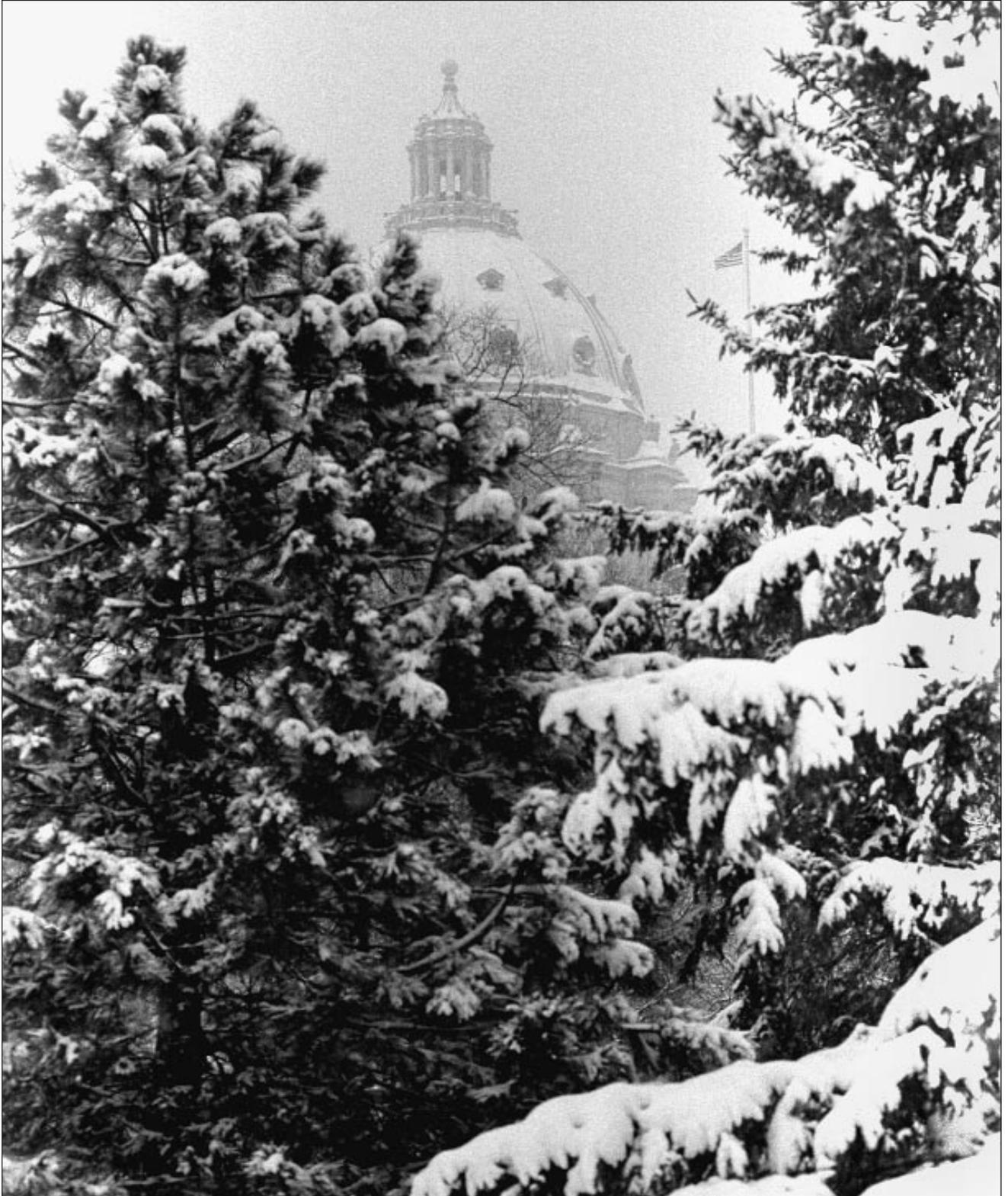


SESSION WEEKLY

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Update

Most individuals are noted for celebrating odd holidays or the occurrence of some unique event in history. For Minnesota legislators, Groundhog Day is not one of them. Even if the woodchuck did not see its shadow on Feb. 2, spring does not come to the Capitol for members and staff until well after March 26, the first deadline for bills to be out of committee and on their way to the floor for open debate.

But February was observed as a celebration of Black History Month and March is devoted to Women's History Month. In honor of women's history, you will find some updated information on page 28 of this issue of *Session Weekly*. Much of the index pertains to Minnesota women elected to the Legislature, including the first four elected in 1922.

Likewise, a tribute is paid here to a small group who were, or are presently part of a racial minority in the Legislature. The first to be elected was J. Francis Wheaton in 1898. Much of his district included Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield. He served for one term.

No other person of color was elected for 74 years until B. Robert Lewis became the first black senator in 1972 from St. Louis Park. Lewis died in office in 1978. Also in 1972, Ray O. Pleasant was elected to the House from the suburb of Bloomington. He served until 1982.

Others included Conrad Vega, a Latino from South St. Paul, elected to the Senate in 1976, and Frank Rodriguez Sr., to the House in 1979, from St. Paul's Mexican-American community. Randy Staten was elected in 1981. For three terms, he represented Minneapolis' near north side. The total population of members of color dropped to one in 1986, when Richard Jefferson took the seat left open by Staten.

The election year of 1990 brought in three new legislators and raised the minority caucus to four. Harold "Skip" Finn, the first Native American in the Legislature from Cass Lake served for two terms in the Senate. Across the way, the House celebrated the arrival of Edwina Garcia, representing Richfield, and Carlos Mariani, whose district encompasses downtown and the west side of St. Paul.

Garcia and Mariani continue to serve along with Jefferson, and first-term representative Satveer Chaudhary, an East Asian-American from Columbia Heights. With 39 women now in the House and four legislators of color, one of them recently noted that "It may not seem like the opportunity is there for everyone, but the promise of a truly democratic society definitely is."

—LeClair G. Lambert

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On the cover: Despite recent balmy temperatures offering tempting hints of spring, a powdery but deep March 4 snowcover reminded all Capitol visitors that winter has not yet relinquished its grip.

— Photo by Laura Phillips

Highlights

Property tax reform . . .

Easing burden for businesses, homeowners, landlords

Owners of low-income housing, older apartment buildings, and commercial-industrial properties would see a cut in their property taxes under bills approved by the House Taxes Committee's Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division March 5.

HF627, sponsored by Rep. Ann H. Rest (DFL-New Hope), would reduce property tax rates for low-income housing by creating a new assessment

classification that would enjoy a 1.5 percent property tax rate. Other low-income properties that don't qualify for the new classification, primarily residential, non-homestead buildings containing up to three units and non-subsidized apartments with four or more units, would also get a tax break phased in over three years beginning in 1998. By 2000, the non-homestead buildings would be taxed at 2 percent and the non-subsidized complexes at 2.8 percent. Currently, those rates stand at 2.3 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively.

The bill also extends homestead status to some low-income housing, imposes rent restrictions on landlords seeking to qualify for the new, lower rates, and sets the percentage of rent that may constitute property tax at 20 percent.

Under HF627, more than \$14 million in property tax revenue would be lost during the coming 1998-1999 biennium and nearly \$60 million over the 2000-2001 period, according to a Department of Revenue analysis. To offset a potential tax loss to local communities, the bill contains a provision for increased Homestead and Agriculture Credit Aid (HACA).

Low-income housing is now subject to a "tremendously complex" property tax structure, Rest said. HF627 "brings uniformity and consistency to that property tax type." Moreover, she continued, the bill would help preserve Minnesota's dwindling stock of affordable housing.

On the other hand, Rep. Andy Dawkins (DFL-St. Paul) felt HF627 did not go far enough in that direction, particularly with respect to federal programs already in place. He introduced a series of amendments that would have required a percentage of the units receiving the tax break to be occupied by Section 8 renters. Section 8 is the federal subsidy to low-income tenants.

"This is a good bill," Dawkins said, "but it misses on one issue. It still allows properties that don't qualify for Section 8 to receive the tax break."

The percentage of landlords who accept the federal subsidy is already startlingly low and HF627 would do nothing to change that, Dawkins argued. Indeed, it would discourage more landlords from participating in the Section 8 program by rewarding them with a lower property tax, he said.

Ultimately, the division rejected the idea

tax increment financing for qualifying property owners. HF744 would exclude the value of improvements to a property from assessment for a five-year period, then phase in the increase over a subsequent five-year term. To qualify, a property must be a residential apartment building with four or more units, at least 30 years old, certified as "affordable" by the MHFA, and located in the seven-county metro area. Several other caveats also apply.

Richfield City Manager Jim Proctor said the bill would help his community maintain its stock of affordable rental housing by encouraging the owners of aging buildings to reinvest in their property.

While the bill would provide some incentive to keep apartment buildings in good repair, a Department of Revenue representative said, it could have some unintended



A bill (HF627) that would significantly lower the property tax rate on aging apartments and low-income housing won approval from the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division March 5.

of tying a specific number of units to the Section 8 program and Dawkins had to settle for an amendment merely requiring the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency (MHFA) to monitor changes in the number of landlords accepting Section 8.

HF744, sponsored by Rep. Edwina Garcia (DFL-Richfield), also seeks to protect affordable housing.

The bill provides a mechanism similar to

consequences for landlords if they confused routine maintenance with actual, substantive improvements.

"If you have an apartment complex and you're putting in a swimming pool — that's an improvement," said Michael Wandmacher, director of the revenue department's property tax department. "If they're changing the carpeting, that's maintenance."



Robert Feuling, a small-business owner in Little Falls, Minn., testified March 5 before the Property Tax and Tax Increment Finance Division in favor of a bill (HF6) that would reduce the tax rate on commercial-industrial property.

HF6, sponsored by Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls) would reduce the property tax burden on commercial-industrial property by slashing the rate at which the first \$100,000 of value is taxed.

Under current law, the first \$100,000 of regular commercial properties is subject to a 3-percent property tax, while similar parcels located in enterprise zones are taxed at 2.3 percent on the first \$50,000 and 3.6 percent for the next \$50,000. Wenzel's bill would effectively do away with the enterprise-zone distinction and tax both classes at 1.5 percent.

All three measures move to the full Taxes Committee for consideration in the 1997 omnibus tax bill.

— F.J. Gallagher



AGRICULTURE

Feedlot problems

Lawmakers heard warnings of environment peril and assurances of good stewardship during a hearing on the impact of hog feedlots.

The House Agriculture Committee and the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee conducted joint hearings on the controversial issue Feb. 24 and Feb. 28.

Officials from agricultural organizations said Minnesota does not face the kind of

feedlot problems occurring in other states, but environmental leaders said odor problems and threats to ground and surface water demand tighter regulatory oversight.

"The smell robs us of our quality of life," said Monica Kahout, a Renville County farmer and member of the Land Stewardship Project. "When the neighborhood has to plan their day around wind direction, something is wrong."

A feedlot is any building or lot where animals are confined and manure can accumulate, including manure lagoons used to store waste. There are an estimated 45,000 feedlots in Minnesota.

Gov. Arne Carlson's proposed budget calls for \$580,000 to be committed to feedlot odor and waste research during the 1998-99 biennium, and several legislative proposals related to feedlots are expected to be debated this session.

Kahout and her family raise hogs on their farm, and like many in rural communities, they trace the problems with feedlots to the advent of large, so-called corporate farms.

In Renville County, large hog operations and the problems that sometimes accompany them began to appear in the early 1990s. The large hog farms, with manure lagoons covering as much as 10 acres, are a nuisance and a health threat, according to Kahout.

"Stewardship and family farms have always tried to go hand in hand," she said. "We have had livestock on our farm for almost 20 years, and neighbors have not found our setup offensive."

Kahout urged lawmakers to support improvements in state feedlot regulations, to see that they are consistently enforced, and to allow local government units the authority to enact tougher requirements.



Julie Jansen of Renville County told a Feb. 28 joint hearing of the Agriculture and Environment and Natural Resource committees about the problems she and her family have suffered living near a liquid manure pond.

However, an official from the Minnesota Pork Producers Association said the state's existing corporate farming laws and environmental standards have prevented serious hazards.

"Farmers are not in it for a quick buck. They're in it for the long haul," said David Preisler, executive director of the organization. "If we do damage the environment, then we're not going to be in business for very long."

Minnesota's current feedlot regulations are already far ahead of other states where serious problems have arisen, according to Preisler. The lack of such laws allowed corporate hog operations to develop unfettered in places such as North Carolina, where leaking lagoons have fouled rivers and lakes.

"Those types of producers have absolutely no place in the future of our industry," Preisler said.

Dwight Hasselquist, vice president of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation, urged lawmakers to avoid regulatory changes that would hurt financially strapped family farmers.

"As regulations increase, the costs of meeting those regulations increase," Hasselquist said. "It becomes more and more difficult for the small operator."

The problem with current state oversight of manure lagoons is that it focuses on design of the facilities and does not pay enough attention to their construction and operation, said Marie Zellar, organizing director for Clean Water Action Alliance.

"We don't have the regulation to protect the environment, and we don't have the regulation to protect public health," Zellar said.

Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls), who chairs the Agriculture Committee, said the feedlot issue is of vital interest to the state's agricultural industry.

"We can have in Minnesota a strong agriculture economy and simultaneously protect the environment," Wenzel said.

Farm in the family

The House Agriculture Committee approved a bill March 3 that would provide continued funding for a program that aims to keep farms in the family.

HF463, sponsored by Rep. Gary Kubly (DFL-Granite Falls), would provide \$200,000 to the Passing on the Farm Center at Southwest Technical College in Granite Falls, Minn.

The funds would keep alive a program that assists families and others who are in the

process of transferring a farm from one generation to the next.

In 1995, the Legislature passed a law to create the Passing on the Farm Center by expanding an existing local program into a statewide effort. But Gov. Arne Carlson line-item vetoed the \$100,000 appropriation for the center.

Lawmakers passed a separate piece of legislation in 1996 providing \$50,000 for operation of the center during fiscal year 1997, and the governor signed the bill.

Prior to 1996, the project operated on grant funding from the Southwestern Minnesota Initiative Fund, Sisters of Notre Dame, and several other organizations and was limited to southwestern Minnesota.

The program has an annual operating budget of about \$125,000. Under Kubly's bill, the state would provide \$75,000 in fiscal year 1998, with the other \$50,000 coming from outside grants, and the state would pick up the full tab of \$125,000 in fiscal year 1999.

Between 200 and 300 families have received some kind of assistance through the program since it came under the state's umbrella July 1, 1996, according to Ivan Anderson, program manager for the Passing on the Farm Center.

The bill now moves to the House Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee.

Poor milk pricing

The House Agriculture Committee approved a resolution March 3 asking the federal government to provide relief for Minnesota dairy farmers currently feeling a financial squeeze.

HF1067, sponsored by Rep. Steve Wenzel (DFL-Little Falls), would require the state to send a resolution to Congress, the president, and the Department of Agriculture asking for changes in the federal milk pricing system.

Minnesota dairy farmers in recent months have seen a significant drop in the prices they get for their products, while the state's consumers continue to pay exceptionally high retail prices for milk.

Low prices paid to farmers are driving them out of the dairy business, according to Wenzel. The state is losing an average of about three dairy operations a day.

"It is not inconceivable to have this industry disappear from Minnesota," Wenzel, who chairs the Agriculture Committee, said. Currently, the dairy industry generates \$3.5 billion in annual gross revenues in the state and

provides employment for about 39,000 people.

The proposed resolution calls for an end to a pricing system that is, according to the resolution, "profoundly unfair and discriminatory against Minnesota and Upper Midwest dairy producers."

It also requests that Minnesota and neighboring states be allowed to form a compact to guarantee dairy farmers a fair minimum price if a similar compact already formed by northeastern states is allowed to stand.

HF1067 now moves to the House floor.



CHILDREN

Special-needs adoptions

A bill to better reimburse licensed private adoption agencies who help place children, often from abusive homes, with new adoptive families is on its way to the governor.

The bill, which would reimburse agencies up to \$16,000 per child, passed the House March 5 on a vote of 129-0. It passed the Senate Feb. 24 on a vote of 62-0.

Currently, the Minnesota Department of Human Services reimburses licensed private adoption agencies a maximum of \$4,000 per case and the cap hasn't increased since the 1980s. Today, it costs agencies from \$8,000 to \$13,000 to place a single child with special needs, according to Bob DeNardo, a supervisor in the department's family and children services division.

The current \$4,000 cap discourages private agencies, especially the small ones, from actively seeking families for special needs kids because they cannot recoup their costs, said Rep. Jim Knoblach (R-St. Cloud) who sponsored the bill (HF374/SF274*) in the House.

The adoption reimbursement helps compensate the private agency for recruiting families, matching them with the right special needs child, and preparing the family for the child through education, counseling, and home visits.

Special needs children are part of the Adoption Assistance Program, and in many cases, have been severely neglected or abused and their parents have relinquished their parental rights to the state. The child may not only suffer from physical problems but from behavioral, mental, and emotional ones as well.

These children often wait in foster care until someone wants them, DeNardo has said.

Currently, there are 1,700 children who are considered wards of the state. Some are

being considered by families for adoption but nothing has been finalized. As of January, however, no one has shown an interest in 813 of those children.

Last year, more money was set aside for reimbursement for private adoption agencies, but steps to remove the cap have been tied up by a departmental rulemaking procedure. The longer state officials wait to make the change, the greater the risk that fewer children with special needs will be placed. The bill is designed to speed things up.

(See Feb. 14, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 4 and Feb. 21, 1997, *Session Weekly*, page 5.)

Child support update

The House Judiciary Committee's Civil and Family Law Division March 5 discussed a bill to revise the state's child support laws.

Many of the provisions of HF925 — which was not voted on — are mandates of the Federal Welfare Reform Act, which is designed, in part, to reduce the number of families on welfare who are owed support payments, and to step up enforcement on those who owe them.

"The underlying message is that parents are responsible for the support of their children," said Laura Kadwell of the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). "There is no longer guaranteed cash assistance in this country. Child support is the one that is left and is being asked to pick up the slack. People are coming to the county, the state, and the Legislature and saying, 'I need child support. How do I get it?'"

The intent is to draft the federal requirements "as conservatively as possible to avoid misgivings about how far we're going" regarding changing current law, Kadwell said. The changes will become part of an omnibus child support bill later this session, said Rep. Andy Dawkins, (DFL-St. Paul), committee chair.

Christa Anders of the DHS said that the federal provisions coincide with the direction in which Minnesota law was heading and that none are radical departures from Minnesota child support policy.

The federal mandates and the bill cover almost every aspect of child support law. Some areas the committee discussed are: provisions for keeping financial data on parents who owe support payments; sanctions on employers who fail to report relevant information about those who are to provide support payments; and mandatory community service for an unemployed parent with a child or children on welfare.

The bill also includes details for reinstating the "most wanted" list of parents who are delinquent in their payments. The new list would be restricted to those who owe the most money and those whom the state cannot find. Its primary function would be to help locate those parents, Kadwell said.

Some provisions are unbalanced, according to Timothy Theisen, who testified on behalf of R-KIDS, an advocacy group for non-custodial parents. Theisen said those requiring blood tests to prove paternity are too broad and do not reflect the rights of those ordered to undergo them. The provisions of HF925 also fall short regarding a parent's rights in areas such as revoking driver's licenses for failure to pay; rules governing banks when they keep a debtor's financial records, and the criteria for determining a non-custodial parent's income, he said.

Christina Huson, a St. Paul attorney with experience in child support cases, said that some of the new rules fail to take into account the realities of trying child support cases and enforcing support provisions. She wrote a list of items that Dawkins said the committee will review.

Dawkins said the committee will make further modifications to the child support bill before passing HF925 on to the full Judiciary Committee.

Later, the committee will address visitation rights. "At issue is how do we enforce visitation orders with the same vigor we do support obligations," he said.

It takes a steady hand

He had two minutes and 30 seconds to complete the job. It would be close, but Rep. Mike Osskopp (R-Lake City) thought he could do it.

Working the levers from his perch up in the crane's cab, Osskopp tried his best to grab a brick with the machine's shiny silver claw. After several attempts, he finally snared one and began to move his prize over to the hopper which would dump the brick on a conveyor belt, down a chute, and into a bin. He had less than one minute left until the mechanical hand automatically released its grip. The hopper, only five feet above the pile of rock, might have been a mile away.

"I'm no good at these," Osskopp said as the load began to swing wildly on the cable. "I can never win at these things."

Hoping against hope, Osskopp let the brick go, but the load was moving too fast. It clanged against the side of the hopper and tumbled back down into the pile, to be picked



Rep. Mike Osskopp made a strong impression on a wall of pins during the State Government Finance Division's March 3 tour of the Minnesota Children's Museum in St. Paul.

up another day by some young visitor to the World Works Display at the Minnesota Children's Museum in St. Paul.

Osskopp, along with a handful of the other members of the House Governmental Operations Committee's State Government Finance Division, visited the museum March 3 at the invitation of Ann Bitter, museum president. The committee recommends the amount of the museum's budget, and Gov. Arne Carlson's 1998-99 biennial request contains a \$270,000 initiative for the institution, which Bitter said would allow the museum to expand on its mission to improve learning readiness in the state's children.

Before legislators toured the museum, Bitter outlined several of their learning readiness efforts, including one called "Bedtime Book Reading." The program takes place in the early evening hours, just before most children's bedtime. Kids in their pajamas, accompanied by their parents, can come to the museum, Bitter said, to hear books read by celebrity readers.

"We can't teach them how to read," Bitter said, "but we can make them want to read."

With that, the legislators were off to see the displays, including Habitot, which Bitter described as one of the few galleries in the world set up for children between the ages of 6 and 48 months; and One World, an exhibit that teaches the value of respect and cooperation by recreating public areas where children might encounter people of different ethnic backgrounds.

Debate on the museum's budget will occur when the division's omnibus funding bill is assembled.



CRIME

Battles on the drug front

Two bills approved by the House Judiciary Committee would give law enforcement officers additional tools to fight illegal drug use and sales. Adopted March 5, both will be added to the omnibus crime bill to be voted on later this session.

HF97 would address a method that drug pushers now use to circumvent the law. Current law treats possession of small quantities of drugs as a lesser offense than larger amounts. As a result, some drug dealers have learned to carry only small amounts with them for sale on the streets, according to Minneapolis Police Chief Robert Olson. "Our police officers are faced night after night with arresting the same faces," Olson said. "Every time we develop an investigative technique to stop them, they find a way around it." With a change in the law, the criminals will find that "those small amounts have suddenly become large," he said.

That's because the bill allows the amounts of drugs discovered in each arrest to stack over time, eventually resulting in a more serious offense. "Sales or acts of possession by the same person . . . within a 180-day period . . . may be aggregated," the bill reads.

Initially, the bill's sponsor and committee chair Rep. Wes Skoglund, (DFL-Mpls) had asked for a 90-day period. The typical offender, he said, "isn't hard to find," and is picked up several times during that period. But Rep. Rich Stanek (R-Maple Grove), a Minneapolis police officer, suggested that the 90-day period was too limiting and successfully offered the 180-day amendment.

Steve Cramer from the Project for Pride in Living, said that the small dealers undermine the fabric of neighborhoods. The “revolving door” of repeat offenders is the most dispiriting factor for neighborhoods trying to maintain peace and stability. “We’re trying to build a quality of life that once existed,” he said. “We have to disrupt this pattern of commerce that is making life miserable” for law-abiding neighbors and businesses, he said.

The committee also approved HF96, which adds several drugs to the list of Schedule II controlled substances.

Methcathinone and cathinone are prescription drugs that increasingly are being stolen during robberies and are being manufactured for illegal use. Schedule II drugs are those with a high potential for abuse; have accepted medical uses; and may lead to severe psychological or physical dependence. Opiates and amphetamines are also on the list. Making them Schedule II drugs will make current criminal laws apply to their possession and sale.

“There are new drugs out there that aren’t being grown,” Skoglund explained. “Instead, they’re made of chemicals that people are buying in quantity and mixing. The behavior of those who take them is terrible.” The use of the drugs is spreading beyond the inner city, he added.

“These are very potent drugs,” said detective John Lageson of the Hennepin County Sheriff’s Office. “In some circles it’s called ‘bathtub speed’ because it’s so easy to make and to buy the ingredients. They’re more addictive than methamphetamines.”

Fighting gangs statewide

A proposal six months in the making to target criminal gang activity had its first committee hearing March 3.

HF163 would form a commission of the top law enforcement officials from across the state that would develop a strategy and establish a strike force to fight the growing problem of gang crime. The measure was discussed — but not voted on — during a crowded meeting of the House Judiciary Committee.

Gang crime is not only exploding within the Twin Cities metro area, but is increasingly felt in smaller towns and rural communities throughout Minnesota, according to Hennepin County Sheriff Pat McGowan. A coordinated effort is needed because gang and criminal activity do not honor city or county boundaries, he added. “If we don’t let gangs in Minnesota know that we mean



Left to right: Nick O’Hara, superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension; Patrick McGowan, Hennepin County sheriff; and Bob Fletcher, Ramsey County sheriff, testified before the House Judiciary Committee March 3 in favor of a bill (HF163) to establish a criminal gang council and strike force.

business, we will have failed,” he said.

“No areas are immune to the juvenile delinquency evolution to gangs,” said Ramsey County Sheriff Bob Fletcher.

The bill specifies that those serving on the commission would be: the commissioner of public safety; the superintendent of the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension; the attorney general; Hennepin, Olmsted, Ramsey, and St. Louis county attorneys and sheriffs; and chief law enforcement officers for Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth

“This is the most significant gang-fighting measure this Legislature has ever taken,” said Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls), the bill’s sponsor. “Every gang member in the state will be targeted.”

Dennis Flaherty, executive director of the Minnesota Police and Peace Officers Association, praised the measure because it coordinates resources on a statewide basis in addition to enabling local law enforcement agencies to focus personnel on local problems.

According to Minnesota Attorney General Hubert Humphrey III, the national homicide rate for juveniles age 14-17 has jumped 163 percent in 10 years, mostly due to criminal gang activity. “Kids are being robbed of their youth, their sense of safety, and, too often, their lives,” he said. “This provides an opportunity for law enforcement agencies to come together in a comprehensive plan to target and combat gang activity.”

“America has the most violent children in the world,” Fletcher said. “They’re three times worse than any other industrialized country. But their behavior can be modified by a strong law-enforcement response. . . . We know who the bad guys are. We just don’t have the resources to focus on them,” he added.

The bill authorizes the council to award

grants for additional officers and other personnel and equipment. Skoglund estimated that up to 40 new officers would be hired. No specific appropriation has been established.

Continued discussion of HF163 is expected.



EDUCATION

No-pass, no-drive

A proposal to link driving privileges to academic performance has drawn criticism from high school students who say the plan would do nothing to improve learning or reduce dropout rates.

“Why should you punish students who have been putting forth the effort, but they just can’t pass the test?” asked Terrance Clark, a senior at Minneapolis South High School. “This will be another strike against students who are striving hard to graduate.”

Clark was one of several teenagers who urged the House Education Committee to reject the “no-pass, no-drive” proposal during a March 4 hearing on the matter.

The committee took no action on the bill, but the subject is expected to be taken up again soon.

HF446, sponsored Rep. Len Biernat (DFL-Mpls), would prohibit the state from issuing a driver’s license to anyone younger than 18 who has not passed the state’s basic skills graduation tests and who is not regularly attending school.

Biernat said the bill would provide additional motivation for students by tapping into the enthusiasm most young people have for getting a driver’s license.

But the bill drew opposition from students, parents, teachers unions, and school officials.

“The parents should decide if a kid is ready to drive,” said Beau Brown, a youth



Shanina James, a junior at Edison High School in Minneapolis, gave the thumb's down on a bill (HF446) that would prohibit the issuance of a driver's license to students under the age of 18 who have failed pass the state's high school graduation tests. She testified March 4 before the House Education Committee.

worker at North View Junior High School in Brooklyn Park. "I think the state has gotten involved in too many things that are parental decisions."

Math and reading tests, required under Minnesota's graduation rule, are first given to students in the eighth grade, when most students are 14 years old. Students who fail the tests are given another chance to pass at least once each school year.

Exceptions to the academic requirements could be made for special-needs students, under the bill. Private school students would simply have to provide evidence that they are enrolled and making progress in school.

Students who are dismissed (suspended or expelled) from school for more than five days would have their licenses suspended for 30 days for a first-time dismissal and 90 days for each subsequent dismissal.

Dropouts and habitual truants would have their licenses suspended by the Department of Public Safety until they turn 18.

Shania James, a junior at Edison High School in Minneapolis, told the committee that the bill would not prevent struggling students from dropping out.

"They're just going to wait until they are 18 to get their driver's license or they'll just drive anyway," James said.

Bill supporters have touted the proposal as a part of an effort, which includes the basic skills tests and a move toward new statewide

testing efforts, to increase accountability in public education.

Some students who testified during the hearing agreed that Biernat's bill would encourage students to focus on school.

"If you can't concentrate in school you're not going to be able to concentrate when you're on the road," said Autumn Nomeland, a 15-year-old ninth grader at Menlo Park Alternative School in Minneapolis who recently received her learner's permit.

Unlicensed teachers?

An education subcommittee March 6 rejected a proposal to allow districts to hire nonlicensed teachers without approval from the State Board of Teaching.

"There are some things that local school districts can do better, but this is not one of them," said Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), a member of the House Education Committee's Subcommittee on Quality Initiatives.

The panel threw a roadblock in front of HF557, a bill sponsored by Rep. John Tuma (R-Northfield) and backed by Gov. Arne Carlson and the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

The bill, which would alter current law allowing nonlicensed community experts to teach in public schools, is part of a push for local control and increased accountability, Tuma said. It is not an assault on licensed teachers or teachers unions.

"There is no bogeyman in the closet," Tuma said. "... This is a community decision, and community safeguards are already there."

But the bill drew opposition from the Board of Teaching, the state's largest teachers union, and individual teachers.

"The effect really is to allow untrained or partially trained people to serve in the capacity of a teacher," said Cheryl Furrer, a lobbyist for the Minnesota Education Association.

Since 1985, state law has allowed districts to hire nonlicensed experts to teach on a limited basis, but districts first must get approval from the Board of Teaching.

The board must base its decision on the individual's qualifications, the district's need to hire someone other than a licensed teacher, the amount of time the expert would spend in the classroom, and other factors.

Districts have filed 15 applications to hire nonlicensed experts since the law took effect and 13 of those applications have been approved, according to Judy Wain, executive secretary for the board.

Tuma's bill would allow districts to make final decisions about hiring nonlicensed individuals, but districts would have to comply with a new requirement that they report to the Board of Teaching on the performance of the individuals.

The proposal also would add a requirement that districts conduct a criminal background check on nonlicensed applicants for teaching positions.

The bill would not "dismantle or weaken teacher licensure," said Susan Heegaard, director of intergovernmental affairs for the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Rather, Heegaard said, the bill would simplify the process allowing districts to tap into pools of expertise often cut off from the classroom. She pointed out that a legislator who does not have a teaching license cannot teach a high school government class but a teacher who has never been to the Capitol can.

"We need those who have real-world experience and those who have lots of classroom experience," Heegaard said. "You need to have both types of teaching to occur to better prepare kids."

Opponents of the bill said current law allows nonlicensed experts into the classroom, while providing oversight that ensures consistency on a statewide basis.

"The Board of Teaching has no desire to be obstructionists. That is not our position," said Board Member Marilu Theodore. "This is a valuable process. It is not cumbersome, unwieldy or unduly bureaucratic. And it works."

Changing school schedules

The House passed a bill March 3 that would make it easier for school districts to establish year-round school or other alternative schedules. The vote was 129-0.

HF302, sponsored by Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville), would do away with a requirement in current law that makes districts receive the approval of the State Board of Education before establishing a flexible learning year program at a particular school.

Such a program could include a four-day school week or an elimination of the traditional summer vacation in favor of classes for 45 out of every 60 days.

Under current law, a district wishing to establish a flexible learning year for a school site must submit an application to the Board of Education, which has the authority to review the plans and approve or disapprove.

Greiling's bill would give local school district officials the authority to decide whether to establish a flexible learning year and would relegate the Board of Education to a supervisory role.

HF302 now goes to the Senate.



ELECTIONS

Absentee voting

A bill that would ease voting by absentee ballot cleared the House General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee March 3, after failing to gain approval several weeks ago.

HF74 would eliminate the existing qualifications for voting by absentee ballot that require people to provide a reason for their inability to go to the polls. Instead, any voter could request to vote by absentee ballot.

"This is a simple bill that would allow people to vote statewide without [providing specific] qualifications," said Rep. Tom Osthoff (DFL-St. Paul), the bill's sponsor.

Under current law, voters must provide one of several reasons to vote outside an official polling place: an expected absence from the precinct; illness; disability; religious discipline; observance of a religious holiday; or service as an election judge in another precinct. The new legislation would read: "Any eligible voter may vote by absentee ballot as provided in this chapter."

Opening the process of absentee balloting



Secretary of State Joan Anderson Grove answered questions on a bill (HF74) during a March 3 meeting of the General Legislation, Veterans Affairs and Elections Committee that would make it easier to vote by absentee ballot.

is intended to increase voter participation, according to Osthoff and Secretary of State Joan Grove, who also testified before the committee. In Ramsey County, where a four-year pilot program for unrestricted absentee balloting began in 1993, absentee voters have grown to 12 percent, compared with a state-wide average of 6 percent.

The bill's sponsors believe that eliminating the inconvenience of getting to a polling place will encourage some people, such as the elderly, to vote.

The absentee ballot initiative is not the same as a vote-by-mail program, Osthoff said. In the latter, ballots are automatically sent to all registered voters. Participants must request ballots to vote by absentee ballot under the pending legislation.

HF74 now moves to the House floor.



EMPLOYMENT

YouthBuild builds lives

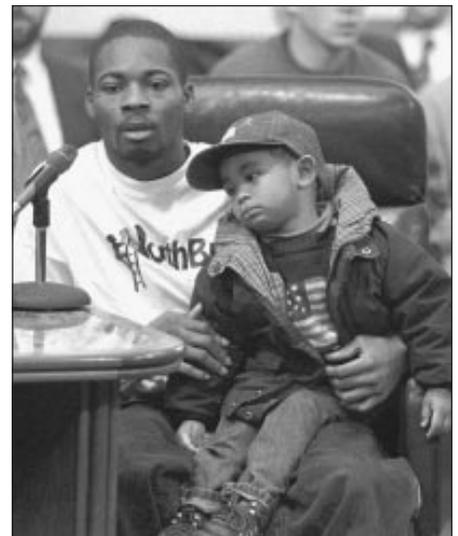
Minnesota's YouthBuild Program helps at-risk youth turn their lives around by gaining skills and experience in the construction trades and completing their educations, its proponents say. But due to inadequate funding, the program is turning away many eligible youth, witnesses told the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee's Housing and Housing Finance Division March 6.

A bill (HF834) sponsored by division chair Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) would add \$400,000 to the \$600,000 that Gov. Arne Carlson already has recommended for the program in his biennial budget.

YouthBuild participants must be between 16 and 24 years old and considered "at-risk." Target groups include dropouts and potential dropouts, youth involved with the juvenile justice system, chemically dependent youth, those with disabilities, youth in foster care, teen parents, and public assistance recipients.

A unique requirement of the program is that work projects must result in the expansion or improvement of residential units for homeless people and very low income families or social service, educational, or health facilities that primarily serve these populations. YouthBuild has the cooperation of several building trade unions including those representing carpenters, bricklayers, and pipefitters.

In 1996, 324 youth participated in YouthBuild, according to the Department of Economic Security. More than 80 percent of



Jerome Jones held his 2-year-old nephew, Tyreese Rohr, while testifying before the Housing and Housing Finance Division March 6 in support of a bill (HF834) that would increase funding for the state's YouthBuild program. The program is helping Jerome earn his GED and improve his communication skills.

the participants successfully completed the program. A recent follow-up study indicated that 70 percent had obtained their high school diploma or GED, 15 percent enrolled in postsecondary schools, 15 percent entered the building trades, and 50 percent were employed at a starting wage averaging \$7 per hour. Approximately 375 homeless and low-income people and families also benefitted from the work done by YouthBuild.

Jerome Jones told the panel that YouthBuild helped him turn his life around. "In 11th grade I was incarcerated for four years," he said, holding his nephew on his lap. "When I got out I ran into YouthBuild. It gave me an opportunity to think about my future. I took advantage of it to leave the bad crowd alone and come to the good crowd. I got my GED and a scholarship to go to trade school. I've set goals for myself and they are going to get achieved."

Another program participant, Jewel Jones, left welfare, finished her GED, and received a full scholarship to study bricklaying at a technical school. "The program really needs the proper tools," she said.

Tony Evans, YouthBuild program manager at Summit Academy in Minneapolis, said that he sees many more youth than the program can currently serve. "When I do an orientation, I get 70 or 80 eager applicants and can only let five in. You wonder what will happen to the others."

Next, the bill will be taken up by the Economic Development and International Trade Finance Division.



GOVERNMENT

Privacy vs. Technology

Envision this: You get up in the morning and almost every action is recorded or controlled through electronic technology. Your speed on the freeway, your arrival in your office, the phone calls you make, the time you spend in the bathroom, and the time you leave the office are all duly noted. If you call in sick to work, your insurance company is notified.

Some will recognize the scenario as not all that far-fetched. The technology exists to perform each function, and in varying capacities, is already in use. Who is controlling that information and who has a right to access it?

That was the topic of discussion at the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Data Practices meeting Feb. 28.

Living in an information society is affecting our lives in an increasing number of ways, according to Don Gemberling, director of the Public Information Policy Analysis Division of the Minnesota Department of Administration.

Gemberling outlined Minnesota's Data Practices Act for members, which, since 1974, has addressed privacy issues and what information can be released by the government. What began as a three-page law now consumes nearly 70 pages in *Minnesota Statutes*.

"Increasingly at issue is the disposition of governmental records," he said, as the ability to collect data grows.

With the advent of the Internet and other electronic media, the question of data control has grown more complicated. One area of concern in this environment is medical records, which Gemberling said can be used and disseminated in an uncounted number of ways.

"I'm careful to never leave a hair or a fingernail where anyone else can get it. Someone could map your entire DNA structure," he added, only half-jokingly. "Once you move any function into the electronic arena, you create records, trails, and data."

Gemberling also mentioned the advent of "smart cards," which people eventually will carry in their wallets and will contain a computer chip with detailed information about the individual. Bills have been introduced this session to fund a pilot project using the cards. State employees would serve as the experimental subjects.

"Some day we may all be asked to carry these," Gemberling said. "They'll have on them thousands of pieces of information

about us which we cannot read. We'll have to go to someone else and trust that they have our interests at heart and will tell us the truth. We've never had a comparable thing in history."

The availability of electronically acquired data can both enhance or interfere with citizens' rights, he said. The most powerful tool citizens have is the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, which, Gemberling said, presumes that all government data are public and that citizens have a right to free access. "I don't know how we could make representative democracy work without it," he said.

The subcommittee drafts a bill each year to amend the state's Data Practices Act. The assembly of this year's proposal will occur later in the session.

Governor's phone bills

In the first official face-to-face meeting since a telephone bill controversy sprouted several weeks ago, representatives from the governor's office and members of the Legislature met March 5 to discuss the problem.

At issue is how much of the cellular telephone bills generated by the governor's office should be open to the public. In responding to a request for the bills, the governor's office censored portions that detailed the locations and telephone numbers of the incoming calls.

Tanja Kozicky, the governor's legal counsel, told the House Judiciary Committee's Data Practices Subcommittee that the deleted information was confidential and that the governor's office was constrained by law from revealing it.

"We don't object to releasing records we're required to release. But we can't release individual telephone numbers that are protected in the Data Practices Act," Kozicky said.

A bill (HF902) sponsored by Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul) would specify that the cellular phone bills of legislators, the governor, and other state employees and officeholders which are paid for by taxpayers would be — in their entirety — public data. The proposal would be retroactive to May 1993.

The retroactive provision creates more problems, Kozicky said, because the people whose identities could be revealed had a right to be warned. "People gave us information with the understanding that it would be used responsibly," Kozicky said.

The request also covers an estimated 133,000 calls and would require the

governor's office to take the time and expense of sorting through each to determine which are protected.

But Entenza and Rep. Wes Skoglund (DFL-Mpls) suggested that the governor's office was asking for a different standard from that the Legislature follows.

"The Legislative phone records have been open for four years and we haven't seen any problems," Entenza said. "Present law holds that the phone records should be open to the public. Why would the governor's office find that the openness we've had wouldn't work for them? They should come forward with specific reasons why we should exempt some records."

Skoglund asked: "Are your calls more sensitive than ours?"

"We receive calls from whistleblowers," Kozicky said. "The governor's office is often the forum of last resort." Kozicky said another relevant scenario is when the governor's office becomes involved in negotiations to attract a company to Minnesota or in persuading an existing business to stay. In such cases, she said, "confidentiality is absolutely key".

Rep. Mary Jo McGuire (DFL-Falcon Heights), committee chair, said the law favors openness, but concurred with Kozicky that the Data Practices Act could stand review. But, she added, "Three years ago, we heard much more public sentiment to open records than to keep them private."

The committee did not vote on HF902 but will discuss it at a future date.



HEALTH

Keeping track of shots

A bill to create a statewide immunization registry for all Minnesota children was approved by the House Health and Human Services Committee March 4, but some lawmakers promised to amend it as it moved through the process.

The registry would remind parents when immunizations against measles, Hepatitis A and B, polio, and other diseases are due and allow the records to follow children throughout their lives even if they move to a different county or change doctors or health plans.

At issue is whether creating a statewide registry intrudes on a family's right to privacy and whether there is enough flexibility in the bill to allow for a family to opt out of the registry.

As the bill stands now, there is no option for a family to opt out. Consent is not needed before enrolling an individual on the registry.

The bill (HF259) is on its way to the Judiciary Committee where amendments pertaining to data privacy are expected.

Rep. Nora Slawik (DFL-Maplewood), sponsor of the bill, said a statewide registry is very important, especially since families today are much more mobile and the list of necessary immunizations has grown considerably.

She noted that if families were allowed to boycott the registry, it would be difficult for the Department of Health to know who hasn't been vaccinated and notify them in the event of an outbreak.

The bill permits the Department of Health to create a statewide registry using information from community-based registries throughout Minnesota. Several community registries already are up and running. So far 33 Minnesota counties have access to a registry to keep track of who is immunized and for which disease.

In Hennepin County, for example, a group of 160 clinics are tracking some 20,000 children, said Scott Giebink, chair of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota who testified in favor of the bill. In northwestern Minnesota, 13 counties have joined together and are tracking some 2,500 births per year. The bill, however, does not make it mandatory that a county or group of communities set up a registry.

Giebink said a statewide registry is important because each community-based registry needs to be linked to be effective and share information. And, he pointed out, despite educating parents, doctors, and health plans, some 30 percent of 2-year-olds are under immunized.

Under the bill, immunization data that would be shared with the state and among other registries would include the patient's name, date of birth, gender, address, legal mother's name, and any indicators that suggest a vaccine is not advisable for a particular patient.

The Department of Health also would be instructed to come back to the 1998 Legislature with recommendations on who should have access to the immunization data, how to certify community-based registries, and how an individual can appeal the sharing of his or her immunization data.

The bill also requires doctors, health plans, and other health care providers to report immunization data to the certified registry in their area. Not only must data be reported

on children born in the area but on people who move into the community as well.

Several groups testified against the bill, including the Minnesota Family Council. Tom Prichard of the council questioned the need for a registry because many children are up-to-date with all their shots.

He also said that state involvement in immunizations would usurp parental responsibility.

Jim Van Horn of the Christian Science Church said he was concerned how such a registry "might be used in a negative way" by government.

He said that people of his religious affiliation do not feel that they are putting their children in danger if they choose not to immunize them.

Although the bill does not require immunizations by those who claim medical, religious, or other exemptions, it does not allow them to opt out of being placed on the registry.

Members of the committee agreed that immunizations are very important, but not everyone agreed on what role the state should play.

Rep. Tom Huntley (DFL-Duluth) remembers the polio epidemic and life before a vaccine. "There were seven or eight cases of polio on my block," he said. Pools were closed and quarantine signs were widespread.

A statewide immunization registry would "help make sure that those few kids who are left [not immunized]... get the vaccine they need," he said.

Rep. Richard Mulder (R-Ivanhoe), the only physician in the Legislature, said immunizations are absolutely necessary but added "I do have a little problem with a state registry" as it relates to data privacy.

He began an immunization program decades ago in Lincoln County and achieved 100 percent immunization in the schools.

After a stop at the Judiciary Committee, HF259 is expected to travel to the Health and Human Services Finance Division where a price tag is expected to be attached to the proposal.

HOUSING

Addressing lead contamination

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, lead poisoning is the number one environmental threat to America's children. Exposure to even an infinitesimal amount of lead can have devastating effects on a small child, and can lead to a lower growth rate, lower intelligence, impaired hearing, behavioral problems, and severe metabolic problems.

A bill (HF843) sponsored by Rep. Karen Clark (DFL-Mpls) would establish an advisory task force on lead hazard reduction, and appropriate \$1 million to fund lead cleanup efforts already in place. The bill was approved March 4 by the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee's Housing and Housing Finance Division.

House Gallery



On March 5, Rep. Bill Haas tacked up the last piece of artwork he received from his district's Monroe Elementary School of Brooklyn Park. This marks the 10th exhibit — which Haas changes monthly — of student creativity to adorn his walls.

In addition to representatives from the Legislature and state government, the 15-member task force would include landlords, tenants, attorneys, parents of lead-poisoned children, insurers, educators, doctors, realtors, the Children's Defense Fund, the federal Environmental Protection Agency, and local health boards.

The task force would study and propose a program to certify residential rental property as lead-safe (meaning that no lead contaminants are accessible to children). The group would also propose essential maintenance practices to ensure that a residence remain lead-safe after certification. The legal rights and liabilities of tenants and landlords also would be studied in regard to providing lead-safe housing and in cases where a child is lead poisoned.

Mary Johnson of the Phillips Lead Prevention Project told the panel about the lead poisoning of her child. "A few weeks after I moved into a house in the Phillips neighborhood [of south Minneapolis] I started noticing changes in my 16-month-old daughter," Johnson said. "She started getting gray strands in her hair, her joints ached, and she had stomach pains."

Johnson's daughter was tested and found to have an elevated level of lead in her blood. The source was lead paint chips in the bathroom and kitchen of the home. Johnson moved to a safe house while her landlord addressed the lead problem, but when she moved back, her daughter's blood-lead level rose again due to the higher volume of lead dust the work had stirred up. They later found a new apartment that was certified as lead-safe. "Three months after we moved [to the new apartment] my daughter's lead level finally went down," Johnson said.

She and other witnesses urged the passage of HF843 to restore funding for the "swab team" approach to help families and communities deal with the lead problem. Swab teams are called in when a home with children is identified as having a lead problem. The team takes measures to make the home lead-safe rather than lead-free. Lead-based paint is typically wet scraped and covered with a latex enamel. The home is then vacuumed with a machine equipped with special filters that trap the finest particles of lead dust. Experience has shown that this is the safest and most cost effective approach, said Clark.

The measure now goes to the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee.

Housing discrimination?

A bill to study whether discrimination is occurring on a widespread basis in the rental housing market won approval from a House panel March 6.

The proposal (HF552) comes on the heels of a report on the rental housing markets in two Minneapolis neighborhoods last year which found that prospective tenants were being discriminated against because of their race in 70 percent of the cases studied. The report was conducted by the Minnesota Fair Housing Center for the Minneapolis Department of Civil Rights.

In the study, two people who were nearly identical, except for their race, were sent to the same place to look for housing. Their experiences were recorded, and then compared by a testing coordinator to determine if there were any differences in treatment. Of the 72 properties tested, 52 showed a difference in treatment based on race, family status, or public assistance status.

The discrimination ranged from the rental agent making overtly race-based comments to imposing more stringent requirements on the African-American prospective tenants. Often neither visitor was aware of the discrimination, which emerged only when the test results were compared. African-American clients were often shown inferior apartments in the same building and not encouraged to fill out rental applications, while white applicants were offered better units and urged to fill out rental applications before leaving.

Some of the cases resulted in civil rights charges being filed against the discriminating property owners.

"When I first read this report, I was quite shocked," said bill sponsor Rep. Matt Entenza (DFL-St. Paul). HF552 would mark \$50,000 for the state Department of Human Rights to conduct similar studies. The bill was approved by the Economic Development and International Trade Committee's Housing and Housing Finance Division.

"It is a good idea to conduct these tests," he said, "because it lets landlords know that they can't get away with discrimination. It also sends a message to our communities of color that they can live where they choose in Minnesota."

Human rights spokesman Dan Nicolai told the panel that the department agrees that testing needs to be done and would contract the work to organizations that have a track record conducting such tests.

The bill now goes to the Judiciary Committee.

Designing affordable housing

In 1995, the Legislature passed an initiative to develop innovative affordable housing designs through an architectural competition. However, no money was appropriated to run the contest.

Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville), sponsor of the original initiative, has introduced a bill (HF592) which would provide approximately \$100,000 for the contest. It was approved by the House Economic Development and International Trade Committee's Housing and Housing Finance Division March 4.

If the measure passes, the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency would announce a "designed affordable" housing competition open to architects, architectural schools, and non-profit and for-profit housing developers. "Designed affordable" means that state-of-the-art materials and construction techniques are used to bring down the total cost of housing units, said McElroy. The per-unit cost could be reduced by as much as \$3,000 to \$5,000 with a good design, he said.

As an example, McElroy cited new wall materials that eliminate the laborious taping, mudding, sanding, and painting needed to finish a conventional wall. "They attach the wall panels and put paper directly over that," he said. "It looks better than a conventional finish."

"Since you first introduced this idea two years ago, members of my extended family have gotten homes like this," said Rep. Barbara Sykora (R-Excelsior). "They are very nice homes and were very reasonably priced."

Traditionally, affordable housing has been achieved by either letting older housing deteriorate until it is affordable or by subsidizing new construction, McElroy said. "The contest would challenge the state's best and brightest architects to come up with some innovative cost-saving designs for new housing."

Prizes of \$50,000, \$35,000, and \$25,000 would be offered for first, second and third place winners of the design contest, McElroy said. All the designs would become the property of the state and would be made available to local developers of affordable housing.

HF592 will be included in the omnibus housing finance bill to be taken up later this session.



LABOR

Human rights loopholes

Two bills approved by the House Labor-Management Relations Committee would extend human rights protection to those who now fall through loopholes in the law.

HF787 would establish that those controlling the work environment are responsible for everyone working at that location, and therefore, are also accountable if any discrimination takes place.

Rep. Bill Hilty (DFL-Finlayson), the bill's sponsor, explained that many businesses now contract jobs out to individuals or service providers for services such as security, accounting, or payroll to be done on the business' premises but with another organization's employees. The state's Human Rights Act now defines an employer as a person with "one or more employees." If a business is charged with discrimination against a contract employee, it can argue that since the person is actually employed by an outside agency, the contracting business is not responsible for any discriminatory acts perpetrated against them.

The agency providing services, which is the employer of record in these cases, also denies responsibility, said Hilty, because they are not in control of the workplace where the discrimination took place.

Such cases consume an inordinate amount of the department's time and resources because the current law is unclear, said Ken Nicolai of the Department of Human Services. "We ran into a situation where a security guard was working at a firm where there was some discrimination. After we investigated and found probable cause, we discovered there was a problem with the law."

A second bill (HF814/SF323*), sponsored by Rep. Luanne Koskinen (DFL-Coon Rapids), adds "individuals" to the list of groups prohibited from engaging in acts of reprisal against those who file discrimination complaints.

Under the current law, individuals are covered only if they are employees. If they quit or are fired, they are free to engage in reprisals against those who complained against them.

"The situation that pointed out the problem to us involved a student attending one of Minnesota's colleges," Nicolai said. "She filed a sexual harassment complaint against a professor who was subsequently fired by the college. He then took several actions against her, including filing a lawsuit. We found it

constituted reprisal, but that we had no jurisdiction over such individuals."

Both bills now move to the House Judiciary Committee.



LAW

Under-21 ID cards

The House Transportation and Transit Committee approved a bill March 3 that would clearly mark state identification cards for people under the legal drinking age.

HF40, sponsored by Rep. Peggy Leppik (R-Golden Valley), would require state identification cards for people under age 21 to include markings similar to drivers' licenses for that age group.

"We are putting so much effort into trying to curtail the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors," Leppik said. "This is one way we can help in that effort."

Under the bill, identification cards for people under the legal drinking age would be a different color and would be labeled "Under-21." The cards would expire on the holder's 21st birthday.

Minnesota identification cards, which provide a form of legal identification for non-drivers, are issued by the Department of Public Safety. There is a \$12.50 fee to receive an identification card, and cards for people under age 65 are normally valid for four years. Senior citizens are issued cards that are good indefinitely.

The bill now moves to the House floor.



OUTSTATE

Calling schools long distance

The decades-long trend of combining rural school districts has resulted in at least one unforeseen problem. By blending areas with different telephone exchanges, students often meet friends who require a long-distance telephone call to reach. Calling the school can mean long-distance charges for parents, and vice versa, even over distances of just a few miles. The effect is burdensome phone bills for some rural school districts and many of their residents.

In southern Minnesota, the towns of West Concord, Claremont and Dodge Center combined to form the Triton School District.

"When we formed Triton, we formed a community," Superintendent John Hornung told the House Regulated Industries and Energy Committee. "The [merger] has been

great for the community, but our phone bills are atrocious." Hornung has installed toll-free lines into each of the district's schools at a cost of about \$6,000 a year. But that solves only one part of the problem.

HF211, which would make it easier for rural communities to eliminate such long-distance costs, received the committee's approval March 4.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Steve Sviggum (R-Kenyon), would change the way customers within a school district can petition the Public Utilities Commission to install extended area service (EAS), which would localize the exchanges and eliminate the long-distance charges. Its most important provision would eliminate a requirement that at least half of the customers make at least three phone calls per month to exchanges outside of their own to qualify for EAS service, Sviggum said. School district residents would need to vote on the phone service change, and at least 10 percent of the customers in each affected phone exchange must live within the combined school district.

"The bill will enhance the success of combined school districts in Minnesota," Sviggum said, adding that the telephone situation is one of the biggest problems they face.

But Victor Dobras of the Sprint Corporation and president of the Minnesota Telephone Association, said that EAS was not the most practical alternative for the communities. The association opposes the bill on four grounds:

- New rules are currently in progress regarding calls between exchanges, which makes the EAS effort premature.
- The law would invite many more EAS petitions.
- Without the threshold test, the EAS petition may fail.
- EAS is overkill.

Using 1-800 service is one solution, Dobras suggested. Furthermore, he said, "The bill may or may not make a significant difference in the speed of the process. You still need traffic and cost studies."

HF211 now goes to the House floor.

**Send e-mail comments
regarding *Session Weekly* to:
session@house.leg.state.mn.us**

We thank you for your input.

The editors

Mondale details prescription for global success



The United States, now the world's "technology pioneer," could lose that status to a Japanese government bent on becoming the global economy's dominant player, former Vice President and U.S. Ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale told a gathering of Minnesota legisla-

tors March 4.

"A good measure of their determination is money," Mondale said. "Last summer, the Japanese cabinet approved a plan to spend an additional \$155 billion on government science and technology programs over the next five years."

That increase, he said, represents only slightly less than our government's entire civilian research and development budget for the same period.

Mondale, in addition to his turns as vice president and ambassador, served as a Minnesota's U.S. senator and attorney general. He is currently a partner in the Minneapolis-based law firm Dorsey and Whitney. He made his remarks at the Minnesota History Center's 3M auditorium as the fourth speaker in the Capitol Forum Series. The series, sponsored by Minnesota Technology and the McKnight Foundation, is designed to present legislators with a more expansive view of the circumstances in which they make policy decisions.

America, Mondale said, has drawn on its rich history of entrepreneurship and belief in the potential of the individual, combined with a long-standing commitment to higher education and research, to achieve its position of technological dominance.

Conversely, Japan has traditionally relied on its group-oriented culture and bureaucratic meritocracy, operating in a strictly regulated and overprotected economy.

It would seem, he said, that the United States' innate ability to adapt quickly would provide a natural competitive advantage in the global economy. But that is not necessarily so.

In fact, Mondale said, our position is threatened. Japan's strategy to overtake the U.S. is fourfold. It includes:

- doubling the government's allocation

of tax dollars to science and technology programs, especially basic research;

- reforming the education system to promote more independent thinking;
- expanding the amount of available venture capital; and
- targeting certain foreign technologies for Japanese development.

There are, he said, already signs that the Japanese effort is succeeding. For example, the latest list of the top 10 patent recipients from the U.S. Patent Office contained the names of eight Japanese corporations. Moreover, Japan has made substantial gains in seven critical technology categories.

Meanwhile, Mondale said, America continues to "permit the very basis of our wealth to disintegrate" by neglecting to support science and technology efforts, particularly in the area of K-12 education.

"We need to do a much better job of public education in both America and Minnesota," Mondale said. "We can no longer afford to waste the talents of countless young people."



Former U.S. Senator, Vice President, and U.S. Ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale spoke to an audience at the Minnesota History Center about Japan and Minnesota's role in the expanding Pacific Rim economy. He spoke as part of the Capitol Forum Series March 4.

To remain economically strong, Mondale said, the U.S. needs to place a renewed emphasis on science and math education and our schools must prepare students for a future in which the Pacific Rim nations will play a much larger role.

Japan, Mondale said, also represents a fantastic economic opportunity for Minnesota and the U.S. Indeed, he continued, we should do everything possible to encourage Asian investment instead of instinctively tightening up our markets. Partnerships with Japanese companies could prove extremely profitable.

Certainly, Japan is coming on strong, but fundamental differences exist between the two countries, Mondale said. As long as America builds on its strengths — individuality, entrepreneurship, and education — the country will continue to thrive in the global economy.

"As legislators . . . you are in a superb position to persuade Minnesotans of the crucial role that science and technology will play in the future of our citizens," Mondale said. "High technology is the essential element of economic growth. It is America's crucial advantage in international commerce."

Many legislators said they were intrigued by Mondale's remarks.

"The idea of Japan as an opportunity rather than a threat is an interesting thought," said Rep. Dan McElroy (R-Burnsville). "The emphasis on creativity is important."

McElroy said he doesn't know of any of his constituents who do business in Japan, and the few companies he is aware of that do usually employ agents.

Rep. Torrey Westrom (R-Elbow Lake) said the scenarios outlined by Mondale presented policymakers with an opportunity to implement further welfare reform. Legislators, he said, could target some education dollars toward providing instruction in technological fields to people now receiving government assistance.

"With the technological age we're moving into," Westrom said, "there's going to have to be a commitment to that."

— F.J. Gallagher

Exclusive interview . . .

Former U.S. Senator, Vice President, and U.S. Ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale has returned to his home state of Minnesota, where he was interviewed on issues both state and global before his Capitol Forum Series speech March 5 at the Minnesota History Center.

Session Weekly: Have you had a chance to stay in touch with the issues confronting Minnesota?

Mondale: I would say not very much. I always read the local papers when I was in Japan, but it's always once removed and I'm not as up to date on specific issues as I may once have been.

Session Weekly: Given the state of the Japanese stock market and their economy right now, and looking at ours, which is just raging — very much like theirs was maybe a decade or so ago — is there something that we could, or perhaps should, learn from Japan?

Mondale: You know, Japan is in a period of trouble now, there's no question about it. It's had sluggish growth, the stock market's cratered, they've got a lot of bad debts and all sorts of things like that so, like all complex societies, there are some things that aren't working. It needs badly to deregulate, open up and so on. But I would say the topic of today's speech, centering on technology, also points out some of its strengths. Japan is the largest reserve nation in the world. It has enormous cash reserves and it's decided to increase support for the sciences by almost the same amount that we spend a year — just in the increases over the next five years — and while it's got other problems in their scientific field, this will help them move forward in science technology. In their schools, they have a very strong program in sciences — in K-12 — and they get results from that. It's got other handicaps, but the Japanese are a resilient, diligent people and while they're having some difficulties now, the economy — particularly the export side — is doing very well and some of that is pretty advanced stuff.

Session Weekly: To that point, I'm sure you're familiar with the dispute between [Japan-based] NEC and [Minnesota-based] Cray over the supercomputer being purchased by the National Atmospheric Research Center. Would it be wise for the

United States government to institute a U.S.-only policy with regard to supercomputers?

Mondale: No, I don't think so. One of the great strengths of the United States is that we have been willing to permit competition, but it has to be competition according to the international rules. The question in the Cray/NEC case that you refer to involves the charge "dumping." That is, the charge is — there haven't been any hearings — that NEC came in and charged a price that had to be beneath their cost. Now, I think NEC has refused to submit to the proceedings, so what's going to happen, I don't know. But let me go back to my basic point. I think that keeping open American markets while insisting others play by the rules has served our country well because you can't hide, and if you do, the others will quickly take the example and

define its role in terms of the U2000 policy — are we a research institute or are we a teaching institute. Where do you see the University in Minnesota's economy as we try to become a player in this global economy?

Mondale: Well, the University is what one of our presidents once called the "jewel in the crown" of our state. It is essential to all of our hopes. There are many, many other important institutions, I don't wish to be misunderstood, but the University has those graduate schools, they have the centers of research and excellence. If you look at the number of companies in Minnesota, high-tech companies, that directly or indirectly come from that relationship, you get an idea of how heavily our future is bound up. So I would say, you know, that the university has many, many different roles to play. One is the undergraduate role. I was an undergraduate there, first at Macalester College, and then I went to the University of Minnesota Law School. It gave me my chance and it has done the same for thousands and thousands of young people for well over, what, 140 years or so. So I wouldn't pick out one

We've got problems, but I wouldn't want to trade our situation for anybody's. Japan's got a lot of problems, Europe's got a lot of problems [but] we should not be cocky because we're no longer the world's sole repository of science and technology. . . . I think we're the best, but we have to continue to invest in that and insist on that and work on that. That's the challenge for our time.

— former U.S. Ambassador Walter F. Mondale

go clear beyond. The United States has a lot at stake in a more open international trading and financial system. We're doing very well; we're the most productive nation on earth. We're the most advanced scientific and technological nation. I think we're the best agriculture nation, all sorts of bests. This world-global idea is made for us. We've got to master it.

Session Weekly: You're a newly elected member of the University of Minnesota Foundation's Board of Trustees. The University right now is really struggling to

area and say, "you have to be good here," and forget the others, but I will be emphasizing in my remarks the importance of pushing forward in high technology, science and research.

Session Weekly: Now, you mentioned the University giving you your chance. Many people, young people now entering the job market for the first time, particularly those with graduate degrees, are doing so with staggering burdens of debt. Is there anything that can be done to help these people out?

Mondale: Well, I think this is one place where people ought to take a good look at the president's program. He's talking about tax deductibility, and I think some tax credits, for community colleges in the early years; he's talking about some kind of pattern on Georgia, some kind of special grant for young people that do well, and he's talking about increasing the investment in K-12 and in other ways trying to close the gap some. . . . He's also going to increase the basic opportunity grants — the so-called Pell grants, so that good students, but poorer students, in terms of economics, will get a larger grant to cover some of this gap when they go to college, and he's talking about something like \$50 million. It's a big program. But I don't think it will totally close that gap. The problem is called money. At the same time, we're trying to bring the deficit down and so on, but I think that's the most significant proposal on the table right now.

Session Weekly: **The President has said he wants to wire every classroom in the country. Is that technology for technology's sake? Is that something we need to watch out for when we consider technology education?**

Mondale: You know, I don't know the answer to that question. I know that the idea behind his proposal is to permit the young people in school, all over the country, no matter where they live or the wealth of their parents, to be able to connect with the world.

Session Weekly: **To sort of level the playing field?**

Mondale: Well, it levels it up, so to speak. It's not leveling it down. It will allow people to hook in to all these forms of international communications and that strikes me as a good idea. Beyond that, I don't have any grasp of the details.

Session Weekly: **In terms of America's place in the global economy, particularly with a unifying Europe, where do you see America's greatest challenge, and then Minnesota's challenge, as things are constantly shifting?**

Mondale: I think that we have to stay, obviously, the scientific and technological leader of the world or we'll slip behind — and there's no reason why we should lose that edge because we're ahead of the others in

many, many ways. . . . and I think our goal has to be to do better. We have to build on our strengths which are just right for this new world, and we have to make certain that our K-12 kids get a better chance, get a better education, more kids can go on to college . . . that entrepreneurship is encouraged and that we honor and support education and responsible individuals and all the rest. We've got problems, but I wouldn't want to trade our situation for anybody's. Japan's got a lot of problems, Europe's got a lot of problems [but] we should not be cocky because we're no longer the world's sole repository of science and technology. There are a lot of other good students . . . around the world. I think we're the best, but we have to continue to invest in that and insist on that and work on that. That's the challenge for our time. Minnesota has the same sort of problems at the state level. We have to stay out ahead. Practically every one of these high-tech companies, you can trace to somebody from the University of Minnesota or one of our other institutions that had an idea, they created it, and now it's a big business. We have to keep that energy and level of sophistication. That's the key.

— F.J. Gallagher

During the last two presidential campaigns, Americans flirted with the idea — primarily in the form of Ross Perot — of embracing a candidate who is neither Republican nor Democrat. While no third-party hopeful has ever become president, Minnesota voters elected Gov. Floyd B. Olson in 1930, the state's first Farmer-Labor chief executive, to the first of three terms.

The only child of Scandinavian immigrant parents, Olson exhibited a healthy mistrust of authority in his youth. As a student at the University of Minnesota, he refused to participate in what were then compulsory military drills. Ultimately, Olson left the university after only one year, choosing to instead become a student in the school of hard knocks.

He spent the next 12 months working a variety of blue-collar jobs, learning first-hand about the market forces that produced both fantastic wealth and grinding poverty — apparently indiscriminately, in his view. By all accounts, Olson's experiences during this period of his life brought to the forefront the young man's already strong social conscience.

At the beginning, according to *The*

Do you know?

Political Career of Floyd B. Olson by George H. Mayer, Olson maintained his official status as a Democrat, even seeking the party's nomination in the congressional races of 1918 and 1920. Yet his first political appointment came from the Republican-controlled Hennepin County Board, who named him assistant county attorney in 1919. Eighteen months later, the board chose Olson to finish out the term of the Hennepin County attorney, who had been removed for charges of misconduct. Olson held the job for 10 years, using the post to build a strong political base.

Politics in the Midwest has always been closely tied to agriculture, and the hall-



Third-party Gov. Floyd B. Olson

mark of Olson's era was a fiery brand of economic populism with its roots in the Grange and Greenback movements. Farmers organized and reorganized in an astonishing array of coalitions, each with the aim of reforming the system and taking it out of the hands of controlling corporate interests.

From his position outside traditional party circles, Olson held a natural appeal for reformers, and when the Farmer Labor Federation emerged in 1924, its leaders picked Olson to run for governor on the party ticket. He lost to Republican Theodore Christianson by the narrowest of margins.

In 1930, though, Olson reappeared as a candidate for the Farmer Labor Association, which had risen out of the ashes of the now-defunct Farmer Labor Federation. This time, Olson won, beating his Republican opponent by nearly 25 percent, the largest margin of defeat for a Republican gubernatorial candidate up to that time.

Olson won re-election twice after that, firmly establishing the upcoming farmer-labor movement as a legitimate political force, and went on to become one of Minnesota's most beloved governors.

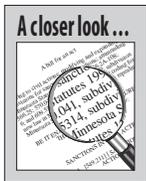


The faces of Minnesota welfare recipients.

—Photo-illustration by Tom Olmscheid

Tackling welfare . . .

Debate begins on initial welfare reform legislation



After months of learning a new welfare alphabet and deciphering all the cuts in a 1996 federal welfare law, the Minnesota House has begun debating a bill that outlines how to cope with the

changes.

The Health and Human Services Committee March 6 heard HF159, the House's early answer to the tough new federal law.

The bill, as it stands now, requires poor families to work to receive welfare, restores some of the federal cuts to immigrants, limits how long a person on welfare can attend school instead of work, and shares federal penalties with counties if Minnesota fails to move enough people into work.

The bill, however, is by no means a done deal, said sponsor Rep. Loren Jennings (DFL-Harris). "There is no agreement on this bill. This is open to amendments."

States across the country are hurrying to pass new welfare laws after the federal government scrapped the long-standing welfare system in August 1996.

The federal law does away with monthly welfare checks and food stamps for many legal immigrants and eliminates disability cash assistance for people with drug and alcohol addictions. It also eliminates cash assistance for children with certain behavioral disabilities and requires able-bodied adults, ages 18-50, who receive food stamps to work.

Perhaps the most significant change involves poor families with children. The law

requires these parents to get a job and sets a five-year-lifetime limit on their welfare benefits. States that do not move these parents to work will be penalized by the federal government. Specifically, they'll lose some of their federal aid.

While the federal law prescribes some of what states are required to do, it leaves each state to decide how to design its own welfare system. For instance, states are free to restore some of the cuts if they choose, but they must use their own money to do it.

The Health and Human Services Committee is expected to debate HF159 over the next several days and, if all goes well, vote the bill up or down March 13.

Below is a summary of some of the bill's highlights.

Work for welfare

For several years, Minnesota has experimented with a welfare pilot program in eight counties that requires poor families with children to work if they want public assistance.

Under the bill, that experiment would become permanent beginning Jan. 1, 1998, and spread to all 87 counties in Minnesota.

The Minnesota Family Investment Program, (MFIP) allows families to accept lower-paying jobs while receiving some public assistance, such as extra monthly cash and subsidized child and health care. In theory, allowing someone to work while still receiving benefits helps a low-skilled parent gain work experience and eventually obtain a better job.

MFIP statewide would replace the traditional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program done away with by the 1996 federal welfare law. And, in keeping with federal law, the bill sets a five-year, lifetime limit on receiving MFIP welfare checks.

There are some exceptions to the five-year limit. For example, the bill exempts certain victims of domestic abuse who need time to find safety before they can settle into a job.

MFIP began in 1994 as a pilot project in seven counties—Anoka, Dakota, Hennepin, Mille Lacs, Morrison, Sherburne and Todd. Ramsey County was added in July 1996. So far about 4,500 families receive welfare under MFIP and preliminary study results suggest that those people are more likely to work than those under the old AFDC system.

Under the statewide MFIP proposal, a parent or guardian would be required to develop a job search and employment plan and accept any suitable job once they've completed all the steps in their plan. As is the case now, the state would continue to pay for employment and job training services, but not at the same level.

Currently, the state spends about \$2,000 per person on employment and job training services in the MFIP pilot counties. Most officials agree, however, that the state cannot afford to spend that much if it takes the program statewide.

Just how much the state will spend on employment and training is expected to be outlined in a separate bill. Money to expand

child care aid for families now required to work also is expected in a separate bill.

Under HF159, there would be penalties for adults who do not work. For the first offense, the state would use a family's grant to directly pay off rent and utility bills. The state would then give the balance — minus a 10 percent penalty — to the family. On the second offense, the money leftover after rent and utility bills are paid would be cut by 25 percent. On the third offense, the money leftover would be cut by 35 percent.

In terms of schooling, the bill limits the amount of postsecondary education a person may receive while on MFIP. Under the current AFDC welfare program, some parents are allowed to attend college for four years while still receiving their monthly welfare check, and subsidized child and health care.

That would end under HF159. Generally, the bill limits approved postsecondary or training programs to a year or less but does allow for up to two years if the diploma or degree can be shown to help the welfare parent earn a better income, and he or she agrees to pay a portion of the money back.

Current AFDC parents who are in the middle of their degree programs would get a break, however. Under the bill, those AFDC parents enrolled in a degree program as of March 1, 1997, would be allowed to continue in school for up to two years after being placed on MFIP.

The bill does set income limits on how much a family can earn on the job and still continue to receive a monthly MFIP check.

For a family of three, for instance, the bill sets a limit of \$1,163 a month. A family of three in the current pilot MFIP program, can earn up to \$1,554 a month before being cut off. Officials maintain the state couldn't afford the higher cut-off income if the program goes statewide.

Due to the new federal welfare law, states are under a great deal of pressure to move people off the welfare rolls and HF159 plans to share that pressure with counties.

Under the new federal law, beginning with fiscal year 1997, each state must show that 25 percent of families on welfare are working at least 20 hours per week. By fiscal year 2002, the requirement jumps to 50 percent working at least 30 hours per week. There are cash penalties for states that do not meet the percentages.

Mirroring the federal law, HF159 would penalize counties. Specifically, the bill would force counties to share in the federal penalty.

Although the bill calls for MFIP to go statewide by Jan. 1, 1998, counties have the

option of beginning earlier and would receive a bonus of \$100 for each person they move into a job.

Immigrant help

Despite being cut off from most welfare programs in the federal law, some legal immigrants in Minnesota would be taken care of by state dollars, under the bill.

The measure, however, requires that the income of a legal immigrant's American sponsor be considered when determining eligibility for public assistance. This is in keeping with the federal law.

Under the bill, legal immigrants would be eligible for most welfare programs including:

- Medical Assistance (MA), a joint state-federal program that helps people who can't afford health care. State dollars, however, would have to pay for legal immigrants who, under the federal law, are cut off from the program.

- MFIP, the state's new welfare-to-work program. States receive federal dollars for their welfare reform programs but they are not allowed to use federal money for many legal immigrants. Minnesota would use state dollars to pay for that population.

- General Assistance (GA), a state program that offers help to those in poverty who do not qualify for other state or federal welfare programs. The average benefit is about \$203 a month.

- General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC), a state program that pays for necessary health care for those who are ineligible for MA or other health care programs. Specifically, elderly, blind or disabled legal immigrants cut off from a federal program known as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) would be eligible for Minnesota's GAMC as long as they cooperate with the Immigration and Naturalization Service and work toward becoming a citizen or meet some other standard that would qualify them for the federal dollar portion of MA.

Legal immigrants cut off from SSI also may qualify for some help with their housing costs. The bill would set aside a pot of money meant to make up the difference between a \$203 monthly state GA check and the \$378 monthly federal SSI check many elderly and disabled immigrants currently receive.

Jennings said there are about 400 or 500 immigrant families (mostly in the metropolitan area) who will need the help or lose their housing.

The bill also calls for immigrants cut off from the federal food stamp program to receive \$63 per month for food. In Minne-

sota, an estimated 16,000 legal immigrants will lose their food stamps in 1997, under the federal cuts. The average person receives \$63 per month in food coupons.

To qualify for the money, legal noncitizens must be enrolled in a citizenship, literacy or English class, have applied for such classes, or applied for a waiver from citizenship requirements from the INS.

Potpourri

Some of the bill's other highlights would:

- Mandate a 30-day residency requirement to receive welfare and require that, for the first year, families who move to Minnesota receive either the benefit amount they would have received in their previous state, or Minnesota's rate, whichever is less.
- Eliminate the \$1,500 cap on the value of a welfare recipient's vehicle. Many argued that the low value too often meant unreliable transportation and could cost people their jobs. HF159 would allow each working adult in a household to own a vehicle valued up to \$4,600.
- Tap into the rental subsidies of some families on welfare. Specifically, the bill would count \$100 of a welfare recipient's rental subsidy as part of their income, thus potentially reducing their overall welfare benefit. This provision helps pay to expand MFIP statewide but it has been criticized as shuffling benefits from one poor person to help another.
- Prohibit certain people from receiving MFIP or other welfare help such as GA. People convicted of felony drug possession, for instance, would be barred for five years from receiving MFIP.

Parole violators and felons on the run would be barred completely from receiving welfare. Those convicted of fraudulently attempting to receive benefits in two or more states at one time would be barred for 10 years.

- Make children with behavioral disorders cut off from the federal SSI program eligible for Minnesota's GA welfare program. GA, however, will not make up for the entire federal cut. These children averaged \$406 a month while on SSI and GA pays out about \$203 a month.
- Make drug and alcohol addicts cut off from SSI eligible for GA as long as they are in treatment or on a waiting list. They averaged about \$470 a month while on SSI.

— K. Darcy Hanzlik

Bill Introductions

HF1088-HF1250

Monday, March 3

HF1088—Hasskamp (DFL)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Candidate name rotation allowed on ballots.

HF1089—Garcia (DFL)
Taxes

Metropolitan areawide tax base homestead property inclusion provided.

HF1090—Clark (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Medical assistance nursing facility reimbursement rate provisions modified.

HF1091—Mullery (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Home equity conversion counseling grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1092—Mullery (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Learn to earn summer youth employment program grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1093—Macklin (R)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Metropolitan town election date change authorized.

HF1094—Boudreau (R)
Judiciary

DWI; driver's license revocation period doubled for persons who violate driving while intoxicated laws with a blood alcohol level of 0.20 or greater, and penalty assessment provided.

HF1095—Abrams (R)
Education

University of Minnesota Board of Regents selection procedures established.

HF1096—Westfall (R)
Health & Human Services

Temporary assistance for needy families and general assistance cash assistance prohibited for persons convicted of drug felonies.

HF1097—Garcia (DFL)
Judiciary

Convenience business surveillance security camera use required for crime prevention purposes, and penalties prescribed.

HF1098—Swenson, D. (R)
Environment & Natural Resources

Washington County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.

HF1099—Folliard (DFL)
Governmental Operations

Hopkins Police Department retiree and surviving spouse optional annuity election authorized.

HF1100—Tuma (R)
Education

Higher Education Services Office powers and duties modified.

HF1101—Swenson, D. (R)
Education

General education basic formula allowance increased, pupil transportation funding enhanced, referendum subtraction removed, school year lengthened, compulsory instruction age lowered, and money appropriated.

HF1102—Leighton (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Used motor oil and filter collection and recycling plan revised.

HF1103—Van Dellen (R)
Taxes

Property tax classification rates modified, education homestead credit provided, property tax statement information requirements modified, senior citizen property tax refund provided, and money appropriated.

HF1104—Leppik (R)
Education

University of Minnesota citizen's regent candidate advisory council established, student regent requirement removed, and money appropriated.

HF1105—Nornes (R)
Education

Independent School District No. 544, Fergus Falls, fund transfer authorized.

HF1106—Leighton (DFL)
Labor-Management Relations

Employers required to recognize employee representatives.

HF1107—Tuma (R)
Education

Options plus teacher support pilot program extended, and money appropriated.

HF1108—Bettermann (R)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Douglas County tourism facility tax increment financing exemption provided.

HF1109—Farrell (DFL)
Judiciary

Criminal trial final argument prosecution rebuttal provided.

HF1110—Rukavina (DFL)
Labor-Management Relations

Minimum wage increased, and large and small employer requirements specified.

HF1111—Weaver (R)
Transportation & Transit

Recreational vehicle combination definition expanded to include vehicles drawing trailers carrying off-highway motorcycles, off-road vehicles, snowmobiles, or all-terrain vehicles.

HF1112—Pelowski (DFL)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Legislator terms of office lengthened, staggered elections provided, legislature size reduced, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1113—Luther (DFL)
Governmental Operations

Intergovernmental information systems advisory council appropriated money for development of the multiple jurisdiction law enforcement network project.

HF1114—Boudreau (R)
Education

Minnesota state academies provided technology improvements, and money appropriated.

HF1115—Tunheim (DFL)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Sign contractor licensure required, rule adoption and penalties provided, and money appropriated.

HF1116—Sekhon (DFL)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Architecture, engineering, land surveying, landscape architecture, geoscience, and interior design board provisions modified.

HF1117—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Nursing board and practice provisions modified.

HF1118—Sekhon (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Municipal water use permit established.

HF1119—Clark (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Jungle Theatre grant matching requirements clarified.

HF1120—Tomassoni (DFL)
Education

Multicounty multitype library systems appropriated money.

HF1121—Delmont (DFL)
Education

Child development education and training loan program established, child care provider training initiatives funded, and money appropriated.

HF1122—Finseth (R)
Environment & Natural Resources

Big game and turkey hunting permitted with a crossbow by persons 65 years of age or older.

HF1123—Delmont (DFL)
Regulated Industries & Energy

Telecommunication company slamming and loading prohibited, and penalties provided.

HF1124—Schumacher (DFL)
Education

Regional library basic system support grant distribution formula modified, and money appropriated.

HF1125—Murphy (DFL)**Education**

Minnesota undergraduate college and university tuition scholarship trust program established, trust fund established, and money appropriated.

HF1126—Jennings (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources**

Hazardous products labeling law repealed.

HF1127—Kahn (DFL)**Governmental Operations**

Public employee individual retirement account plan provisions modified.

HF1128—Kahn (DFL)**Governmental Operations**

Higher education supplemental retirement plan employee and employer contribution provisions modified.

HF1129—Kahn (DFL)**Governmental Operations**

Teachers Retirement Association employee and employer contribution provisions modified.

HF1130—Kahn (DFL)**Governmental Operations**

Higher education individual retirement account plan provided administrative changes, and advisory committee established.

HF1131—Bradley (R)**Health & Human Services**

Southeastern Minnesota quality assurance pilot project established for programs treating persons with developmental disabilities, and money appropriated.

HF1132—Ness (R)**Education**

Technical college diploma and certificate provisions modified.

HF1133—Kielkucki (R)**Economic Development & International Trade**

Hubert H. Humphrey museum planning provided, and money appropriated.

HF1134—Knight (R)**Governmental Operations**

Administration department elevator regulation, building code, lease, and manufactured home installer licensure provisions modified.

HF1135—McCullum (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Massage and Oriental bodywork therapist licensure requirement established, and penalties provided.

HF1136—Biernat (DFL)**Education**

Community crime prevention program grant award procedures modified, learn and earn graduation incentive grant program established, and money appropriated.

HF1137—Lieder (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Red River Basin Board water management planning grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF1138—Lieder (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Municipalities authorized to enlist private emergency snow removal assistance, and assumption of liability provided.

HF1139—Lieder (DFL)**Education**

Independent School District Nos. 561, Goodridge, and 600, Fisher, revenue use permitted.

HF1140—Orfield (DFL)**General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections**

Campaign finance independent expenditure definition modified, campaign report electronic filing provided, spending limit provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF1141—Orfield (DFL)**Taxes**

Dependent care income tax credit expanded, and money appropriated.

HF1142—Tunheim (DFL)**Environment & Natural Resources Finance**

Thief Lake Wildlife Management Area interpretive display construction provided, and money appropriated.

HF1143—Tunheim (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

County financial statement publication requirements modified.

HF1144—Tunheim (DFL)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

County boards authorized to assign duties of auditor and treasurer.

HF1145—Milbert (DFL)**Transportation & Transit**

Court administrator financial responsibility eliminated over deputy registrars.

HF1146—Trimble (DFL)**Governmental Operations**

Independent School District No. 625, St. Paul, teacher retirement coverage choice provided.

HF1147—Leighton (DFL)**Labor-Management Relations**

Health care provider workers' compensation claim terminology use requirement provided.

HF1148—Wolf (R)**Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs**

Scott County auditor, recorder, and treasurer appointment permitted.

HF1149—Pugh (DFL)**Judiciary**

Domestic abuse victim civil cause of action provided.

HF1150—Greenfield (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

HIV Hepatitis B; corrections guards and peace officers provided testing for HIV and hepatitis B under certain circumstances, hypodermic needle sales permitted without prescription, and money appropriated.

HF1151—Van Dellen (R)**Judiciary**

HIV virus transmission action against health care providers time limit imposed.

HF1152—Swenson, D. (R)**Judiciary**

Governor's council on data practices reform established, and money appropriated.

HF1153—Stanek (R)**Judiciary**

Theft and burglary crimes expanded to include certain crimes on railroad property or property in transit by a common carrier, and penalties provided.

HF1154—Skoglund (DFL)**Judiciary**

Bomb disposal expense reimbursement provided, and money appropriated.

HF1155—Long (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

Child care center employment and training provided for recipients of temporary assistance for needy families, and money appropriated.

HF1156—Jennings (DFL)**Regulated Industries & Energy**

Petroleum product above ground storage tank secondary containment methods studied, and task force established.

HF1157—Huntley (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

County prepaid Medical Assistance and General Assistance Medical Care capitation rates modified.

HF1158—Greiling (DFL)**Education**

Children's library service and regional public library system grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1159—Greenfield (DFL)**Education**

HIV/AIDS prevention education demonstration project established, grants provided to school districts, and money appropriated.

HF1160—Greenfield (DFL)**Health & Human Services**

HIV; prenatal HIV transmission prevention education campaign provided, HIV and Hepatitis B testing provided, and money appropriated.

HF1161—Trimble (DFL)**Economic Development & International Trade**

Public facilities authority revenue bonding authority increased.

HF1162—Koppendrayer (R)**Governmental Operations**

Employee relations department technical corrections bill.

HF1163—Long (DFL)**Education**

University of Minnesota Regent Candidate Advisory Council membership and duties modified.

HF1164—Juhnke (DFL)**Transportation & Transit**

Bus definition expanded to include special transportation service vehicles.

HF1165—Skoglund (DFL)**Judiciary**

Juvenile court records and peace officer records on children data practice provisions modified, and money appropriated.

HF1166—Clark (DFL)**Economic Development & International Trade**

Minnesota 1997 employment and economic development program established, and money appropriated.

HF1167—Goodno (R)
Health & Human Services

Public health provisions modified, state core function fees established, infant inborn metabolic error testing requirements modified, food and beverage definitions modified, enclosed arena inspection required, and money appropriated.

HF1168—Pugh (DFL)
Judiciary

City charter commission member removal provided.

HF1169—Carlson (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Brooklyn Center; Brookdale regional center redevelopment provided, and money appropriated.

HF1170—Jennings (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Chisago County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.

HF1171—Jennings (DFL)
Regulated Industries & Energy

Telephone, telecommunication, and cable system regulations modified, and civil penalties provided.

HF1172—Jennings (DFL)
Regulated Industries & Energy

Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996 state goals provided.

HF1173—Lieder (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources Finance

Rydell national wildlife refuge access provided, and money appropriated.

HF1174—Carruthers (DFL)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Tobacco self-service merchandising prohibited.

HF1175—Clark (DFL)
Judiciary

Restorative justice programs authorized, increased penalties provided for repeat misdemeanor violations, grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1176—Hausman (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

St. Paul Civic Center improvements provided, and money appropriated.

HF1177—Schumacher (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Municipal waste processing debt retirement grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1178—Davids (R)
Environment & Natural Resources

Border-to-border state trail study provided, and money appropriated.

HF1179—Davids (R)
Environment & Natural Resources

Petroleum tank upgrade assistance program established.

HF1180—Murphy (DFL)
Governmental Operations

State government ombudsman services provided.

HF1181—Pugh (DFL)
Judiciary

Title insurance company certificates of release regulated.

HF1182—Orfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services

Health care provider prohibited contract provisions modified.

HF1183—Pugh (DFL)
Commerce, Tourism & Consumer Affairs

Real estate referral compensation regulated.

HF1184—Milbert (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Heritage and historic subdistrict creation authorized within tax increment financing districts.

HF1185—Van Dellen (R)
Taxes

Two-thirds legislative majority vote required for new taxes or tax increases, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF1186—Tunheim (DFL)
Agriculture

Bakeries in retail food stores provided equipment and ventilation requirements.

HF1187—Kubly (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs

Buffalo Lake wastewater treatment facility construction contract bid requirements modified.

HF1188—Anderson, B. (R)
Financial Institutions & Insurance

Hassan detached banking facility establishment authorized.

HF1189—Greiling (DFL)
Transportation & Transit

Public safety department rules modified.

HF1190—Rest (DFL)
Taxes

Economic efficiency and pollution reduction act adopted, and money appropriated.

HF1191—Rifenberg (R)
Rules & Legislative Administration

Balanced budget; Congress memorialized to propose an amendment to the United States Constitution to balance the budget.

HF1192—Leighton (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Corporate aid moratorium established prohibiting grants, tax incentives, and financial assistance to corporate entities.

Wednesday, March 5

HF1193—Swenson, D. (R)
Judiciary

Motor vehicle registration suspension provided under certain circumstances, and title certificate form use required.

HF1194—Carlson (DFL)
Education

Student financial aid determination asset consideration provisions modified, and state grant determination formula provided.

HF1195—Jaros (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources

Duluth area old growth forest protection provided.

HF1196—Weaver (R)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Voters allowed to prevent public dissemination of address information.

HF1197—Weaver (R)
Judiciary

County attorney administrative subpoena powers expanded to include subpoena of computer network records.

HF1198—Weaver (R)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Political contribution refund recipient names made public.

HF1199—Peterson (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Housing Finance Agency applicant income limits not based upon geographic location.

HF1200—Pugh (DFL)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Legislative and congressional district coordination provided.

HF1201—Jaros (DFL)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections

Simulated elections provided for minors.

HF1202—Tuma (R)
Judiciary

Harassment restraining order violation penalties increased.

HF1203—Peterson (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade

Upper Minnesota Valley River Regional Visitors Center development provided, and money appropriated.

HF1204—Stang (R)
Agriculture

Milk producer well water testing requirements modified.

HF1205—Murphy (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance

Lyme disease health plan coverage provisions clarified.

HF1206—Murphy (DFL)
Education

Independent School District No. 99, Esko, community health and physical fitness center funded, and money appropriated.

HF1207—Paymar (DFL)
Judiciary

Private corrections treatment facility liability limits provided.

HF1208—Rostberg (R)
Environment & Natural Resources

Community forest improvement grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1209—Sviggum (R)
Environment & Natural Resources

Stagecoach trail established in Steele, Dodge, and Olmsted counties.

HF1210—Kraus (R)
Education

Year-round school/extended week or day/pilot program study extended, and money appropriated.

HF1211—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
DeafBlind Services Minnesota Inc. appropriated money for services to deaf-blind children.

HF1212—Johnson, R. (DFL)
Judiciary
Human services department employee assault by certain persons deemed fourth degree assault.

HF1213—Goodno (R)
Education
Moorhead land transfer authorized.

HF1214—Koppendrayner (R)
Environment & Natural Resources
Crow hunting season established.

HF1215—Mullery (DFL)
Financial Institutions & Insurance
Consumer Fraud Act jurisdiction extended to include loans.

HF1216—Entenza (DFL)
Education
Limited English proficiency program funding increased, statewide revenue cap removed, student instructor ratio lowered, and money appropriated.

HF1217—Larsen (R)
Education
School district referendum allowance reduction discontinued.

HF1218—Van Dellen (R)
Judiciary
Heroin sale and possession law conformity provided with cocaine sale and possession law.

HF1219—Van Dellen (R)
Judiciary
Government tort liability law peace officer provisions modified.

HF1220—Van Dellen (R)
Judiciary
Pistol illegal possession by minors provided mandatory minimum penalty, public assistance benefits limited for persons convicted of felony offenses, obstruction of justice crime expanded, and money appropriated.

HF1221—Kahn (DFL)
Governmental Operations
Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement and Minnesota Resources Commission membership provisions modified.

HF1222—Milbert (DFL)
Taxes
Reverse referendum allowed for property tax levy increases in counties and certain cities.

HF1223—Rest (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Impounded vehicle notice period provisions modified.

HF1224—Kinkel (DFL)
Transportation & Transit
Liquefied petroleum gas delivery vehicles exempted from seasonal weight restrictions.

HF1225—Milbert (DFL)
Taxes
Neighborhood Assistance Program contribution income tax credit provided.

HF1226—Broecker (R)
Judiciary
Ramsey County enhanced probation law enforcement community partnership pilot project grant provided, and money appropriated.

HF1227—Swenson, D. (R)
Judiciary
Graffiti vandalism civil cause of action established, and juvenile crime data release authorized.

HF1228—Trimble (DFL)
Economic Development & International Trade
Hmong language speaking employee position established within Labor and Industry Department.

HF1229—Biernat (DFL)
Judiciary
Crime victim information release discretion granted to prosecutors.

HF1230—Johnson, R. (DFL)
Governmental Operations
Independent School District No. 77, Mankato, teacher authorized service credit purchase.

HF1231—Ness (R)
Education
Students dismissed from school provided attendance options, and teacher liability provisions modified.

HF1232—Lieder (DFL)
Environment & Natural Resources
Wild Rice Watershed District levy extended.

HF1233—Opatz (DFL)
Education
St. Cloud Hospital/Mayo Family Practice Residency Program funding provided, and money appropriated.

HF1234—Stanek (R)
Judiciary
Public safety department film rental rules repealed.

HF1235—Stanek (R)
Judiciary
Knowingly driving without insurance violation liability provisions modified.

HF1236—Stanek (R)
Judiciary
Accident report evidentiary use allowed by peace officers.

HF1237—Dawkins (DFL)
Local Government & Metropolitan Affairs
Great Northern Corridor Community Development Act adopted, and money appropriated.

HF1238—Greenfield (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Registered nurse anesthetist certification provided.

HF1239—Hasskamp (DFL)
Taxes
Residential property market value increases limited.

HF1240—Pugh (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Dakota County Human Services minimum reimbursement provided.

HF1241—Pugh (DFL)
Judiciary
Dakota, Hennepin, and Ramsey County school-based probation pilot program established, and money appropriated.

HF1242—Rest (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Education Now and Babies Later (MN ENABL) teen pregnancy prevention program expanded, and money appropriated.

HF1243—Tingelstad (R)
Transportation & Transit
Snow plowing vehicle annual overwidth permit issuance authorized by local road authorities.

HF1244—McCollum (DFL)
General Legislation, Veterans Affairs & Elections
Campaign finance definitions clarified, reporting requirements modified, public subsidy return required, and penalties provided.

HF1245—Hasskamp (DFL)
Education
Higher education women's athletic budget conditions specified.

HF1246—Huntley (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Mental health or substance abuse treatment provider peer review required.

HF1247—Dawkins (DFL)
Judiciary
Child support order retroactive modification permitted.

HF1248—Wejcman (DFL)
Health & Human Services
Older Minnesotans Ombudsman activities expanded and clarified, and money appropriated.

HF1249—Murphy (DFL)
Governmental Operations
Red Wing Sexual Psychopathic Personality Treatment Center employees included in a temporary retirement election option.

HF1250—Sykora (R)
Taxes
Low-income housing property tax class rate reduction provided.

Where to find information

House Public Information Office

175 State Office Building
(612) 296-2146 or
1-800-657-3550

This nonpartisan office provides: committee meeting schedules; legislator information; and publications, including the *Session Weekly* newsmagazine, educational brochures for all ages, and member directories. All information is available at no charge.

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

Committee Schedule

Schedule is subject to change.
For information updates, call
House Calls at (612) 296-9283.
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To have the daily and weekly schedules
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MONDAY, March 10

8 a.m.

Economic Development Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble
Agenda: HF413 (Rest) Job training income
tax credit provided.
HF679 (Gunther) Omnibus economic
development appropriations bill.

Higher Education Finance Division/EDUCATION

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Gene Pelowski
Agenda: Higher Education Services Office
(HESO) budget.

K-12 Education Finance Division/ EDUCATION

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso
Agenda: Overview of governor's budget
recommendations: Minnesota State
Academies for the Deaf and Blind; and Lola
and Rudy Perpich Minnesota Center for Arts
Education.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff
Agenda: Budget hearing: Pollution Control
Agency.

Property Tax & Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson
Agenda: Tax Incidence Study.

10 a.m.

AGRICULTURE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Stephen Wenzel
Agenda: HF162 (Tunheim) Seed potato
inspection fund appropriated money.
HF148 (Tunheim) Turf grass research and
development support continued, and money
appropriated.

HF748 (Tunheim) University of Minnesota
appropriated money for wheat and barley
scab research.
HF729 (Finseth) University of Minnesota
appropriated money for wheat and barley
scab research.

HF578 (Kubly) Animal feedlot and manure
management advisory committee expiration
date designated, and food safety advisory
committee membership provisions
modified.

HF913 (Kubly) Livestock odor research
program developed at the University of
Minnesota, and money appropriated.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger
Agenda: HF269 (Bakk) State owned iron-
bearing material and stockpiled metallic
minerals material ownership provisions
modified.

HF1208 (Rostberg) Community forest
improvement grants provided, and money
appropriated.

HF760 (Wejman) Motor vehicle emission
inspection waivers issued to disabled persons
upon request.

HF880 (Hausman) Minnesota Nuclear
Responsibility Act of 1997 adopted, and
money appropriated.

Health & Human Services Finance Division/

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield
Agenda: Presentation of governor's proposed
budget for Department of Human Service
health care programs.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: HF29 (Skoglund) Probationers and
parolees from other states residing in Minnesota
without permission under the interstate
compact provided criminal penalties.

HF95 (Skoglund) Sex offender federal prison
release community notification plan and
report required.

HF472 (Bishop) Sex offender release
community notification cost reimbursement
provided to local units of government, and
money appropriated.

HF541 (Bishop) Sex offender release
community notification provisions clarified.
HF163 (Skoglund) Criminal gang council
and strike force established, grants
authorized, and money appropriated
(time permitting).

Additional bills may be added.

State Government Finance Division/ GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina
Agenda: Budget hearings: Office of
Administrative Hearings; and Office of the
Attorney General.

12:30 p.m.

Family & Early Childhood Education Finance Division/EDUCATION

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tony Kinkel
Agenda: Overview: Community Education;
Extended Day; Adults with Disabilities;
Hearing Impaired Adults; and Family Service
Collaboratives.

GENERAL LEGISLATION, VETERANS AFFAIRS & ELECTIONS

300N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bob Milbert
Agenda: HF78 (Rest) State primary election
name changed, candidate party support
required, primary election date changed, and
election procedures, terms, and deadlines
modified.

HF85 (Anderson, I.) State primary election
date changed, and candidate filing
requirements modified.

HF1088 (Hasskamp) Candidate name
rotation allowed on ballots.

HF1093 (Macklin) Metropolitan town
election date change authorized.

LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Richard Jefferson
Agenda: HF560 (Tuma) Workers' compensation
benefit payment dispute arbitration provided.
HF966 (Garcia) Employer wage and payment
requirement definitions expanded to include
the state.

HF1147 (Leighton) Health care provider
workers' compensation claim terminology
use requirement provided.

HF892 (Rukavina) Minimum wage increased,
and large and small employer requirements
specified.

HF1038 (Goodno) Employee wage protection act adopted, wage protection account established, and money appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius

Agenda: HF454 (Johnson, A.) Collector motor vehicle single license plate issuance and display allowed.

HF242 (Juhnke) Recreational equipment registration and taxation provisions modified related to slip in pickup truck campers, and vehicle registration information access restricted, vehicle dealer purchase receipt requirements modified.

HF906 (Kuisle) Farm machinery tax exemption provisions modified, and farm machinery speed limit increase provided.

HF457 (Juhnke) Transportation department federal construction project payment provisions modified, bridge inspection provisions clarified, procurement pilot project extended, municipal air transportation service assistance provided, technical corrections.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

7 p.m.

WAYS & MEANS

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Solberg

Agenda: House budget resolution.

TUESDAY, March 11

8 a.m.

Judiciary Finance Division/ JUDICIARY

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy

Agenda: Agency budget presentations: Department of Corrections - Institutions, members report on individual institutions; Health Care, Rep. Andy Dawkins; Education, Rep. Mary Jo McGuire; Institution Support Service, Rep. Doug Swenson. County Issues, Reps. Sherry Broecker, Thomas Pugh. Legislative Relations and Juvenile Services, Reps. Mary Jo McGuire, Peg Larsen, Rich Stanek, Thomas Pugh. Community Services, Reps. Doug Swenson, Wes Skoglund, Sherry Broecker. Crime Victim and Prevention Services, Reps. Mary Jo McGuire, Peg Larsen, Rich Stanek, Andy Dawkins, Doug Swenson. Management Services, Reps. Michael Paymar, Peg Larsen. Employee Concerns, Rep. Thomas Pugh.

Subcommittee on Education Planning & Transitions/ EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Ruth Johnson,
Rep. David Tomassoni

Agenda: HFXXXX (Carlson) Lifework learning centers.

HFXXXX (Winter) Heron Lake/Okabena applied learning pilot program.

Subcommittee on Quality Initiatives/ EDUCATION

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Matt Entenza

Agenda: HF961 (Greiling) Education supervisory personnel code of ethics established.

HF904 (Larsen) Student tobacco use reporting required.

HF891 (Harder) Independent School District No. 638, Sanborn, authorized to enter into an interdistrict cooperation agreement.

HF543 (Entenza) Child and family program outcome accountability mechanism established and working group established, report required, and money appropriated.

HF310 (Koppendrayner) Teachers employment contract provisions modified.

Transportation & Transit

Finance Division/ TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bernie Lieder

Agenda: HF20 (Lieder) State patrol operating appropriations to originate from state general fund, traffic and overweight vehicle fine deposit in general fund provided, and gasoline tax revenue non-highway use study required.

HF1015 (Lieder) Local bridge replacement and rehabilitation provided, bond issuance authorized, and appropriation increase provided.

HF873 (Pugh) Major transportation projects fund established, and eligibility requirements prescribed.

HF609 (Erhardt) Motor vehicle buyers to notify registrar of transfer within ten days of purchase, and fees and penalties imposed.

HF841 (Dehler) Firearms safety training designation provided on drivers' licenses and identification cards.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: Continuation of March 10 agenda.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES

300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson

Agenda: Presentation of the 1997 Minnesota Tax Incidence Study, Department of Revenue. Public testimony on the report.

10 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

Basement Hearing Room
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Phyllis Kahn

Agenda: Rule 5.10 referral:

HF272 (Wejcman) Human services program

licensure requirements modified, and civil penalties imposed and modified.

HF450 (Rest) Legislative Audit Commission membership provisions modified.

HF756 (Hilty) State demographer population estimate procedures modified.

HF188 (Long) Coya Knutson memorials designed and constructed, and money appropriated.

HF747 (Kahn) State High School League governing board appointing authority provisions modified.

HF182 (Greiling) Legislative Coordinating Commission assigned responsibility for review of legislative rules.

Rule 5.10 bills may be added.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. John Dorn

Agenda: HF159 (Jennings) Welfare reform; human services and public assistance programs and eligibility requirements modified, and money appropriated.

Housing & Housing Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Karen Clark

Agenda: Rental property tax bills:

HF306 (Olson, E.) Rental residential property tax class rate reduced.

HF627 (Rest) Low-income housing property tax class uniform rules established, apartment and nonhomestead residential property tax class rates reduced, penalties imposed, rulemaking authorized, and money appropriated.

HF636 (Pugh) Residential rental property tax class rate reduced.

HF744 (Garcia) Apartment property improvements provided valuation exclusion for property tax purposes.

This Old Apartment.

TAXES

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Dee Long

Agenda: Informational hearing on the governor's tax initiatives for 1997.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

500S State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis

Agenda: Higher Education Asset Preservation and Renewal (HEAPR) reports from the University of Minnesota and Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU). Capital Asset Preservation and Replacement Account, Department of Administration.

COMMERCE, TOURISM & CONSUMER AFFAIRS

200 State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim

Agenda: HF784 (Leighton) Unclaimed property uniform act adopted.

HF1032 (Entenza) Commerce department powers and duties specified, regulatory provisions modified, and technical

corrections provided.
Additional bills may be added.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ann H. Rest

Agenda: HF427 (Dawkins) St. Paul, Ramsey County, Independent School District No. 625 joint property tax advisory committee duration extended.

HF662 (Anderson, I.) Local government unit apportionment permitted between two or more contiguous government units.

HF698 (Rukavina) St. Louis County division vote provided.

HF685 (Rest) Local government innovation and efficiency program established, and money appropriated.

HF809 (Winter) Regional economic development commissions regulated.

HF812 (Dawkins) Municipal and school district local performance aid eligibility requirements modified.

HF962 (Schumacher) Manufactured home park municipal zoning provisions modified.

HF995 (McElroy) Joint truth-in-taxation hearings allowed.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Jennings

Agenda: HF1172 (Jennings)

Federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, state goals provided.

HFXXXX (Jennings) Reorganizing and renaming the Legislative Electric Energy Task Force as the Legislative Commission on Utility Competition.

Additional bills may be added.

4 p.m.

EDUCATION

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lyndon Carlson

Agenda: HF446 (Biernat) Driver's license issuance prohibited to persons under age 18 who have failed to receive a passing score on the state high school graduation test or meet other educational requirements.

5 p.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. John Dorn

Agenda: HF367 (Davids) Omnibus mortuary science regulation bill.

HF58 (McElroy) Birth parent adoption or placement notification required, grandparent visitation provided, and adoption record privacy provisions modified.

HF257 (Dorn) Ambulance service licensing requirements established, emergency medical services statutory provisions relocated, and money appropriated.

HF496 (Slawik) Ambulance service financial data collection system established, and money appropriated.

HF511 (Otremba) Rural hospital grant and

loan program established, physician license surcharge eliminated, health care commission membership modified, and money appropriated.

HF673 (Vickerman) Nursing facility authorized to qualify for interim and settle up payment rates.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ann H. Rest

Agenda: HF422 (McCollum) Contaminated land industrial development provided, and money appropriated.

HF692 (Tingelstad) Andover contaminated land cleanup funded, and money appropriated.

HF771 (Long) Contamination cleanup grant program requirements modified, redevelopment and job creation grants provided, and money appropriated.

HF1237 (Dawkins) Great Northern Corridor Community Development Act adopted, and money appropriated.

WEDNESDAY, March 12

8 a.m.

Economic Development

Finance Division/ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble

Agenda: Budget hearings: Minnesota Humanities Commission; and Minnesota Historical Society.

Higher Education

Finance Division/EDUCATION

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Gene Pelowski

Agenda: Continuation of March 10 agenda. HF1194 (Carlson) Student financial aid determination asset consideration provisions modified, and state grant determination formula provided.

HF671 (Entenza) Higher education state grant student share reduced, living and miscellaneous allowance increased, work-study provided for grant recipients, and money appropriated.

K-12 Education Finance Division/ EDUCATION

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso

Agenda: Local education finance bills.

Property Tax & Tax Increment Finance (TIF) Division/TAXES

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson

Agenda: HF807 (Olson, E.) Property tax receipt, refund, investigation, local government performance aid eligibility, and aid reduction provisions modified.

HF994 (McElroy) Relative homestead

property tax treatment provided in cases of involuntary absences.

HF1027 (Milbert) Apartment property tax class rate reduced.

HF887 (Anderson, I.) Golf course property tax classification provisions modified.

HF1084 (Anderson, I.) Education cost financing with property taxes prohibited, and constitutional amendment proposed.

HF137 (Haas) Permanent and total disability homestead property tax classification requirements modified.

HF709 (Rest) Seasonal recreational residential property tax class rate reduced.

HF722 (Dawkins) Relocated residence improvements provided valuation exclusion.

HF636 (Pugh) Residential rental property tax class rate reduced.

8:30 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building

Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: Continuation of March 10 agenda.

State Government Finance Division/ GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina

Agenda: Budget hearings: Office of Governor; Minnesota Racing Commission; Lawful Gambling Control Board; Minnesota State Lottery; Board of Government Innovation and Cooperation.

HF329 (Leighton) Uniform partnership act adopted, and money appropriated.

HF56 (Kahn) Minnesota electronic authentication act adopted; electronic signature and message transmission use, validity, and security provided, and penalties prescribed.

10 a.m.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger

Agenda: HF948 (Wagenius) Mercury emissions consumer information act of 1997 adopted.

HF949 (Wagenius) Electric relay and device manufacturers deemed responsible for the waste management costs of these devices.

HF742 (Kahn) Incinerator mercury emission testing requirements modified.

HF707 (Rukavina) Toxics in products requirements and enforcement provisions modified.

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS & INSURANCE

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Irv Anderson

Agenda: HF924 (Abrams) Health plan companies required to disclose certain information to enrollees relating to financial arrangements.

HF929 (Orfield) Patient protection act adopted, health care consumer assistance

program established, and money appropriated.

**Health & Human Services
Finance Division/
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield
Agenda: Continuation of March 10 agenda.

JUDICIARY

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Wes Skoglund
Agenda: HF504 (Murphy) Probation defined, probation service provider jurisdiction clarified, and probation policies adopted.
HF93 (Skoglund) Probationer or parolee concealment or harboring provided criminal penalties.
HF350 (McGuire) Emergency 911 telephone call interruption prohibited, and criminal penalty provided.
HF94 (Skoglund) Emergency telephone call disruption or interference provided criminal penalties.
Additional bills may be added.

**Subcommittee on Land Sales/
ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES**

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Hausman
Agenda: HF424 (Koppendrayer) Mille Lacs County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.
HF975 (Hilty) Aitkin County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.
HF1098 (Swenson, D.) Washington County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.
HF1170 (Jennings) Chisago County tax-forfeited land sale authorized.
HF299 (Bakk) State park additions and name changes provided.

12:30 p.m.

Civil & Family Law Division/JUDICIARY

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Andy Dawkins
Agenda: HF661 (Biernat) Landlord and tenant law recodified, clarified, and relocated.
HF686 (Paymar) Tenants provided right to seek police and emergency assistance, and penalties provided.
HF932 (Wejcman) Public nuisance definition expanded to include zoning and business licensure violations.
HFXXXX (Chaudhary) Relating to landlord tenant nuisance laws.
HFXXXX (Chaudhary) Relating to landlord tenant law, prohibiting the taking of fraudulent application fees.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Jaros
Agenda: HF988 (Wejcman) Economic Security Department extended employment program procedures modified.

HF544 (Kahn) Economic Security Department extended employment program procedures modified.
HF960 (Rukavina) Blind Minnesotans board established, and money appropriated.

**Family & Early Childhood Education
Finance Division/EDUCATION**

5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tony Kinkel
Agenda: Overview: CAPs; MEOG; Headstart; Weatherization; and energy programs.

TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jean Wagenius
Agenda: HF330 (Luther) School bus safety provided through bus monitors, seat belts and video cameras.
HF687 (Marko) Motorcycle helmet use admissibility into evidence prohibited.
HF90 (Lieder) Commercial motor vehicle drivers working as relief, replacement, or emergency snow plow operators exempted from drug and alcohol testing requirement.
HF1066 (Greenfield) Seat belt use failure violation provided primary offense designation.

2:30 p.m.

**Subcommittee on
Business Regulation/
COMMERCE, TOURISM
& CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Al Juhnke
Agenda: HF761 (Wejcman) Cordial and liqueur brand labels prohibited from containing cartoons and caricatures, mandatory minimum civil penalty provided for sales of alcoholic beverages to minors, and home delivery of alcohol regulated.
HF916 (Entenza) Wine tasting event restrictions modified, and malt liquor consumption authorized at wine tasting events.
HF982 (Dawkins) Public Safety Department liquor control and gambling enforcement divisions consolidated, and technical corrections provided.
Additional bills may be added.

**Property Tax & Tax Increment Finance
(TIF) Division/TAXES**

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Edgar Olson
Agenda: Continuation of 8 a.m. agenda.

**Subcommittee on Gambling/
REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY**

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mike Delmont
Agenda: HF613 (Pugh) Cribbage; card game tournaments permitted and maximum prize amount designated.
Additional bills may be added.

6 p.m.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. John Dorn
Agenda: Continuation of March 11 agenda.

THURSDAY, March 13

8 a.m.

**Economic Development
Finance Division/
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Steve Trimble
Agenda: Budget hearing: Department of Public Service.

**Judiciary Finance Division/
JUDICIARY**

500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Murphy
Agenda: Continuation of March 11 agenda.

**State Government Finance Division/
GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS**

400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Rukavina
Agenda: Budget hearings: State Board of Investment; all retirement funds.

**Subcommittee on
Education Planning & Transitions/
EDUCATION**

200 State Office Building
Chrs. Rep. Ruth Johnson,
Rep. David Tomassoni
Agenda: To be announced.

**Subcommittee on Quality Initiatives/
EDUCATION**

10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Matt Entenza
Agenda: HF519 (Mares) Health and physical education instruction required, and health education included in teacher preparation programs.
HF884 (McElroy) School districts permitted to include attendance information on secondary student transcripts.
HF575 (Weaver) School districts authorized to hire nonlicensed teachers without board of teaching approval, and nonlicensed teacher background checks provided.
HF897 (Greiling) School district superintendent performance contracts authorized, and salary increases provided.
HF309 (Koppendrayer) School boards authorized to contract for instructional and non-instructional services.

8:30 a.m.

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES FINANCE**

Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Tom Osthoff

Agenda: Budget hearing; Department of Agriculture.

Sales and Income Tax Division/TAXES
300S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Alice Johnson
Agenda: To be announced.

10 a.m.

GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
Basement Hearing Room,
State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Phyllis Kahn
Agenda: HF120 (Kahn) Office of technology established as a state agency, North Star information access account created, and money appropriated.
Bills referred under Rule 5.10.
Continuation of March 6 and March 11 agendas.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. John Dorn
Agenda: Continuation of March 11 agenda.

**Housing & Housing Finance Division/
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT &
INTERNATIONAL TRADE**
500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Karen Clark
Agenda: HF699 (Dawkins) St. Paul rental tax equity pilot project reinstated, property tax refunds provided, and money appropriated.
HF927 (Evans) Bridges program; rental housing assistance program for persons with a mental illness or families with an adult member with a mental illness appropriated money.
HF1091 (Mullery) Home equity conversion counseling grants provided, and money appropriated.

TAXES
200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: Continuation of March 11 agenda.

12:30 p.m.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT
500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Henry Kalis
Agenda: Bridge Bonds, Rural Finance Authority. Railroad Improvement Bonds, Department of Transportation.

**COMMERCE, TOURISM
& CONSUMER AFFAIRS**
200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Jim Tunheim
Agenda: HF335 (Jennings) Building and construction contracts, payments and retainages, and mechanics liens regulated.
HF1115 (Tunheim) Sign contractor licensure required, rule adoption and penalties provided, and money appropriated. Additional bills may be added.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT &
METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS**
10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Ann H. Rest
Agenda: HFXXXX (Rest) Stadium financing.

REGULATED INDUSTRIES & ENERGY
5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Loren Jennings
Agenda: HFXXXX (Jennings) Providing for development of utility rates for sale of electricity generated from renewable energy resources, and for recovery of the cost of electricity generated from renewable energy sources through automatic energy adjustment clauses.
Additional bills may be added.

2:30 p.m.

The House meets in session.

FRIDAY, March 14

8 a.m.

**Higher Education
Finance Division/EDUCATION**
500N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Gene Pelowski
Agenda: Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) budget.
HF319 (Pelowski) Higher education institution gift income tax credit allowed.
HF655 (Opatz) Firefighter relief association trustee training video production authorized, and money appropriated.

**K-12 Education Finance Division/
EDUCATION**
5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso
Agenda: Continuation of March 12 agenda.

**Transportation & Transit
Finance Division/
TRANSPORTATION & TRANSIT**
500S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Bernie Liedler
Agenda: Preliminary budget considerations.

10 a.m.

**Health &
Human Services
Finance Division/
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**
10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Lee Greenfield
Agenda: Continuation of March 10 agenda.

**Subcommittee on Data Practices/
JUDICIARY**
400N State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Mary Jo McGuire
Agenda: HF1165 (Skoglund) Juvenile court

records and peace officer records on children data practice provisions modified, and money appropriated.
HF116 (Skoglund) Public assistance and housing agency data made available to law enforcement agencies.
HF583 (McGuire) Unwed mother government data access provisions modified.
HF227 (Goodno) Human Rights Department investigative data reclassification provided.
Additional bills may be added.

**Subcommittee on DWI/
JUDICIARY**
400S State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Satveer Chaudhary
Agenda: HF918 (Skoglund) DWI; electronic alcohol monitor use mandated during pretrial release and following conviction for certain driving while intoxicated violations.
HF1061 (Chaudhary) DWI; criminal penalties, minimum sentences, and administrative sanctions increased for driving while intoxicated offenders with an alcohol concentration of 0.20 or more.
HF1004 (Entenza) DWI; alcohol presence determination test requirements modified, implied consent hearing process modified, accident injury reports required, and penalties provided.
HF506 (Swenson, D.) School bus safety regulated, student school bus conduct requirements developed, accident reporting provided, and penalties provided.

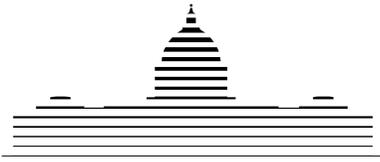
TAXES
200 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Dee Long
Agenda: Presentation by authors of property tax reform proposals.

12 Noon

**ENVIRONMENT &
NATURAL RESOURCES**
10 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Willard Munger
Agenda: HF1190 (Rest) Economic efficiency and pollution reduction act adopted, and money appropriated.

**K-12 Education Finance Division/
EDUCATION**
5 State Office Building
Chr. Rep. Becky Kelso
Agenda: Overview of governor's budget recommendations-Department of Children, Families and Learning agency budget.

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 Majority Leader: Ted Winter
 Minority Leader: Steve Sviggum

MINNESOTA INDEX

Women in politics

Women now serving in the Minnesota Legislature, of 201 seats	61
As a percentage of all members, 1997	30
Women in the Minnesota Legislature, as a percentage of all members, 1971	1
National average, women in state Legislatures, 1997	21
DFL women, current Minnesota members	39
Republican women, current Minnesota members	22
Women in the U.S. Senate, record high	9
Women in the U.S. House	51
Governors, nationwide, who are women	2
Women candidates for the Minnesota Legislature, 1996	105
Races in which two women opposed each other in the general election, 1996	15
Minnesota Districts in which women now compose the entire legislative delegation, (one senator, two representatives)	4
Number of the six statewide constitutional offices now held by a woman	3
Women elected to the Legislature prior to 1922	0
Women in state history who have served as Lieutenant Governor	3
Women who have served as governor, attorney general, or state treasurer	0
Number of the 447 county commissioner posts statewide held by women	66
School board seats statewide (of 2,593) held by women	780
Cities statewide	856
Women serving as mayors, 1995	107
City council seats statewide	3,477
Number of seats held by women, 1994	790
Women elected to represent Minnesota in Congress (Coya Knutson)	1
Women appointed to represent Minnesota in Congress (Muriel Humphrey)	1
Percentage of judges in Minnesota who are women	23
Number of Minnesota's seven Supreme Court justices who are women, 1997	3
State Supreme Courts besides Minnesota, dominated by women, 1993-1994	0
Statewide, positions on task forces, advisory councils and commissions appointed by the governor	1,597
Percent who are women	47

Source: Commission on the Economic Status of Women, Newsletter #217, December 1996/January 1997.

For more information



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