it can refuse to accept the report and send it back to conference. As a part of the motion to refuse to adopt the report of the conference committee, the author of the motion can request that a new conference committee be appointed to work out the differences in the bill.

When both houses repass a bill as amended by conference committee, it is transmitted to the governor for consideration.

# How a Bill Becomes a Law in Minnesota

## Idea

**1** A bill is an idea for a new law or an idea to change an old law. Anyone can suggest an idea for a bill — an individual, consumer group, professional association, government agency, or the governor. Most often, however, ideas come from legislators, the only ones who can begin to move an idea through the process. There are 134 House members and 67 senators.

## Introduction

**4** The chief House author of the bill introduces it in the House; the chief Senate author introduces it in the Senate. Identical bills introduced in each body are called *companion* bills. The bill introduction is called the *first reading*. The presiding officer of the House then refers it to an appropriate House committee for discussion; the same thing happens in the Senate.

## General Register

**7** In the House, the General Register serves as a parking lot where bills await action by the full body. Bills chosen to appear on the Calendar for the Day or the Fiscal Calendar are drawn from the General Register.

In the Senate, a different procedure is used. Bills are listed on the General Orders agenda. Senate members, acting as the "committee of the whole," have a chance to debate the issue and offer amendments on the bill. Afterwards, they vote to recommend: passage of the bill, progress (delay action), or further committee action. And sometimes they recommend that a bill not pass. From here, the bill is placed on the Calendar.

## Conference

**9** If the House and Senate versions of the bill are different, they go to a conference committee. In the House, the speaker appoints three or five representatives, and in the Senate, the Subcommittee on Committees of the Committee on Rules and Administration selects the same number of senators to form the committee. The committee meets to work out differences in the two bills and to reach a compromise.

## Legal form

**2** The Office of the Revisor of Statutes and staff from other legislative offices work with legislators in putting the idea for a new law into proper legal form. The revisor's office is responsible for assuring that the proposal's form complies with the rules of both bodies before the bill can be introduced into the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Senate.

## Committee

**5** The bill is discussed in one or more committees depending upon the subject matter. After discussion, committee members recommend action — approval or disapproval — to the full House and full Senate. The House committee then sends a report to the House about its action on the bill; the Senate committee does likewise in the Senate.

## Calendar for the Day

**8** In the House, the Calendar for the Day is a list of bills the House Rules and Legislative Administration has designated for the full House to vote on. Members can vote to amend the bill, and after amendments are dispensed with, the bill is given its *third reading* before the vote of the full body is taken. The House also has a Fiscal Calendar, on which the chair of the House Ways & Means Committee or House Taxes Committee can call up for consideration any tax or finance bill that has had a second reading. The bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.

## Floor

**10** The conference committee's compromise bill then goes back to the House and the Senate for another vote. If both bodies pass the bill in this form, it is sent to the governor for his or her approval or disapproval. (If one or both bodies reject the report, it goes back to the conference committee for further consideration.)

## Authors

**3** Each bill must have a legislator to sponsor and introduce it in the Legislature. That legislator is the chief author whose name appears on the bill along with the bill's file number to identify it as it moves through the legislative process. There may be up to 34 co-authors from the House and four from the Senate. Their names also appear on the bill.

## Floor

**6** After the full House or Senate accepts the committee report, the bill has its *second reading* and is placed on the House agenda called the General Register or the Senate agenda called General Orders. (A committee can recommend that non-controversial bills bypass the General Register or General Orders and go onto the Consent Calendar, where bills usually pass without debate.) After this point, House and Senate procedures differ slightly.

In the Senate, bills approved by the "committee of the whole" are placed on the Calendar. At this point, the bill has its *third reading*, after which time the bill cannot be amended unless the entire body agrees to it. Toward the end of the session, the Senate Committee on Rules and Administration designates bills from the General Orders calendar to receive priority consideration. These Special Orders bills are debated, amended, and passed in one day.

A bill needs 68 votes to pass the House and 34 votes to pass the Senate. If the House and Senate each pass the same version of the bill, it goes to the governor for a signature.

## Governor

**11** Once the governor has the bill, he or she may: sign it, and the bill becomes law; veto it within three days; or allow it to become law by not signing it. During session, the House and Senate can override a governor's veto. This requires a two-thirds vote in the House (90 votes) and Senate (45 votes). The governor also may "line-item veto" parts of a money bill, or "pocket veto" a bill passed during the last three days of the session by not signing it within 14 days after final adjournment.



# Tax and Spending Bills

## Development

Development of the key taxing and spending bills follows a track somewhat different from that followed for development of most other bills.

## Budget Resolution

Each biennium, the Ways & Means Committee meets to discuss the state's budget situation and to pass a budget resolution. The committee waits until after the state releases its February budget forecast to discuss the resolution. This resolution sets, as a single amount, the maximum limitation on general fund expenditures, especially as they relate to the Legislature's taxing and appropriating powers, for the fiscal biennium. This resolution must be approved by the full House before becoming effective. The Ways & Means Committee also sets budget targets for each finance committee and the Taxes Committee.

## Collecting Money: Omnibus Tax Bill

The Omnibus Tax Bill, which must originate in the House, represents a comprehensive summation of the House Taxes Committee's activities during the legislative session. It is the product of many formal hearings and informal deliberations among legislative leaders, the governor's office, and others.

Work begins on several fronts. The full committee usually begins work on personal income tax and corporate income tax matters. Subcommittees may begin work in such areas as property taxes, sales taxes, economic development, or fiscal disparities. When necessary, the Taxes Committee chair can appoint members to serve on subcommittees to review specific tax issues. Since the Taxes Committee has responsibility for the revenue side of the state budget, the usual starting point is an evaluation of revenues being raised by the current tax structure, the revenue items

in the governor's proposed biennial budget, the effects of tax proposals on the budget, and the revenue targets listed in the budget resolution.

With the budget resolution targets in mind, the committee examines the state's fiscal outlook, using revenue forecasts provided by the Department of Finance. The full committee and subcommittees hold hearings on proposals, which may be considered for possible inclusion in the omnibus bill. (Many of the initial components may be recommendations from members and the chair.)

The full committee then holds final hearings to complete work on the bill. Separate bills referred or re-referred to the Taxes Committee and acted on may also be incorporated into the omnibus bill.

On the House floor, the Taxes Committee chair is the chief spokesperson on behalf of the omnibus bill. Other amendments may be considered here. The bill then moves to the conference committee, where it takes final shape. Differences between House and Senate versions of the bill are resolved, and other remaining tax-related legislation, considered by either body, also may be incorporated into the bill. The bill is then sent back to each body for final passage.

## Spending Money: Appropriations Bills

In the past, the Minnesota Legislature has passed nine major operating budget bills, in addition to the Omnibus Tax Bill and the Omnibus Capital Budget Bill, commonly called the bonding bill, which lists all the construction and improvement projects.

However, due to the differing structure of committees between the House and the Senate, leaders have not determined specifically how many bills will be sent jointly to the governor.

In the House, there are 10 finance committees that produce appropriations bills. The House rules dictate that omnibus bills emerging from finance committees

## Tax and Spending Bills

cannot be combined with those from other committees. However, joint rules for the bodies will govern the process.

All bills containing items of appropriation are referred to the Ways & Means Committee before they can be brought before the full House.

The relevant finance committees are as follows:

- *Agriculture & Rural Development Finance* — provides funding for the Department of Agriculture, the Board of Animal Health, the Horticultural Society, and a variety of state boards.
- *Capital Investment* — reviews capital improvement projects, also known as bonding projects, for state building and facilities. It also considers proposals from other organizations, such as local governments, schools, and non-profit organizations, seeking state assistance in the form of bonds.
- *Education Finance* — provides funding for K-12 and early childhood education issues, including the Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning; primary and secondary schools; childcare; Head Start and other pre-school education programs; Adult Basic Education; community education; public libraries; and other initiatives and education related agencies.
- *Environment & Natural Resources Finance* — provides funding for the Department of Natural Resources, the Pollution Control Agency, and several other agencies.
- *Health & Human Services Finance* — provides funding for the Minnesota Department of Health, the Department of Human Services, health-related boards and ombudsman offices, and other health and veterans' programs.
- *Higher Education Finance* — provides funding for the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU), the University of Minnesota, selected programs at the Mayo Medical School, and several other higher education-related agencies.
- *Jobs & Economic Development Finance* — provides funding for a wide variety of state boards and agencies, including the Minnesota State Arts Board, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Economic Security, the Minnesota Historical Society, the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, the Department of Labor and Industry, the Public Utilities Commission, and the Department of Trade and Economic Development. The committee also provides funding for homelessness prevention, affordable housing, and other programs administered by the Housing Finance Agency.
- *Judiciary Policy & Finance* — provides funding for the state's criminal justice and judicial system.
- *State Government Finance* — provides funding for the legislative branch, constitutional officers and executive branch departments such as revenue, finance, and administration.
- *Transportation Finance* — provides funding for all transportation and transit-related areas, including the Department of Transportation, Metro Transit, the Department of Public Safety (transportation areas), and the Transportation Regulation Board.

Legislative work on the state budget begins in January of odd-numbered years. Early on, the Ways & Means Committee hears an overview of the state budget situation and a summary of the governor's budget recommendations. Then, each finance panel starts its work.

Each finance committee begins by having public hearings to hear from each department, agency, and system contained in the section of the budget assigned to it. They hear testimony by officials and other individuals concerning budget requests and other matters relating to their operations. The next phase is the allocation of money. During these public hearings, motions are made by the committee members to allocate funding for each department or agency. As they are approved, they become part of the panel's omnibus appropriations bill.

Bills are also referred to the finance committees that may have fiscal implications to particular areas of state government. A fiscal note may be requested on those bills that may have a financial impact on the state budget. House rules dictate that the total of all bills with a fiscal impact — not just the omnibus bill — will be counted against that committee's budget target.

After the finance committees have completed work on the bills, they are considered by the Ways & Means Committee. When the bills are taken up on the House floor, the committee chair defends the bill prepared by his or her committee. After the House passes the bills, they are sent to the Senate. Differences in the House-passed version and the Senate-passed version are resolved by a joint conference committee.

When the governor receives an omnibus appropriations bill, he or she can sign it, let it become law without a signature, line-item veto spending provisions, or veto the bill entirely. Unless otherwise specified, appropriations are not effective until the beginning of the next fiscal year, July 1. In the second year of the biennium, the Ways & Means Committee considers adjustments that may need to be made in the state budget as well as new bills that may have financial implications.



# The Governor's Role

## The Governor

A bill that has passed both legislative bodies in identical form is “enrolled” (compared with all records to ensure final agreement to one single version of House and Senate bills and carefully and accurately copied into a presentation format). The enrolled copy is signed by both presiding officers and by the chief clerk of the House and the secretary of the Senate and presented to the governor. During the session, it is the date of the revisor’s presentation of the bill to the governor, not the date of final passage, which starts the clock running for deadlines for the governor’s action on the bill.

The governor has several options:

- The governor may sign a bill and it becomes law.
- When the Legislature is in session, a bill becomes law without the governor’s signature if he or she does not return it to the house of origin with a statement of objections within three days after receiving it.
- If the governor objects to a bill, he or she can veto it and send a message to the Legislature explaining the actions. The governor can also veto specific items of appropriation in an appropriations bill and allow the remainder to become law (line-item veto). A two-thirds vote in each house is needed to override a veto (90 votes in the House and 45 votes in the Senate).
- A bill vetoed after the Legislature is adjourned at the end of an odd-numbered year is returned to its house of origin and tabled. The vetoed bill may be taken up after the “interim recess” (time between sessions) when the Legislature reconvenes.

- Special rules apply to bills passed during the last three days before final adjournment in the even-numbered year. The Legislature has three extra days to send the enrolled bill to the governor. The governor has 14 calendar days following final adjournment in the even-year sessions to make a decision on a measure. This period includes a three-day period immediately following the session, during which the bill might not have been presented yet. During this period, the governor must sign all bills he or she wishes to become law.

Any bill not signed and deposited with the secretary of state within the 14-day period does not become law. Sometimes, late in the session, the governor will intentionally delay a veto until it is too late for the Legislature to override the action. Such a “pocket veto” automatically kills the bill.

The attorney general routinely reviews all bills passed by the Legislature and advises the governor as to the constitutionality of each measure.

## The New Law

To be “enacted,” a bill must pass the Legislature, be approved by the governor or repassed over the governor’s veto, and be filed with the secretary of state. (This constitutional office is the permanent custodian of official state documents.)

Acts, except those containing appropriations, take effect on Aug. 1 following enactment, unless another date is specified in the act itself. Most appropriations acts take effect on July 1, the beginning of the fiscal year.

## Special Sessions

The governor may call the Legislature into special session during the temporary adjournment between the first and second year of a legislative biennium, or after final adjournment, to take emergency action or to act on important issues left undecided at the close of a regular session.

The governor can suggest the agenda for the session but cannot dictate the measures to be considered or the length of the special session.

A special session is a separate legislative session. It is not a continuation of a regular session. Officers elected for the regular session serve in the special session, and the rules adopted for the regular session remain in effect, unless the body provides otherwise.

A special session has its own records, which may be published separately or in conjunction with the records of the preceding regular session.

Any legislation to be considered must follow the same steps that would be required in a regular session.



# After the Session

## Interim

Adjournment of the Legislature at the end of the first year of a biennial session does not mean the end of the road for a bill.

Bills that are in committee at the end of the first annual session may be heard during the interim recess. Bills on the Consent Calendar or General Register are returned to the standing committee last acting on the bill. Bills in conference committees and bills that have been vetoed after adjournment are returned to their house of origin, where they are tabled and members of the conference committee are discharged. They may be taken from the table in the second year's regular session and acted upon.

## Activities

The interim recess also is an opportunity for committees and individual legislators to have meetings in communities throughout the state.

Authors can use the time to educate fellow legislators and the public about their pending bills and to build support.

Wide-ranging compromises are sometimes reached during the recess interim hearings and during the second year of the biennial session.

When the Legislature adjourns "sine die" (at the end of the even-numbered year, terminating the two-year session), all bills which have not received final approval in identical form by both bodies do not become law.

Some ideas are introduced in every session for a number of years before they win final approval and receive the governor's signature.



# Publications

## Member-Oriented Publications

### Minnesota Statutes

Permanent and general laws, which apply to all citizens, are published in bound volumes called *Minnesota Statutes*. Included are laws which apply to: the Legislature; the executive branch, including state departments; the judiciary and courts; tax policy; public safety and police authority; towns, cities, and counties; commerce and trade; private property and private rights; civil injuries and remedies; and crimes against people and property and their penalties. In this volume, laws are organized according to subject matter.

A completely new set of statutes is printed every two years. Pocket supplements containing changes in the new statutes are printed following the first year of the biennium.

At the beginning of the session each member is supplied with an up-to-date set of *Minnesota Statutes*.

### Session Laws of Minnesota

Each “act” (new law, change in existing law, repeal of old law, proposed constitutional amendment) is printed in a bound volume called *Session Laws of the State of Minnesota* (informally called “Session Laws”) at the end of each annual session. Each act is a chapter in the Session Laws of the year in which it was enacted.

Special and temporary laws — line-item appropriations, laws which apply only to certain local or regional units of government, and some resolutions — are published only in this volume, which also includes a comprehensive index.

### Daily Journal

The daily journals, compiled by the chief clerk of the

House and the secretary of the Senate for their respective houses, are the official records of legislative proceedings.

The state constitution requires that the journal contain a record of all roll call votes. The journal also records attendance, introductions, committee reports, and reports of conference committees. The journals contain the text of official communications between the two houses, messages from the governor, and protests filed by members. The text of all amendments and motions proposed to the body are included with the actions taken upon them, but no official record is kept of the comments made in debate and discussion. However, sessions are audiotaped and filed with the Legislative Reference Library.

Minnesota is a “journal entry state,” which means that the journal is the *final authority* used by the courts concerning actions of the Legislature and in determining legislative intent. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that the journal be complete and accurate.

The journal is printed at the end of each day’s session, and copies are placed in binders and made available in the chamber before the next day’s session. Journal binders also are available on the leadership floors of the State Office Building and are updated daily. Copies of daily journals are available from the Chief Clerk’s Office in the Capitol.

### Permanent Journals

Each year the daily journals are proofread, corrected, indexed, and certified for publication by the chief clerk and the secretary of the Senate. All members receive a bound copy of the permanent *Journal of the House*. Bound copies of the permanent *Journal of the Senate* also are available to members.

## Bills

Copies of all bills pending in the House are available to legislators and the public from the Chief Clerk's Office. A master copy of each bill also is available in the caucus leadership corners in the State Office Building.

Committee members are provided copies of bills to study at the time they are taken up by the committee.

On each member's chamber desk there are two large, hard-covered binders — one containing House bills that have passed House committees and one containing Senate bills. Printed bills must lay on members' chamber desks for at least 24 hours before they can be taken up.

Unofficial engrossments of Senate bills, are printed for House members and placed in the Senate bill binders.

An index that cross-references House file number or Senate file number with page number(s) of the bill in the binder is placed inside the front cover of each binder.

Bill binders in the chambers and in the State Office Building are kept up-to-date by the House page staff.

## Official Agenda

The House official agenda for each legislative day is prepared by the chief clerk, under the direction of the speaker. The General Register, Consent Calendar, Fiscal Calendar, and Calendar for the Day announced in advance are placed on members' office desks and their chamber desks prior to each daily session. (See section on Legislative Procedure, beginning on page 13, for more information regarding the official agenda.)

## Constituent-Oriented Publications

The following publications, prepared and distributed by the House Public Information Services Office, are available to members and constituents.

Members may request quantities to distribute to Capitol visitors or at special events, such as meetings, county fairs, or classroom visits.

The House Public Information Services Office, a nonpartisan office, sends limited quantities of publications to constituents at their written or telephone requests. The office is at 175 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155. Phone (651) 296-2146 or 1-800-657-3550 or TTY (651) 296-9896. In addition, all published documents are available in PDF (portable document format) on the House Web site (<http://www.house.mn/hinfo/hinfo.htm>).

Documents published by the office can be made available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities.

## Session Coverage

• *Session Weekly* — a newsmagazine published once a week during sessions that reports daily House and

committee action, lists all bill introductions, tracks bill action, provides advance committee meeting schedules, and features other information related to the legislative process.

• *Session Daily* — daily news updates on the House Web site, patterned after *Session Weekly* and organized by topic. It provides a quick snapshot of actions from committees and the House floor, as well as links to further information.

(<http://www.house.mn/hinfo/sdaily/sdaily.htm>)

• *New Laws* — a publication prepared at the end of each session that summarizes and indexes all bills that became law during the session.

• *Seating Arrangement* — a chart, published once or twice during a biennium, that shows where House and Senate members sit in their respective chambers.

## Directories

• *Election Directory* — published immediately after each general election. It includes House and Senate districts, members' names, addresses, phone numbers, biographies, and photos.

• *Members Directory* (Green Book) — published early in the session. It includes the contents of the *Election Directory*, as well as information about service offices, majority and minority offices, House and Senate offices, committee schedules, committee assignments, state constitutional officers, and U.S. congressional representatives.

• *Official Directory of the Minnesota Legislature* (Red Book) — published near the end of the first session of the biennium. It includes the contents of the *Members Directory* with any updates necessary, as well as information about commissions, joint rules, constitutional and statutory provisions, and other relevant information.

## Educational Materials

• *Minnesota State Government Series* — a packet of eight fact sheets (available separately) on the state and state government. They are: 1) State Profile, 2) State Symbols, 3) State Counties, 4) State Lawmakers, 5) State Legislative Information, 6) State Law Process, 7) U.S. Congress, and 8) The Three Branches of Minnesota State Government.

• *Welcome to the House* — a brochure that guides visitors through such things as how to testify and where to find committee schedules and obtain copies of bills.

• *Capitol Steps: How Six Bills Became Law* — a 32-page booklet that follows six laws as they made their way through the legislative process. It explains both simple and complicated concepts ranging from where the idea for a law comes from to the Legislature's power of overriding a governor's veto. The book is written for ages 11 and older.

• *Restoration* — a booklet of photos and text describing the 1989-90 renovation of the House chamber.

## Publications

- *General resources* — a number of general resources for children and students of all ages are also available in limited quantities. Many of those items are also available for download at no cost on the Legislature's Web site, via the Youth Pages. Go to [www.leg.mn](http://www.leg.mn) and click on the Youth Pages link.

## Other Publications

*The Minnesota Legislative Manual*, more commonly known as the "Blue Book," is prepared and published by the secretary of state every two years. This book contains a brief history of the state, the state constitution, the rules of the House and of the Senate, a photographic directory of the Legislature, maps of legislative districts, directories of the executive and judicial branches of state government, returns of primary and general elections, and other information regarding state government. Copies are published about six months after the beginning of the new legislative session.

*The Minnesota Guidebook to State Agency Services* is published by the Department of Administration. It includes information about state agencies and the services they provide to the public and to other agencies and units of government. Copies are available from Minnesota's Bookstore, 117 University Ave., St. Paul, Minn.

*Minnesota House of Representatives Legislative Information Manual* is prepared by the House Public Information Services Office. The manual is a general reference and procedural booklet for House members and staff. It describes the roles of the three branches of government, including each department within the House. It also gives a step-by-step description of how a legislative session typically unfolds.

The Court Information Office has published a pamphlet which describes the purpose and procedures of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

The Legislative Reference Library is a highly specialized information resource and can obtain virtually any publication requested by a member. (A description of this office appears in the Legislative Offices section and begins on page 28.)

## Legislative Web Site

Since 1994, anyone with access to the Internet has been able to find an ever-growing range of online legislative information.

By connecting to the Minnesota State Legislature's home page, Internet users can easily find daily schedules for the House and Senate, track the status of

individual bills, read the actual text of bills and statutes, and discover much, much more about activities at the Capitol.

The Legislature's Web page is a joint effort by the House of Representatives, the Senate, the Legislative Reference Library, the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, and the Legislative Commissions.

The goal of the service is to increase citizen participation in the legislative process by providing as much legislative information as possible in an easy-to-use format.

Through the Web site, users can:

- get the full text of bills, including the latest official engrossments. This text comes from the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, which continually updates, or engrosses, bills as they are officially amended in committee or on the floor. You can even download the bill text to your computer;
- look at the status of bills. If you know the House or Senate file number of a bill, you can use this information to determine, for example, whether a bill has reached the floor or is stalled in committee;
- view standing committee rosters and track the activities of House-Senate conference committees;
- search through the catalog of the Legislative Reference Library or find "Links to the World," where you can get information on other legislatures across the country or connect to other government- and policy-related sites, such as the Library of Congress and the White House;
- find which House and Senate district you live in with the Geographic Information Systems District Finder;
- get a House member's e-mail address, office address, phone number, and brief biography. In effect, the *Official Directory of the Minnesota Legislature* (the "Red Book") is online;
- send your representative or senator an e-mail;
- view the *Journal of the House* (the official record of floor action), bill introductions, and the weekly schedule of House meetings; and
- read the online versions of House publications such as *Session Daily*, *Session Weekly*, *New Laws*, *Capitol Steps: House Six Bills Became Law*, and House press releases; and
- look up a current law in the electronic version of *Minnesota Statutes*.

To connect to the home page, simply direct your web browser to: <http://www.leg.mn>

Questions or comments regarding the House Web site may be sent via e-mail to the House Webmaster at:

[webmaster@house.mn](mailto:webmaster@house.mn)



# Legislative Offices

## Chief Clerk's Office

The Chief Clerk's Office, 211 State Capitol, (651) 296-2314, serves as a service and resource center of information for members of the House, staff, and the public. The office provides assistance, advice, and information on procedural and parliamentary matters and is responsible for the filing, printing, and distributing of legal and other records and documents. Technical assistance and maintenance of House electrical and electronic systems also is provided. A managed House World Wide Web site offers public access to daily documents.

## House Desk

The area immediately below the speaker's rostrum in the House chamber is commonly known as the House Desk. It is the primary role of the House Desk staff to ensure that the House of Representatives' business is carried out smoothly and in accordance with the state constitution and the Permanent Rules of the House, and all other laws and rules which relate to legislative operations and enactment of laws. To this end, the House Desk organizes the orders of business, administers and records amendments, prepares motions, records roll calls, documents official action on original bill covers, answers parliamentary questions, offers advice regarding legislative procedure, and compiles and edits the *Journal of the House*.

## Third Floor Office

The Third Floor Office assists the House Desk with the production of all agendas, calendars, orders of business, and the compilation of daily and permanent journals. It also oversees duplication of amendments, concurrences, conference committee reports, noncontroversial motions, resolutions, introductions, committee reports, and other documents for floor use. In

addition, the Third Floor prepares messages for the Senate and governor as directed by the House Desk.

## Front Office

This office primarily works with the public. It organizes, files, and distributes printed bills under consideration by the House, calendars, journals, chapters, legislative resource books, and other documents to the public, legislators, and staff. In addition, the Front Office prepares an index of printed page numbers for House bills and Senate bills, and an identical bill list on House files. At the end of the session, this office produces a bill rider list and compiles a listing of all new laws in numerical order by Chapter number, House File number, and Senate File number.

## Index Department

The Index Department was established by the Permanent Rules of the House. Staff members write short and long descriptions of all bills under consideration by the House. The bills are then listed under appropriate topic areas. The Index Department records all official House actions on legislation from the *Journal of the House*. The data is available on the Legislature's Web site (<http://www.leg.mn>) to help the public, staff, and lawmakers track legislation. In addition to this, the Index Department compiles and maintains computer generated indexes by topic, author, companion bill, and statutory reference. A conference committee bill report also is produced. After the session ends, a "Session Statistics" report is made available to the public through the department.

For bill status inquiries, select reports, or information on training and use of the House Index Information system, please contact the House Index Department at (651) 296-6646.

### Office of the Revisor of Statutes

The Office of the Revisor of Statutes, 700 State Office Building, (651) 296-2868, provides services to members of both houses of the Legislature, the governor and other constitutional officers, and state agencies and departments. The services of the office are nonpartisan and confidential. The office consists of attorneys, editors, computer specialists, and support personnel. Members and staff may request services by writing, calling, or visiting the office.

#### Bill Drafting

The revisor's office works from instructions by a representative, a senator, a person authorized by a legislator to seek the services of the revisor's office, the governor, and constitutional officers. These instructions may be very simple; some only state a problem and request a statutory solution. They also may be very detailed. Sometimes they include a draft of a proposed bill prepared by a researcher or an attorney for a department, local unit of government, or lobbying group.

#### Amendment Drafting

At the request of legislators or others authorized by legislators, office attorneys draft amendments for committee meetings or floor sessions. Office attorneys and support staff are available during House floor sessions to provide advice and drafting assistance, including the drafting, keyboarding, proofing, and copying of amendments. They are stationed in the east and west hallways just outside the chamber.

#### Computer Services

An advanced computer text management system is used to assist in drafting, engrossing, and publishing. The revisor's computer staff also create and maintain programs for other legislative work. These programs are used for the House and Senate journals, House and Senate index, House and Senate calendars and agendas, and information provided on the Internet.

#### Other Services

Other duties of the revisor's office include drafting House committee reports for consideration by the House, integrating amendments into bills as they are adopted (engrossing), drafting conference committee reports for consideration by the House and Senate, preparing comparisons for the House and Senate desks and conference committees, preparing and transmitting formal copies to the governor for signature (enrolling), publishing laws passed at each annual session of the Legislature (Session Laws), approving and drafting administrative rules for state agencies, publishing a collection of permanent and general laws in their most current language (*Minnesota Statutes*), and

publishing the collection of administrative rules (*Minnesota Rules*). Attorneys from the revisor's office serve as legal counsel for the Joint Subcommittee on Claims. The revisor's office prepares and submits legislative bills that clarify or correct errors in statutes and administrative rules.

### House Research Department

The House Research Department, 600 State Office Building, (651) 296-6753, Fax: (651) 296-9887, <http://www.house.mn/hrd/hrd.htm>, is the research and legal services office of the Minnesota House of Representatives. House Research was established by the House of Representatives in 1967 to provide research and legal services to the House and to House members and committees. The department is an agency of the House of Representatives as a whole, rather than of a committee or caucus. The department is nonpartisan; its services are available to all members of the House, without regard to partisan affiliation or legislative position. The department strives to be politically neutral and impartial on the issues. Its staff does not advocate, endorse, promote, or oppose legislation or legislative decisions.

The work of House Research Department focuses on legislative decision-making — on helping members and committees develop and evaluate legislative policies and laws. The department delivers its services in three major ways: First, it provides legal and research staff support for each House committee. Second, individual members of the House may use the services of the department simply by calling, writing, or stopping by the offices on the sixth floor of the State Office Building. (All such requests are treated as confidential, meaning that no one outside of House Research will be told of the request or the response without the permission of the member.) Third, the department publishes information and analysis for use by all members of the House.

House Research has three missions:

1. To help legislators and committees make informed legislative decisions by providing information and analysis that is: (a) credible, impartial, and accurate, and (b) useful and relevant to legislative decisions.

Department staff members gather and summarize information on programs and policies of the federal government, Minnesota, and other states; analyze federal and state policies and laws; conduct empirical research studies; and maintain computer programs used by the House to analyze public finance and other government programs. The department publishes the results for use by all legislators. Research is also done for committees, as part of the legislative process, and for individual legislators on request.

2. To help legislators and committees develop legislation that carries out their legislative decisions by providing expert and experienced help in developing and drafting legislation and in evaluating and understanding the effects of legislation.

Department staff members analyze options, draft bills and amendments, summarize laws and bills, provide information, and answer questions. This work is done for committees, as part of the legislative process, and for individual legislators on request.

3. To advise the House on legal matters arising from the conduct of House business.

Attorneys in House Research serve as legal counsel to the House as a government agency.

## Fiscal Analysis Department

Fiscal analysts provide legislative support for the House finance, taxes, and appropriations committees, as well as function as a department providing information to the Legislature on fiscal issues. The finance committees and divisions, Taxes Committee, Capital Investment Committee, and Ways & Means Committee are all staffed by fiscal analysts who provide professional help to committee members making decisions on state finances.

Fiscal staff provide budget background information, analyze spending and revenue proposals, track legislative decisions, and draft legislation to implement budget decisions. Fiscal analysts also respond to requests from members needing analyses or information on government finances. Publications providing background information on state finance issues are published by the fiscal staff.

## Legislative Reference Library

The Legislative Reference Library, 645 State Office Building, (651) 296-3398, established in 1969 as a nonpartisan service to the Legislature and its staff, has evolved into a highly specialized information resource. The library handles all inquiries — whether in person, by letter, phone, or e-mail ([refdesk@library.leg.state.mn.us](mailto:refdesk@library.leg.state.mn.us)) — objectively, confidentially, and in a nonpartisan manner.

### The Collection

The library's collection contains material on topics which have been, are, or may become of concern to lawmakers. The library staff's experience with the Internet and other electronic resources and membership in an inter-library loan network means that the resources available to the Legislature are, in effect, unlimited.

The library reading room contains a collection of books, state documents, magazines, newspapers, and

background materials. In addition to this collection, the library maintains general legislative history files, lists of elected officials over the Legislature's history, and files of newspaper clippings arranged by subject, legislative district, and name. Tape recordings of House and Senate floor sessions and committee hearings and committee minute books are retained and made accessible by the library.

The library has an extensive collection of publications by state departments and agencies, including budget documents, annual reports of state departments, reports by legislative staff, reports from consultants, and much more. In addition, the library retains all recent Senate and House bills for use by members, staff, and the public.

Library staff members use a variety of electronic resources, including the Internet, LEXIS/NEXIS, and Dow Jones, while its CD-ROM collection includes backfiles of the St. Paul *Pioneer Press*, the *Star Tribune*, census data, and other data compilations. The library also manages "Links to the World," a collection of public policy Internet sites.

The library offers two other popular services: Inside Issues (regular, customized lists of articles on topics selected by service users) and the Contents Page Service (photocopies of contents pages from journals chosen by service users).

### Loan Privileges

Legislators, researchers, and committee staff may borrow material for a three-week period. Requests can be made by telephone or e-mail ([circdesk@library.leg.state.mn.us](mailto:circdesk@library.leg.state.mn.us)). Materials that are available within the Capitol complex are delivered within 24 hours. When material is borrowed from another library, there may be a delay between initiation of the request and delivery.

## Committee Staff

### Committee Administrator

Committee administrators are assigned to each chairperson. They are responsible for a wide range of duties including research, organization of materials, and liaison between the chair, members, and constituent services.

### Committee Legislative Assistant

Committee legislative assistants are assigned to a committee chair and perform secretarial duties for the chair, keep records of the current status of every bill in the possession of the committee, assist members in drafting amendments, and keep records of all committee actions. The legislative assistants gather materials necessary for the preparation of the official reports of the committee for approval by the chair and submission to the full House.

## Legislative Offices

### Chief Committee Clerk

The chief committee clerk coordinates activities among the Chief Clerk's Office, the Office of the Revisor of Statutes, and House committee legislative assistants for the timely drafting and filing of committee reports.

### DFL, GOP Caucus Staff

Both political parties have partisan caucus staff to assist them with scheduling, research, the media, constituent requests, information systems, and word processing.

### Leadership Staff

A select few staff members are considered leadership staff. They assist in caucus and House management and planning, staff coordination, overall staff support services, and act as political advisers. Some may also assist in scheduling House floor sessions and overseeing the flow of bills on the House floor.

### Legislative Assistant

Most members share the services of a legislative assistant with one or two other members. Duties include scheduling, handling constituent inquiries, and coordinating the daily activities of the members.

### Research

The research departments assist members and staff in developing and interpreting public policy by providing information which serves both the political and policy analysis needs of the members and staff. Research assists in the inception, development, drafting, presentation and summarizing of bills, amendments, and other legislation.

### Media

The media departments help members better communicate with their local press. They assist members in their attempts to open up the communication lines. Writing service options include: press releases, news columns, letters to the editor, legislative reports, newsletters, questionnaires, speeches, and photo cutlines. The departments also provide radio and graphics services.

### Constituent Services

Constituent services departments serve as the chief clearinghouse for all requests that require casework for a constituent and/or background information/research for a member.

### Information Systems

The information systems departments coordinate the development of computer systems throughout the

GOP and DFL caucuses, respectively. The information systems staff administers the network, provides software and hardware support, fields computer questions, and trains members and staff in the use of their computers.

### Word Processing

Word processing services produce routine letters, reports, and other materials from hard copy and samples, on the computer network, in a manner that meets the word processing needs of their caucus.

### House Public Information Services Office

The House Public Information Services Office, 175 State Office Building, (651) 296-2146, is a nonpartisan service of the Minnesota House of Representatives serving the public, representatives of the media, and members of the House. The office policy in working with each of these audiences is to remain politically neutral and impartial on the issues.

### Public Access

The office is the first point of contact for members of the public. Staff members handle general requests for information, such as helping constituents contact their representatives, mail out requested publications, and answer questions about the legislative process. The office places most of its printed materials, such as publications, committee schedules, and directories on the Internet at: <http://www.leg.mn>

### Publications

The House Public Information Services Office publishes the *Session Weekly*, a newsmagazine covering each legislative session that provides synopses and updates of bills pending before the House. It also has a topically-organized online companion, called *Session Daily*. The office also publishes a variety of legislative directories and informational material on state government and the legislative process. *New Laws*, for example, includes highlights and a summary of all bills passed by lawmakers and signed or vetoed by the governor during each legislative session. Educational publications developed by this office are often used in classrooms of all levels. (For more House Public Information Services Office publications, see Constituent-Oriented Publications on page 26.)

### Photography

The photography division of the House Public Information Services Office, (651) 296-9284, accepts assignments from both political caucuses and other House offices such as the High School Page Program. The photographers serve on the *Session Weekly* staff, providing news and feature photographs. They take member and staff portraits; candid photos of members

in committee, on the floor, and with constituents; and photographs of Capitol activities. In addition, the photographers document House floor sessions and House committee hearings.

### Television

Television Services, Room 216C State Capitol, (651) 297-1338, was established in 1994 as a nonpartisan legislative office to open the political process to the public. It became part of House Public Information Services in 2002. House Television Services, in conjunction with Senate Media Services, broadcasts floor sessions and committee hearings live throughout the state via satellite. The staff also produce informational and educational programming about the House and the Legislature in general.

### Minnesota State Fair

The House Public Information Services Office is responsible for organizing the operation of the Minnesota House of Representatives exhibit at the Minnesota State Fair each year. The goal of the House exhibit is to introduce people to state government, help them find answers to questions, and familiarize them with the office's literature about the legislative process. The exhibit has been a fixture in the Education Building at the State Fair since 1974. Staff members also arrange for members and other staffers to work in the booth to greet fairgoers and to help inform the public about how to access information about their government and representatives. The House and Senate exhibits are side-by-side in the Education Building, allowing for greater cooperation between the two bodies.

## House Administrative Services

### Payroll, Expense Reimbursement and Payments

The House Administrative Services Office, 198 State Office Building, (651) 296-6648, is the official accounting and financial payment location for the House. All House member and staff paychecks, expense reimbursements, and invoices for House goods and operations are processed here. Members' allotted postage also is available in House Administrative Services.

### Benefit Information

House Administrative Services provides information on the state health and dental insurance plans for employees and their dependents; retirement; deferred compensation; pre-tax medical and dependent reimbursement accounts; employee, spouse, and child life insurance; and short- and long-term disability insurance. Additions or changes to current coverages are also processed here.

Benefits and other employment information is also

available in the House Administrative Services section of the House Intranet Site.

### Personnel Services

Job opportunities are posted in this office (as well as on the House Web site). Information is also available on tuition reimbursement, employee assistance, equal employment opportunity and affirmative action, sexual harassment, Americans with Disabilities Act, and employee training and development. Employment verification requests are processed here.

### Supply

The House Supply room, 35 State Office Building, (651) 296-2305, distributes and inventories House property and equipment and provides the necessary office supplies for House members and staff.

### Purchasing

House Administrative Services performs the purchasing function for all House members and staff. This includes purchasing equipment, supplies, and various services, such as printing and telephone operation/repairs. Equipment repairs also are coordinated through this office.

### Information Systems

House Administrative Services provides the planning and project management of House technology projects, such as the Members' Mobile Computing Project and changes to House local area network. The office also provides evaluation of new technology options and performs the centralized backup of files on the House network.

## Sergeant-at-Arms Office

The Sergeant-at-Arms Office, 45 State Office Building, (651) 296-4860, provides many services for members, staff, and the public. The chief sergeant-at-arms heads the department. Other staff members include three full-time assistant sergeants, the postmaster and assistant postmaster, two duplicating technicians, and an administrative assistant. The chief sergeant is appointed by the speaker. The assistant sergeants, postmaster, and assistant postmaster are elected by the House members to serve with the chief sergeant as officers of the House.

### Pages

Pages serve as support staff for all House and conference committee hearings and aid all departments in accomplishing their duties. During session, pages assist members in the House chamber by obtaining copies of bills or other legislative materials and delivering messages from the public or other

## Legislative Offices

members. They also assist in preparing for a daily session by placing agendas and orders on each member's desk as well as passing out amendments and other data during debate. Pages also maintain chamber and State Office Building files of Senate and House journals and copies of bills pending before the House.

### Parking and Transportation

The sergeant's office assigns parking spaces for members and staff. Parking information for the public is available from the sergeant's office for those attending meetings or visiting House lawmakers. Transportation services for "away from the complex" meetings are provided upon request.

### Security

The sergeant's office serves as a liaison with Capitol Security in providing security for House office areas. A major role for the chief sergeant is to provide a safe environment for members and staff at all times, particularly during session in the House chamber or during committee meetings. The assistant sergeants, postmaster, and assistant postmaster aid in this duty.

The chief sergeant is responsible for decorum and protocol, and may be requested by the speaker to locate and escort members to the chamber during a roll call vote. Members may be escorted from the chamber, or even members of the public from the gallery, if they become disruptive.

The sergeant's office orders and distributes keys for offices, files, and desks; unlocks committee rooms for meetings; and issues Capitol Complex key cards.

### Post Office

The House Post Office, 50 State Office Building, (651) 296-9462, receives and distributes mail for members and staff. The post office is staffed by the postmaster and assistant postmaster. The postmaster coordinates with the chief sergeant-at-arms and House Administrative Services to maintain responsibility for approximately \$100,000 worth of postage per year. The postmaster, during session days, coordinates with the chief sergeant to insure the security and smooth operation of the House chamber. The postmaster also is responsible for supervising temporary chamber staff.

### Educational Programs

An assistant sergeant coordinates the High School Page Program and the College Internship Program. Another responsibility is to organize and lead seminars about the legislative process and conduct tours for constituents and special guests upon request.

#### *High School Page Program*

A nonpartisan student activity brings juniors from more than 500 state public and non-public high schools to spend a week at the Capitol and serve as pages. The program encourages involvement in the legislative process and in state government. Some activities include meeting with individual members and key officials of the three branches of government, attending committee hearings and educational seminars, and serving as pages in the House chamber alongside the full-time pages.

#### *College Internship Program*

Interns work for members or key staff by performing duties, such as conducting research, following the status of bills, or monitoring committees to receive academic credit from their college or university. Internships are available throughout the year and the program provides for orientation and seminars throughout the year.

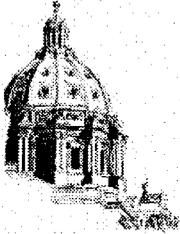
### Duplicating

House Duplicating, 35 State Office Building (651) 296-8611, reproduces the *Permanent Journal of the House*, bills, amendments, committee reports, schedules, and other legislative materials requested by House members and staff. Two administrative assistants operate state-of-the-art duplicating technology to produce high-quality products and to ensure that the duplicating needs of the House are met in a timely manner.

## Media

### Capitol Press Corps

The Legislature rents office space to the news media in the tunnel level of the Capitol, rooms B-28 and B-29. There are mail slots provided for press releases and other information. Telephone numbers for specific members of the media who cover the Capitol are listed in the *Official Directory of the Minnesota Legislature* (Red Book).



# Commissions, Joint Offices

## Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC)

85 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-9002

Greg Hubinger — Director  
Chad Thuet — Assistant Director  
Open Position— Administrative Assistant  
Christine Sasseville — International Affairs Coordinator

The commission serves as the umbrella organization for all of the commissions, joint offices, and other boards that are under its purview. The LCC sets the complement for joint agencies and commissions and the compensation of employees under its jurisdiction. All joint budgets are reviewed by the commission. The commission coordinates certain activities of the House and Senate, including the setting of insurance benefits and sick and annual leaves. Staff work is done out of this office for the Compensation Council which sets the salaries of judges, legislators, and constitutional officers. The LCC serves as staff for the Regent Candidate Advisory Council which recommends candidates to the Legislature for the position of regent, University of Minnesota and the Trustee Candidate Advisory Council, which recommends candidates to the governor for the position of trustee, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. The Subcommittees are: Library, Revisor, Salary and Budget Review, and GIS Oversight, Claims, and Employee Relations.

### Library Subcommittee

The Library Subcommittee oversees the operation of the Legislative Reference Library; it reports to the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

### Revisor Subcommittee

The Revisor Subcommittee oversees the operation of the Office of the Revisor of Statutes; it reports to the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

### Salary and Budget Review Subcommittee

The Salary and Budget Review Subcommittee oversees specific hiring and budget-setting decisions; it reports to the Legislative Coordinating Commission. It is to employees under the jurisdiction of the Legislative Coordinating Commission what the House Rules and Legislative Administration Committee is to employees of the House.

### Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Office/ Subcommittee

85 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-0098

Lee Meilleur — Director  
Troy Lawrence — Assistant Director  
Michael Paton — Network Administrator

The Legislative GIS Office is responsible for the development and maintenance of spatial databases, and the repository for statewide boundary information for legislative use. These databases can be provided to legislators and legislative staff as hard copy maps or electronic files. The office also develops new mapping applications that are pertinent to the Legislature. In the future, the office will be providing access to spatial databases via desktop GIS applications and also through an interactive Legislative GIS web page.

## Legislative Advisory Commission

Fourth Floor, Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155.....(651) 296-4956

The commission has the authority to review and grant requests by state departments and agencies for additional personnel or funding from contingent appropriations. The governor presides and the commissioner of finance acts as secretary.

## Legislative Audit Commission/ Office of Legislative Auditor

First Floor South, Centennial Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155 ..... (651) 296-4708

James R. Nobles — Legislative Auditor  
Roger Brooks — Deputy Auditor for Program Evaluation  
Claudia Gudvangen — Deputy Auditor for Financial Audits

The commission is made up of 16 legislators. The commission appoints the legislative auditor who directs the work of the Office of the Legislative Auditor.

The principal function of the office is to audit the financial operations of the state's executive branch and to evaluate programs funded by the Legislature. The office has a Financial Audit Division with approximately 45 auditors (most of whom are CPAs) and a Program Evaluation Division with a staff of 16 evaluators (all of whom have advanced degrees in various research disciplines). Each division is supervised by a deputy legislative auditor.

The legislative auditor's office was created in 1973, with a mission to strengthen legislative oversight, improve accountability, and promote good management in state government.

The office's financial audit schedule is set by the legislative auditor. It includes an annual "statewide audit," which, among other things, examines the state's financial statements. Each year, the Financial Audit Division also conducts approximately 35 to 40 separate audits of agencies, boards, and commissions in the executive and judicial branches of state government.

The Program Evaluation Division conducts five or six evaluations each year on the subjects of legislative concern. The Legislative Audit Commission chooses evaluation topics after requesting and considering suggestions from all members of the Legislature. In 1993, the division also began reviewing annual performance reports prepared by executive agencies.

## Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women

85 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-8590  
Toll-free number ..... (800) 657-3949

Diane Cushman — Director  
Cheryl Hoium — Assistant Director  
Michelle Pryce— Communications/Policy Specialist

The commission provides basic information and statistics on women, children, and families in Minnesota, including population characteristics, educational attainment and enrollments, marital and parental status, household characteristics, labor force status and employment characteristics, referral to women's programs and services, and basic information on women's legal and economic rights. The commission studies legislative and agency proposals which impact women, children, and families and makes recommendations to the Legislature. The commission also provides information on the Internet.

## Legislative Coordinating Commission/ Subcommittee on Employee Relations

85 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-2963

Greg Hubinger — Director  
Open Position — Administrative Assistant

The subcommittee monitors the collective bargaining process between the state and its employees, ratifies negotiated collective bargaining agreements and arbitrated awards, and approves compensation plans for unrepresented state employees. The subcommittee monitors public employment issues at the local level, and conducts policy research on issues related to public employment.

## Legislative Commission on Health Care Access

309 State Capitol ..... (651) 296-4261  
559 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-9249

This 10-member oversight commission was created by the 1992 Legislature to review the progress of the Department of Health, the Minnesota Health Care Commission, and all other agencies involved in implementing the MinnesotaCare law.

## Legislative Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCMR)

65 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-2406

John Velin — Director  
Dave Flipp — Assistant Director  
Susan Thornton — Manager, Research and Planning  
Yvonne Fritchie — Administrative Assistant  
Sandy Smith — Secretary

The LCMR recommends funding for natural resources programs to be financed by the Minnesota future resources fund, the Minnesota environment and natural resources trust fund, federal oil overcharge funds, and the Great Lakes Protection Account.

## Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

55 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-2750

Lawrence A. Martin — Director  
Edward Burek — Deputy Director  
Lisa Diesslin — Administrative Secretary  
Lecia Churchill — Clerk

The commission was created to conduct an ongoing study and review of public employee retirement plans in Minnesota and to make legislative recommendations to establish and maintain sound public employee pension policy. Annual actuarial studies of each fund are conducted by an independent consulting actuary under the direction of the commission.

## Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy

The commission was created to provide the Legislature with in-depth analysis of projected state revenues, expenditures, and tax expenditures.

## Also Under the Legislative Coordinating Commission

### Central Accounting

60 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-8890

Sandra Gulbranson — Fiscal Services Supervisor  
Sandy Horman — Fiscal Services Assistant  
Denise Jobe — Fiscal Services Assistant

The office performs the bookkeeping and payroll for all of the agencies, commissions, and subcommittees that are under the auspices of the Legislative Coordinating Commission.

### Claims (Joint House-Senate Subcommittee on Claims)

85 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-0099

D'Ann Knight — Claims Clerk

The subcommittee reviews claims submitted by people who believe they have been damaged by the state. The majority of these claims are submitted by inmates at one of the state's correctional facilities. The recommendations of the subcommittee are forwarded to the Legislature for its approval.

### Electric Energy Task Force

322 State Capitol ..... (651) 296-1767

This task force, made up of 10 members from the House and 10 members from the Senate, was created by the 1994 Legislature to study future electric energy sources and their costs and make recommendations for legislation for an environmentally and economically sustainable and advantageous electric energy supply.

The Legislature expanded the role of the task force in the 1997 legislative session, directing the task force to review issues relating to electric industry restructuring and deregulation. In 1998, the Legislature required the task force to conduct analysis of several issues relating to electric restructuring. The task force is currently undertaking that review.

**Commissions, Joint Offices**

**Great Lakes Commission**

351 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-2228

The commission promotes development of the Great Lakes basin, plans water resource development, makes maximum possible use of navigational aids and other public works, and secures balanced use of the basin. The compact was signed by Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, and Ontario.

**Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB)**

P.O. Box 441, Hwy. 53  
Eveleth, MN 55734 ..... (218) 744-7400  
1-800-765-5043

John Swift — Commissioner

The board was created to encourage economic diversification on the Iron Range through development of mineral research, agriculture, forestry, mining, and tourism.

**Mississippi River Parkway Commission**

P.O. Box 59159  
Minneapolis, MN 55459-8207 ..... (763) 212-2560

Hank Todd — Managing Director

The commission aids in the development of a scenic parkway and highway along the Mississippi River in Minnesota and in the promotion of economic development opportunities along the Great River Road. It works with the state and local agencies of the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission in the promotion of tourism and the enhancement of economic development in the Mississippi River Valley.

**Board of Trustees Candidate Advisory Council**

85 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-9002

The council is to assist the governor in identifying and recruiting qualified candidates for nonstudent membership on the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Board of Trustees.

**Regent Candidate Advisory Council**

85 State Office Building ..... (651) 296-9002

The council is to assist the Legislature in identifying and recruiting qualified candidates for membership on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.



# Glossary

## act

A bill which has passed both houses of the Legislature and has been enrolled, certified, assigned a chapter number, and either has become law without the governor's signature, has been signed into law by the governor, or vetoed by the governor and the veto has been overridden by the Legislature.

## adjournment

Closing of a committee hearing or daily legislative session for the day.

## adjournment "sine die"

Or "without a day" — final adjournment of either the House or the Senate at the end of a two-year biennium.

## adopt

Approve or accept; usually applies to a report or clause thereof, by adding, omitting, or altering language. "The report of the committee is now adopted." See prevail.

## advisory task force

A limited-agenda body in any of the branches of government, advisory to a policy setting agency, created with no more than a two-year life span. Example: Seed Potato Certification Task Force.

## appropriation

An authorization by law to spend money from the state treasury.

## authority

An executive branch agency (other than a department) whose purpose is to sell bonds for the financing, ownership, and development of public facilities. Example: Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (Authority).

## biennium

Two-year period. The legislative session is biennial; the state budget is biennial (money for a two-year budget cycle). Minnesota's biennium begins on July 1 and ends on June 30, two years later.

## bill

Proposal for a new law, change in current law, repeal of a current law, or for a constitutional amendment. It consists of a title, enacting clause and body (text), which is examined and approved in its form by the Office of the Revisor of Statutes.

## bill history

A summary of the actions taken on a bill by each legislative house and/or one or more of the committees. The bill history appears on the paper cover of "original" bills, and on the first page of printed bills.

## bill, House advisory

A proposal for initiation, termination, alteration, or study of a law or program which may be drawn up informally in layperson's language by a legislator and need not be submitted to the revisor.

## bill, local

A bill which would affect a unit or units of local government.

## bill status

1. Current standing or location of a bill within the legislative process, which can be tracked on the Legislature's Web site (<http://www.leg.mn>).
2. The informal name for the index systems prepared by the House and Senate index departments.

## Glossary

### "blue book"

The legislative manual published biennially by the Office of the Secretary of State. It contains information on the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Minnesota government; election statistics; and government history. (Blue bound book)

### board

An executive-branch agency with prescribed official duties and policy-setting authorities. Boards have at least one of these powers: 1) to perform administrative acts, including spending money; 2) to issue or revoke licenses or certifications; 3) to make rules; or 4) to adjudicate contested cases or hear appeals. Example: Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board.

### body

1. One of the two houses of the Legislature. 2. Of a bill or resolution — the main text, "language," or wording.

### budget resolution

A binding resolution adopted by the House setting a single dollar amount as a limitation on state taxes and appropriations for the fiscal biennium.

### "by request"

Notation after the chief author of a bill indicating that the bill is introduced at the request of a constituent and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the legislator who introduced it.

### Calendar for the Day

List of bills to be taken up by the full House on a given day. The bills are drawn from the General Register, which means they have been given a second reading. The Rules Committee compiles the Calendar for the Day.

### call of the chair

Summoning of members of a committee or body by its presiding officer.

### call of the house

A condition placed upon the House at the request of 10 members, or upon the Senate by any member, compelling absent and unexcused members to come to the chamber and to cast their vote. No member may leave without permission of the presiding officer. The call may be "lifted" by majority vote of the whole body.

### caucus

1. A group of representatives or senators who affiliate with the same political party or faction, such as the "DFL Caucus," the "Republican Caucus," the "Majority," or the "Minority" caucus. 2. Meeting of such a group.

### chamber

The official meeting place for the House or Senate in the State Capitol.

### chapter

1. In *Minnesota Statutes*, a division of major subject areas of the law. 2. In Session Laws, each chapter is a bill that has been enacted (become law). Chapter numbers of laws are assigned by the revisor of statutes and then presented to the governor for approval.

### Chief Clerk

The administrative officer with the House and parliamentary advisor, elected by House members. (In the Senate, the "Secretary.")

### Chief Sergeant-at-Arms

Appointed officer of the body responsible for keeping security and order in the chamber, offices, and corridors; for supervision of the pages; and for some services to members, some administrative tasks, and for carrying out the directives of the presiding officer.

### co-author

1. One of the joint sponsors of a bill. 2. To sponsor a bill in conjunction with other legislators.

### commission

A legislative body composed exclusively of members of both houses. Example: Legislative Commission on the Economic Status of Women.

### committee

1. A group of members appointed from a legislative body to study, consider, and make recommendations on bills, resolutions, and other related matters that affect an aspect or aspects of the state. 2. An executive or judicial branch agency called to advise another body. It is limited in its authority.

### committee report

Recommendation from a standing committee to a full body to pass a bill with or without amendments, refer to another committee, or report out without any further recommendation.

### companion bills

Identical bills introduced both in the House and the Senate.

### comparison

Study of House and Senate companion bills, reporting any differences in the two bills. See substitution.

concurrence

The process of concurring in (accepting) the amendments put on a bill that passed the other body in another form. A bill up for concurrence is called a code and given a number by the House Desk. Each member gets a copy of the code which is a copy of all the amendments put on the bill by the other body. Once the amendments have been concurred upon, the bill can be given a third reading as amended by the other body, and repassed.

concurrent resolution

A document reflecting the sentiment or intent of both houses of the Legislature that governs the business of the Legislature or expresses recognition.

conferee

Conference committee member.

conference committee

Committee made up of members from each house appointed to reconcile the differences between two versions of a bill that has been passed by both houses.

confirm

Approve an executive appointment; Senate only, except appointments to the Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board, which are considered by both houses.

Consent Calendar

Local or noncontroversial bills which are given their second reading; bypass the General Register; and are eligible for debate and possible amendment, third reading, and final passage in one day.

constitutional amendment

A bill that proposes to the voters a change in the state constitution. Notification of proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution follows the course of House or Senate files.

council

An executive, legislative, or judicial committee at least one-half of whose membership is required to be made up of officers or representatives of specified businesses, geographic regions, ethnic groups, occupations, industries, political organizations, etc.

custom and usage

1. Guidelines used to determine a parliamentary question when the state constitution, laws, and permanent and joint rules do not apply. 2. The tradition and precedence of the body.

division

A request that members stand or raise hands to be counted when the outcome of a voice vote is unclear or in dispute.

division of a committee

A permanent sub-unit of a committee appointed to consider bills or portions thereof that relate to specific subject areas of the committee's responsibility.

division of a question

To allow the separation of a motion or amendment which contains several separate and distinct parts, so that each part can be considered separately.

drafting

Drawing up a bill in legal language and standard form.

effective date

The date when the law takes effect. Unless otherwise provided in the act, all laws containing appropriations take effect on July 1; all other laws on Aug. 1 following the governor's approval.

enabling legislation

Act which provides the means, power, or authority to do something; permissive legislation; usually applies to local units of government.

enacting clause

Constitutionally required portion of a bill which formally expresses the intent that it become law: "BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA."

engrossment

After a bill is amended and approved, the bill is engrossed. This engrossment process incorporates the amendment or amendments inside the bill.

enrolled bill

The final engrossment of a bill passed by the Legislature, ready for the governor's action.

enrollment

Enrolling a bill puts the bill in act form. Once the bill has been passed by both bodies, the bill is first engrossed if there are any amendments, and then enrolled. It is printed on stationery with the words "AN ACT" at the top, and following the bill is a signature page that is first signed by the chief clerk, secretary of the Senate, speaker of the House, and president of the Senate (the bill is now enrolled). The bill is then ready to be presented to the governor for final approval.

## Glossary

### file

Official name of a bill. House file (H.F. No. \_\_\_\_\_) or Senate file (S.F. No. \_\_\_\_\_).

### final passage

A vote taken on a bill after its third reading, requiring a majority of all elected members of a legislative body for approval. Each member's vote is recorded in the Journal, as required by the state constitution.

### first reading

Reporting of a bill to the body, as required by the Minnesota Constitution and the rules of the body, at the time of its introduction and referral to committee.

### fiscal note

A list of the costs, or financial implications of a bill, prepared at the request of a committee chair by the executive branch of government; may be attached with the committee report.

### Fiscal Calendar

A list of spending or revenue bills to be taken up by the full House on a given day. The bills are drawn from the General Register, which means they have had a second reading. Bills can be placed on the Fiscal Calendar by the chair of the Ways & Means Committee or the chair of the Taxes Committee.

### fiscal year

A 12-month accounting period. (For the state budget, July 1 to June 30. Two "fiscal years" make a biennial budget cycle.)

### floor

The chamber and its environs are restricted to members of a body, its officers and employees, and authorized guests.

### front desk

That portion of the chamber where the House chief clerk or secretary of the Senate and their assistants work during the session (below the rostrum of the presiding officer).

### gallery

Balconies in the chamber where visitors may observe the proceedings of a legislative body.

### General Register

A list of bills which have had their second readings and await action by the full House.

### germane

Relevant or pertinent to. (This term is most often used when talking about the appropriateness of amendments for a particular bill.)

### germaneness

Relevance or appropriateness of a proposed amendment or motion under consideration.

### grandfather clause or "grandfather in"

In a bill which creates new or additional qualifications, the clause or section which exempts from compliance those individuals or entities already in the affected class when the law takes effect. Informal terminology.

### "greenback"

Identifies an original House file (must be authored by a House member). Sometimes called a "greenjacket."

### hearing

A formal meeting of a committee, division, or subcommittee where evidence may be presented or testimony heard. Usually used interchangeably with "committee hearing."

### hopper

Basket at the front desk in the House chamber or in the leadership corner of the State Office Building.

### House File or HF

Designation appearing before the number of a bill, which indicates that the measure originated in the House of Representatives.

### indefinite postponement

Used in connection with substitutions. Once a House file has been referred for comparison with its Senate file companion, it is reported and the differences are noted. By motion the Senate file is substituted for the House file and the House file is then indefinitely postponed.

### index

1. A list of bills in a particular category. 2. The departments within the Chief Clerk's Office and the Secretary of the Senate charged with recording the status of all bills in the House or the Senate. Listings of bills also are kept according to their number, author, topic and statutory sections affected.

### interim

The interval between adjournment sine die, and the convening of a new Legislature.

### interim recess

The interval between the temporary adjournment at the end of the first year of a biennial session, and reconvening for the second annual session.

### introduction

The formal presentation of a bill to a body of the Legislature at the time of the first reading and referral to committee.

### Joint Convention

Combined meeting of the two bodies of the Legislature to transact certain business, to hear addresses by the governor or other distinguished guests. The speaker of the House presides as president of the Joint Convention; the House chief clerk is the secretary.

### Joint Rules

Rules adopted by both houses to govern the Joint Conventions and the other official interactions between the House and the Senate.

### Journal

The official record of the daily proceedings of each house kept by the House chief clerk and the secretary of the Senate, respectively. Required by the state constitution, defined by statute and rules of each body.

### laid over

Postponement or delay in consideration of a matter before the body or one of its committees, either temporarily or until a set time in the future. "I move that the bill be laid over until Wednesday, April 4."

### lay on the table

Set aside a matter before the body or committee, so that it may be taken up at a later time by majority vote. Same as "table."

### Legislative Coordinating Commission

A committee made up of members who comprise the leadership of both houses; established by statute to supervise matters concerning the relationship, joint operation, and interaction of the House and Senate.

### legislative day

A day when either house of the Legislature is in session; a 24-hour period commencing at 7 a.m.

### legislative immunity

Privilege of a legislator to be free from civil arrest and civil prosecution during a session of the Legislature. A privilege granted by the Minnesota Constitution.

### lobbyist

A person acting individually or for an interest group who tries to influence the introduction of, the decisions on, or voting on specific legislation.

### main author

Same as "chief author."

### majority

1. *Final Passage* - 50 percent plus one of all members elected to a legislative body: 68 votes in the House; 34 votes in the Senate. 2. *Simple* - in committee, subcommittee, and division, 50 percent plus one of those members present while voting.

### *Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure*

The standard manual of legislative procedure used by the Minnesota House and Senate.

### memorialize

To petition (request by resolution) that a specific action be taken. (Resolutions by the Minnesota Legislature memorializing the Congress are treated as bills.)

### minority report

A report containing the opinion of a minority of the members who disagree with the recommendations in the committee report on a bill or resolution. The minority report is considered before the committee report, and if adopted, stands as the report of the committee on that matter.

### motion

A proposal for a specific action formally made in a committee, subcommittee, or legislative body. A parliamentary device used to put a question before a body.

### "motions and resolutions"

That part of the order of business during which members may make motions on legislative matters that do not come before the body under the other items of the order of business.

### order of business

That portion of the permanent rules of the body which prescribes the order in which items of business will be considered.

### per diem

Literally, "by the day." The daily expense allowance granted legislators during a session, interim recess, and interim when conducting official legislative business.

### point of order

A device used to make a formal request that the presiding officer rule on a parliamentary question relating to a matter before the body.

### President

The presiding officer of the Senate, elected by the senators; the presiding officer of the Joint Convention (which is the speaker of the House).

## Glossary

### prevail

Pertains to motions; a motion which obtains the necessary votes for adoption is said to "prevail." "The motion prevails and the report of the committee is adopted."

### previous question

A motion to close debate and to bring the pending question to an immediate vote.

### progress

To delay action on a bill the author can request progress. This action temporarily sets aside the bill. The request also can be more specific as "progress retaining its place," or "progress to a day certain," in which case the bill could not be considered until the date stated in the request.

### Pro Tempore (presiding officer)

A member of the Senate or House, respectively, designated by the presiding officer to act as the presiding officer in his/her absence.

### protest and dissent

A constitutional provision allowing any two or more members to take exception to an action of either body, and to have their exception printed in the Journal.

### quorum

The number of members in attendance required to conduct business (50 percent plus one).

### reading

A formal procedure required by the state constitution and rules. These readings indicate to legislators and the public that an action or series of actions have been taken on a bill or resolution, and the matter has reached the next stage in the legislative process. Bills receive their first reading at the time of introduction, their second reading after adoption of committee reports, and their third reading before placed upon final passage. Bills can receive more than first, second, or third readings. Before a bill can be repassed as amended by the other body, or repassed as amended by conference, the bill must receive another third reading.

### reapportionment/redistricting

Redrawing legislative and congressional district lines every 10 years following the federal census to reflect changes and shifts in state population.

### recess

1. Intermission in a daily session or committee meeting. "The majority leader moves that the House recess to the call of the chair." 2. Time between two portions of a biennial session.

### reconsideration

A floor procedure whereby a question previously decided in the affirmative or the negative is brought before the body a second time for consideration. This motion can only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side. If the motion to reconsider does not prevail, it cannot be made again.

### refer

To assign a bill or resolution to committee, subcommittee, or division for consideration.

### referendum

A procedure whereby a measure adopted by the Legislature may be submitted to the electorate of a local unit of government for ratification.

### repassage

A final vote on a bill previously passed in another form. The House and Senate repass a bill after concurring on the amendments of the other body, and after adopting a report of a conference committee.

### report

Constitutional language which signifies the same action as the more commonly used traditional term "reading."

### report, committee

Recommendations of a standing committee that a bill or resolution be passed or be passed with certain amendments, with or without reference to another committee, compiled by the committee's legislative assistant and certified by the chair; may include a fiscal note or revisor's analysis.

### report/comparison

Formal announcement by the House chief clerk or secretary of the Senate that companion House and Senate bills are identical or identical with certain exceptions.

### report, minority

A report containing the opinion of a minority of the members who disagree with the recommendations in the committee report on a bill or resolution. The minority report is considered before the committee report, and if adopted, stands as the report of the committee on that matter.

### re-refer

Reassign a bill or resolution to committee.

### resolution, constitutional

Resolutions proposing an amendment to the state constitution or ratifying an amendment to the U.S. Constitution. They are treated as bills.

resolution, House or Senate

Resolution expressing the opinion, sentiments, or intent of one house alone.

resolution, joint

An action taken by the Legislature meeting in Joint Convention.

resolution, memorial

A resolution, introduced as a House or Senate file, that urges another governmental body to take or refrain from a certain action.

revenue-raising

Constitutional term for the setting of taxes. Revenue raising measures must originate in the House. "Raising" means collecting, *not* "increasing," and applies only to taxes and *not* to expenditures.

Revisor of Statutes

The office established by statute to draft all bills (except House Advisories) and resolutions introduced by members of the Legislature, to engross and enroll bills and resolutions, and to publish the *Minnesota Statutes*, *Session Laws of the State of Minnesota*, and *Administrative Rules* (rules adopted by executive branch agencies with statutory rule making authority).

roll call

Recorded vote taken by either body by means of the electrical voting system or by calling by voice for the votes of individual members. All roll calls are recorded in the *Journal of the House*.

rules

1. Regulating principles, methods of procedure. These include the Minnesota Constitution, *Minnesota Statutes*, *Permanent Rules of the House*, *Joint Rules of the House and Senate*, *Mason's Manual of Legislative Procedure*, and custom and usage. 2. An operating principle or order promulgated by a branch or unit of state government under authority granted by the Legislature. These administrative rules have the force and effect of law.

Rules Committee

Officially, the Rules and Legislative Administration Committee in the House and the Committee on Rules and Administration in the Senate. A standing committee made up of the leadership and other members of both caucuses, which prepares and recommends rules for the body and changes therein, designates and assigns employees of the body and their compensation, designates bills for consideration as Special Orders, makes recommendations on resolutions and bills, and recommends policy to govern the administration of the body.

Second Reading

Reporting of a bill to the body following the adoption of the committee report. "Second Reading" places the bill on the General Register, or if recommended, to the Consent Calendar, as required in the constitution and rules of the body.

Secretary of the Senate

The chief administrative officer and parliamentary advisor elected by the senators.

Select Committee

Committee established to study and report on a specific issue. Sometimes known as a "Special Committee."

Senate File (SF)

Designation appearing before the number of a bill which indicates that the measure originated in the Senate.

Sergeant-at-Arms

See Chief Sergeant-at-Arms.

session

The biennial period during which the Legislature meets.

session, daily

A meeting of the House or Senate in its chamber, used interchangeably with "Legislative Day."

session, joint

Same as Joint Convention.

session, regular

The annual meeting of the Legislature between the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January, and the first Monday after the third Saturday in May.

session, special or extra

When the Legislature uses up its constitutionally permitted 120 legislative days in a biennium, or after the date prescribed by law for annual adjournment and if matters in the state present a sufficient urgency, the governor may call a special (or extra) session of the Legislature. The governor can call a special session for a purpose, but cannot limit the matters to be considered nor the length of sitting.

Session Laws

Published numerical listing of the text of all bills that become law during a legislative session including appropriations, local and temporary laws, proposed constitutional amendments, and joint resolutions; and a comprehensive index. Session Laws also is known as *Laws of Minnesota* and *Session Laws of the State of Minnesota*.

## Glossary

### Sine die

The end of the even-numbered year in the biennium, terminating the two-year session.

### Speaker of the House

Presiding officer of the House elected by House members.

### standing committee

Permanent committee appointed with continuing responsibility to study and make recommendations on bills and resolutions within a general field of legislative responsibility.

### statutes

A compilation of the general and permanent laws of the state, printed every two years by the revisor of statutes; organized according to subject matter.

### substitution

The procedure whereby a bill which has received final approval in one body takes the place of its companion bill in the opposite body, by motion. If the bill is on the floor of the receiving body, the bills must be referred for comparison before substitution. See comparison.

### table

To set aside consideration of a question temporarily or indefinitely.

### Third Reading

Final reporting of a bill to the body before its final passage or before repassage if the bill has been amended by the other body, by conference, or after reconsideration. No amendments except amendments to the title may be offered after the third reading unless unanimous consent of the body is granted.

### title

A concise summary of the contents of a bill and the portions of law it affects.

### unofficial engrossment

An unofficial version of a bill pending before a committee or the whole body which has been rewritten to include in its text proposed amendments which have not been formally adopted. Senate files may be unofficially engrossed by the House to incorporate amendments adopted by the House, but on which the Senate has not yet concurred.

### veto

The power or action of the governor to reject a bill. The bill is returned to the house of origin with a veto message.

### veto, line-item

The power or action of the governor, rejecting one or more items of appropriations in a bill, while approving the rest.

### veto, pocket

Rejection of a bill by the governor after the Legislature has adjourned sine die, preventing its reconsideration by the Legislature.

### veto message

A letter from the governor to the presiding officer of the house of origin of a bill in which the governor states the reasons for rejecting the bill or line-item vetoing it.

### veto override

Re-enactment by the Legislature of a bill vetoed by the governor. A two-thirds majority of each house is required to override a veto.

### vote

1. Formal expression of a decision of the body or one of its committees, divisions, or subcommittees by roll call or voice on a motion, bill, resolution, or other policies. 2. The expression of a decision by an individual member. 3. The means by which this decision is expressed.

### "yellowback"

Identifies an original Senate file (must be authored by Senate member). Sometimes called a yellowjacket.

### yield

To surrender the floor temporarily to another member for the purpose of hearing a question or to hear an explanation.

