
Perspectives

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On the cover: The Senate is sworn in by Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court Kathleen A. Blatz, commencing the 82nd Legislative Session. Photo by David J. Oakes.

Editor: Karen L. Clark
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Photographs: David J. Oakes



First Assistant Secretary of the Senate Patrice Dworak introduces the new senators-elect to the Senate chamber.

Millennial Senators: The Class of 2001

by Joshua A. Dorothy

Legislative institutions thrive on new things—new ideas, new structures, new personalities. Three times every decade the Minnesota Senate regularly refreshes itself. Senators with years of service decide to retire or follow other opportunities within government. Other Senators ride the tides of the changing Minnesota political seas and are swept out of office, defeated in the primary or general election. The new Senators bring concerns gathered from the campaign trail, life stories—both their own and those of their constituents—and fresh ideas to the Senate chamber. Some come from the House chamber, mayoral offices, school boards, corporations, small businesses or the home. This year, 10 new Senators will take their seats after they are sworn in Weds., Jan. 3.

So that Perspectives readers can get a better sense of these new members, who they are, what concerns them and how they intend to represent their districts in the Minnesota Senate for the

next two years, all of the Senators-elect granted interviews in the weeks following the November election. They were asked about their backgrounds, the issues facing Minnesota in the 82nd Legislative Session and the perception of government by their constituents. The demographics of our freshman class are interesting, primarily because so much of the data occurs on a six-to-four split. Six of the Senators-elect are female. Six are of the majority party, the DFL. Four come to the Senate with House experience.

Personal data—such as age, occupation, education and family—is requested by the Publications Office; however, Senators are not required to disclose such facts. All of the Senators-elect did disclose at least some of the information. The average disclosed age of the new Senators is 46, with a range of ages from 31 to 60. Seven of the new Senators disclosed that they have college degrees, while five have done some graduate-

level work. Three of the Senators-elect have legal degrees.

The interviews all followed the same basic pattern, with nine major questions. All of them started with the question, “Why did you run for a Senate seat?” Several of the new Senators cited their previous experience in state or local government. All four members with House experience pointed to the retirements of their predecessors as crucial to the decision to run for the seat. Senator-elect Satveer Chaudhary (DFL-Fridley) also mentioned three other elements that motivated him to run for the District 52 seat being vacated by retiring Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton): with a smaller membership, Senators have greater responsibility and more of a chance to make an impact; secondly, at 31, Chaudhary said he would bring a young voice to the Senate; and finally, there are important issues that Chaudhary said he felt weren’t getting enough attention in the



Senator Michele Bachmann

House.

Referring to retiring Sen. Jerry Janezich (DFL-Chisholm) who pursued a U.S. Senate seat this year, Senator-elect David Tomassoni (DFL-Chisholm), said, "I felt we needed somebody with legislative experience to take over his job." Others, including Senators-elect Julie Sabo (DFL-Minneapolis) and Grace Schwab (R-Albert Lea), ran for a seat out of interest in a particular problem or issue. For both Sabo and Schwab, the issue was education. Sabo, a public school teacher, said, "You go into teaching because you want to make an impact on the community." She identified concerns broader than education that were becoming evident in classrooms: housing, labor and transportation. For Schwab, who spent 10 years on her local school board, the impetus to run for the Senate seat in District 27 was frustration. "My father always said if you didn't like the way something was done, you'd better be willing to do that yourself," she said.

In the case of Senator-elect Chuck Fowler (DFL-Fairmont), citizens approached him to run for the seat in a March 1999 special election after then-Sen. Tracy Beckman became state executive director of the Farm Service Agency. Fowler had previously been active on both the Fairmont City Council and with the ambulance service, spending 10 years with each. "I wasn't sure that I wanted to do it," he said. "But I thought more about it and some other people talked to me about it and I finally did decide to run. I had about three weeks to run in that special election...I didn't want to make the mistake of

doing something that I wasn't positive in my heart I wanted to do." In a field of four candidates, Fowler lost the special election by 300 votes and decided to run again in the next regularly-scheduled general election.

Three of the Republican caucus' new members, Senators-elect Michele M. Bachmann (Stillwater), Debbie J. Johnson (Ham Lake) and Mady Reiter (Shoreview), all said that they ran to represent the conservative families in their districts. "I felt strongly about the principles of the Republican party platform. It was important to me to know that the individual representing our district would be advocating those principles," Bachmann said. Johnson echoed her sentiments, "My district has changed so dramatically over the last five or six years, and I felt that there was a new Republican base that wasn't being represented." Reiter, an independent insurance agent who spent 26 years working in the rail industry, said that she observed a trend surfacing. Minnesota's economy is doing well, she said, but many of the institutions she labels as the state's "business partners" feel encumbered by red tape. As a two-term city council member, Reiter also felt that she

was familiar with the area and most of the people and issues. Her love of public service, she said, inspired her to run for the seat being vacated by retiring Sen. Linda Runbeck (R-Circle Pines).

The interviews turned next to the new Senators' campaigns. Several were able to identify specific individuals who encouraged their campaigns. Senators-elect Chaudhary and Ann Rest (DFL-New Hope) both identified the Senate Majority Leadership, including Sen. Roger D. Moe (DFL-Erskine), as a driving force that helped them launch their campaigns. Both are claiming seats held by long-time Senate DFLers: Novak and former Assistant Majority Leader Ember Junge (New Hope), who both joined the Senate in 1982.

Both Johnson and Schwab were encouraged to run by House members in their districts. Schwab credited her family for getting her politically interested and involved and Rep. Dan Dorman (R-Albert Lea) for being an inspiration in the concept of representing each and every person in the district. Johnson said that Rep. Tom Hackbarth (R-Cedar) gave her the push to start her campaign.

Reiter, meanwhile, was encouraged



Senator Mady Reiter poses for her Capitol Security ID badge.



Senator Julie Sabo (left) and a friend, Reede Webster, prepare to move Sabo into her new office in the Capitol.

by her family, especially her husband. Their daughter had given them an overnight package to the St. Paul Hotel in early February of last year, right after Runbeck had announced she was not seeking re-election and would, instead, pursue the Fourth District U.S. House seat of the late Rep. Bruce Vento (D-Minn.), who was retiring. “[My husband] told me I should look at [running], because I have lived in the area all my life and he didn’t feel there was anyone who could do it better. So, I thought about it and decided to do it,” she said. Bachmann, on the other hand, needed no push. In fact, her decision to run, she

said, was made spontaneously in the middle of a party convention. “I didn’t even know I was going to run for office when I went to our endorsing convention. It was in the midst of the convention that I made the decision to throw my hat into the ring,” she said. “I think no one was more surprised than I was that I won the endorsement.”

The Senators-elect all expressed a real joy for campaigning. In fact, most said that door-knocking was their favorite part. Sabo described door-knocking as therapeutic. “Campaigning is a roller coaster. Whenever I was feeling down, the best thing to do was go

out and door-knock,” she said. “In fact, one time I went out and door-knocked and I didn’t feel better afterwards. It turned out I had the flu.” Schwab agreed, noting that door-knocking was her favorite campaign activity because it was unpredictable. “It was the one thing you could never say what it was going to be like when you started the day,” she said. Campaigners have to be ready for whatever is behind the next door—for every issue, attitude and concern that the citizens of that district have.

Johnson, who was joined by St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman one day, called door-knocking “instant gratification.” As they were working together, she said, Johnson and Coleman observed that most people would brighten up just having a candidate listen to them and understand their concerns; whether Johnson would win was not at issue. To Senator-elect Myron Orfield (DFL-Minneapolis), whose urban district includes some of the Twin Cities’ wealthiest and poorest citizens, door-knocking was an “empirical look at the life of the city.” It is a good thing for a politician to see, he said, since it gives one the chance to truly understand people’s concerns. What a candidate hears when door-knocking, Orfield also noted, is a lot of solicited, clear advice, “which is something you might not get from an interest group.”

Fowler subscribed to the community newspapers across his district and would attend just about any activity advertised as open to the public. “It was natural for me to want to go to community events and be around where people were and get acquainted with people.” He also



Senator Satveer Chaudhary



Senator Chuck Fowler

attended about 25 parades over the course of the summer. Fowler's favorite events, however, were meeting with students and with senior citizens. "[Senior citizens] were always happy to see you come and be a part of their event. I heard several comments, 'Don't forget about us. If you're elected, don't forget about us. Come back and see us. Don't forget about us.' Those words will keep me going back," he said. The highlight for Chaudhary was at the other end of the age spectrum—students. He

enjoyed speaking to classes and "offering some exposure to what a young person can achieve if they truly dare to dream," he said.

Sabo created some of her own events as fund-raisers, which injected, she noted, a lot of fun into the campaign. Her volunteers organized a 5K "Soapbox Run" that allowed participants to share their concerns as part of the race. They also organized a cabaret show and brought back an event that had once been a regular feature in one neighborhood: a banana split breakfast. All of these events, and more like them, brought "unique, fun and new people" into the system, she said.

The Senators-elect were also asked to discuss how prepared they felt for the Senate. Specifically, the new Senators were asked about any previous experience in state or local government and how they felt it might prepare them for the Senate. Chaudhary, Orfield, Rest and Tomassoni all expressed a firm conviction that their House experience would be extremely useful to them in the Senate. Rest said that she expects to remain very active in her major area of interest, tax policy, as well as in state and local government issues and education policy. She will, in fact, be



Senator Debbie Johnson

serving as vice-chair of the E-12 Education Budget Division and as a member of the Tax Committee, the Property Tax Budget Division and the Education Committee. Chaudhary noted that his experience as a member of the House's minority caucus has provided him with a good grasp of how to get a bill passed in a tri-partisan environment. His two terms in the House will also, Chaudhary said, help him adjust to the lawmaking process as a whole. Rather than learning a system from scratch, he is already familiar with the flow of legislation.

Tomassoni noted that Senators-elect coming from a House seat already have a reputation around the Capitol. They know the system, the players, and how things get done. That kind of legislative experience, he said, "actually is exactly what is needed to move over" into the Senate. Orfield has not only 10 years in the House, but also experience as an assistant attorney general and an aide to former Minneapolis Mayor Donald M. Fraser. His House experience most of all has given him a "strong political agenda" and a working knowledge of the coalitions often needed to pass legislation. Most of all, Orfield said, he has learned from his failures in the House and has, through the course of successes and failures, developed many significant relationships with members of both chambers.

Reiter has experience at both the state and local levels. She was first elected to the Shoreview City



Human Resources Director Karen Veninga (right) discusses Senate policies with Senators-elect (from left) Debbie Johnson, Michele Bachmann and Chuck Fowler.

Photo by David J. Oakes



Senator Myron Orfield

Council in 1996 and had spent the previous four years sitting on the Minnesota Board on Aging. From the earlier experience, she said she learned how such boards interact with the Legislature and administration. However, her city council tenure brought her directly into people's lives, Reiter said. "There is nothing more rewarding than being able to solve a problem or a

challenge," she said. Fowler echoed her sentiments, and added that his decade with the Fairmont City Council strengthened his belief in representation. "Keeping in contact with people is very important" for any elected official, he said. Schwab observed that government is essentially a customer-service industry and that working on the local level, on the Albert Lea School Board, trained her in the process of identifying people's problems and finding a solution.

When the interviews turned to the next topic, few could match Sabo's pedigree. The new Senators were asked what got them interested in politics and when. As Sabo, not surprisingly, said, "I have no pre-political memory." As the daughter of Minnesota's Fifth District Congressman Martin Olav Sabo (D-Minn.), she was raised in a political household. In fact, her father had been in the Minnesota House for five years before she was born, later served as Speaker of the House and was elected to Congress when the younger Sabo was only 12. Like many of the other new Senators, Sabo volunteered with a wide range of campaigns in her youth.



Senator Mady Reiter

Bachmann also said that she could never remember not being exposed to political discussion. Her grandmother, a staunch Republican supporter, did not possess a high school education but regularly read both the Wall Street Journal and Time Magazine. Bachmann's grandmother always discussed the political issues of the day with her grandchildren, the newly elected Senator said. For Senator-



Senator-elect Satveer Chaudhary examines the camera control room in Senate Media Services.



Secretary of the Senate Patrick Flahaven reviews parliamentary procedure in the Senate chamber.

elect Myron Orfield (DFL-Minneapolis), the tides of political and social reform defined his earliest political memories. "Politics was a constant discussion around the dinner table," he said, especially since his parents and older siblings were all actively involved in the civil rights movement.

Others became politically active and interested when a certain issue touched their lives and demanded their attention. Chaudhary's first political

memory was his father's experience trying to get a job. After immigrating to the United States, the elder Chaudhary wrote to his elected officials discussing his qualifications and his job search, the Senator-elect recounted. Hubert H. Humphrey responded, saying that if Chaudhary was a qualified veterinarian, there was no reason he couldn't find work with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "Twenty-five years later," the son said, "he retired from USDA." After that experience, Senator-elect Chaudhary was inspired by a teacher to get politically involved in support of issues about which he felt strongly: wages, workplace safety and others. Since then, "I have always enjoyed helping create good public policy," Chaudhary said.

Schwab's earliest political activity was sending a telegram to President Richard M. Nixon at the end of the Watergate scandal. As a first-grader, she was vacationing with her family in Northern Minnesota when she heard news reports that Nixon was going to resign before Congress could impeach him and remove him from the White House. "I thought how awful that a president would resign from office. As a first-grader, I really didn't understand

the politics," she said. "Little did I understand the implications. I just couldn't imagine where a president would go." For Johnson, the when and the why of her first major political interest are intimately tied together. "As soon as my kids were born," she said. "All of a sudden my viewpoint got adjusted [as a parent] and I started looking at how [government] is affecting my family's life," Johnson observed.

• The interviews then turned to policy matters that the Senators-elect will face in their two-year terms. Without doubt, education will be a major issue for the Senate, they said. All 10 Senators-elect mentioned it as one of the primary issues with which the state must deal in the next two years. It is not an issue that goes away. As Debbie Johnson said, "Education is always on the table." Every Senator-elect, however, took a different view on what within the educational system needs attention. Chaudhary identified class sizes that are growing to be out-of-hand. Orfield focused on preparing the next generation for changes in the global economic environment. "Everyone that wants to get educated should just be able to do it," he said. It is in the state's interest to give Minnesota youths the skills they need to create and maintain a good standard of living, Orfield emphasized. Sabo agreed, saying that businesses need an educated workforce to grow and survive.

Fowler identified two questions that he said must be answered in order to stave off a crisis: "What is it going to take to keep high-quality teachers?"



Senator Ann Rest



Senator Julie Sabo



New Senators are greeted with a wealth of information at orientation.

What are we going to have to do to entice new ones?" he asked, noting a 40 to 50 percent four-year turnover rate. Fowler also said that he talked with an administrator at Minnesota State University-Mankato who told the Senator-elect that the university could not fill its education courses; not enough students were interested in teaching.

Bachmann said that her goal is "returning academic excellence to Minnesota schools," and targeted the Profile of Learning as an issue of contention between the people of Minnesota and some bureaucratic departments. While she said she doesn't want to polarize the two groups, "the bureaucracy needs to bend an ear and listen to what parents, students and teachers have to say about the Profile."

Tomassoni tackled education on a regional level. Rural Minnesota is facing declining enrollments, he said, and the entire state must determine how to handle and fund the rural schools. Also, Tomassoni said, the Senate must examine what impacts such declining enrollment and any actions taken to help Greater Minnesota will have on the communities, children and teachers involved.

Taxes were a close second to education on the new Senators' lists. Eight of the 10 mentioned taxes and tax

reform in one form or another. Four, including Chaudhary, singled out property taxes. Because market rates for homes are rising so steeply, he said, this issue is becoming increasingly important to Minnesotans. Fowler—also among the four, who were rounded out by Bachmann and Johnson—was not alone in tying property taxes to education since Gov. Jesse Ventura has proposed de-linking property taxes and education funding. Three others—Bachmann, Johnson and Schwab—discussed eliminating the so-called "sick tax."

Bachmann, Johnson and Tomassoni all consider energy and utilities deregulation an attention-grabbing issue for this session. Other issues mentioned included health care and prescription medicines for senior citizens, transportation, economic growth, metropolitan growth, agricultural prices, housing, the impact of state

government on local agencies, crime prevention and personal or recreational activities including professional sports, fishing and hunting.

After discussing issues that are of statewide importance, the Senators-elect were asked about those issues which are of prime importance to the voters in their individual districts. Not surprisingly, many of these issues mirrored those mentioned in the previous answers. However, the new Senators also included the more specific viewpoints that their constituents have on the issues. While everyone agreed that education was an issue of major concern, for example, Johnson made it clear that her supporters in District 50, which includes most of northern Anoka County, want to see the Profile of Learning eliminated. Chaudhary, on the other hand, highlighted the need to reduce class sizes.

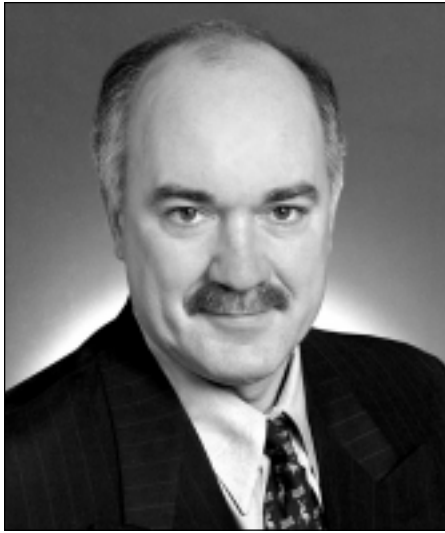
Transportation was another issue of great local concern. Orfield, Rest, Sabo and Tomassoni all said that their constituents value a good transportation system in general. Bachmann, Johnson and Reiter, however, said that funding needs to be diverted from light-rail transit projects. Reiter's constituents, she said, are upset that roads are not being expanded in favor of light-rail development. Six of the new Senators said that their constituents want evidence that government is working for them. Some, like Fowler, stressed contact between elected officials and voters while others placed slightly more focus on efficient government, or as Orfield phrased it, a higher quality and

quantity of services with lower taxes.

It was that relationship between government and citizens that framed the next question. The Senators-elect were asked how they felt Minnesotans perceived government and elected officials, especially at the state level. Overall, most of the new Senators said that they observed some discomfort with government among their con-



Senator Grace Schwab



Senator David Tomassoni

stituents. “I don’t know that anybody has a good perception of politicians,” said Tomassoni. However, he and the others did emphasize that Minnesota’s residents expect government to have a positive role in their lives. “My constituents want government to be responsive to them. I think they want people in elected office to rise above partisanship,” said Rest. “Above all they want politicians to be public servants.”

In Sabo’s Minneapolis district, however, there is a strong sense “that there are roles for government in terms of what is done more effectively in a collective manner.” She said that “there is strong support for those roles for government. They see the connection between government and their community.” As Reiter noted, people realize that government does some things very well—including crime prevention, public safety and emergency management—but in more “private” areas, Reiter’s constituents want less “encroachment.” Bachmann echoed these sentiments, saying that her constituents perceive government as being too large, over-regulating their lives and costing too much for the services it provides.

Johnson’s constituents consider the state government to be slow and ineffective, she said. The current tripartisan nature doesn’t help bring issues to a quick resolution, the Senator-elect added. However, to Fowler, the election of a third-party governor was a signal that citizens are concerned about government and whether officials were addressing the issues important to voters. “Overall there is a general feeling of mistrust and of Legislators not doing

what the general population feel is needed in their districts,” he said. Highlighting the strong voter turnout for another third-party candidate in his district, Orfield also acknowledged that some issues were not being addressed by the two major parties. Since 11 percent of his constituents cast ballots for Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader, Orfield identified a group of “disillusioned progressives” who need to be reassured that Legislators will fight for their issues.

The 10 new Senators went on to suggest ways to resolve any negative feelings that Minnesotans might have about how the state is governed. Primarily, they focused on creating or promoting what Schwab called the customer service side of government. However, Tomassoni warned, citizens can easily come to think of public servants as miracle workers. Thus, Legislators should focus on keeping their constituents informed, but not necessarily making promises to solve all of the state’s problems. “Some things that they would like you to do are simply beyond your control,” he said. Both Orfield and Chaudhary stressed the need for elected officials to create results that have a real impact on citizens’ lives. “It is incumbent on us to go the extra mile in making sure we are making Minnesota government better and doing the utmost to that end,” said Chaudhary. Orfield emphasized that politicians need to concentrate on making a difference, not getting a headline or fulfilling an individual, partisan or special-interest political agenda.

As the interviews concluded, the Senators commented on those features of Minnesota that inspire the most pride in them. For some, the people are the state’s shining stars. “I really think that Minnesota is unique in that it hasn’t been hijacked by cynicism. I think it is a place where we still believe in excelling and working together to get to a better place, and that we can always improve, we can always work. We do have the ability and the power to define our future,” Sabo said. Reiter said, “By and large we just have wonderful people in the state of Minnesota.” Bachmann characterized Minnesotans as people who firmly believe in supporting each other. “If there is one thing that I have learned over the last seven months, we are very hard-working. We’re hard-

working people who love our children and we are willing to do right by them and also by our fellow man. [There is a] strong work ethic, and we’re a very compassionate people. One thing that surprised me is how willing people are to pay taxes. They are willing to do that, especially if it is to care for others and to educate their children,” she said. “They are willing to spend [money], but only if it is spent well,” Bachmann added.

Orfield called Minnesotans a very free-thinking people who try to tackle the difficult issues of society. They are people, he said, who want to make a difference in health care, wetlands and other sensitive issues. The Senator-elect believes that Minnesotans have an inherent ability to lead the nation in resolving important issues—like education, the environment, land use and crime policy—and thus create a better community for themselves. Tomassoni said that Minnesota is what most states strive to be. There is a high quality of life, good schools, safe communities, good health care. “If you get past the mosquitoes and the snow, Minnesota is as good a place as any other, if not better,” he said.

For Johnson, winter is a cleansing agent for Minnesotans. “It keeps us wholesome and hearty,” she said. Johnson also said Minnesotans are good stewards of their environmental resources. Schwab said that she, as an “avid fisherman,” loves the natural resources. Minnesotans are unique in the nation, she said, because community members help each other and work for the greater good. Thus, Minnesota has strong commitments to education, children and senior citizens, Schwab said. According to Rest, those commitments have helped the state lead the way in good schools and a progressive tax policy. While there are still issues to be addressed, she said, Minnesota does a good job addressing its goals.

To Chaudhary, not only do Minnesotans address their goals, they also fairly and conscientiously select their representatives and policy makers. “Despite the so-called ‘punditry’ that predicted that a ‘Satveer Chaudhary’ could never be elected by the people of Fridley, New Brighton, and Columbia Heights, those people judged me by the content of my character, not the number of characters in my name,” he said. “I owe my community a lot for that.”

Restructuring



Minority Leader Sen. Dick Day (left) and Majority Leader Sen. Roger Moe confer on the Senate floor.

by **Karen L. Clark**

In the spirit of new beginnings, one of the first orders of business after the November election was the development of a new committee structure for the Minnesota Senate. An organizing committee was appointed to work out the details of the new structure.

The committee process is often called the heart of the legislative process, so it is extremely important the number, type and jurisdictions of the committees function in the most efficient and effective manner possible. To that end, the organizing committee set about developing a committee structure to best serve the people of Minnesota.

Four years ago, the Senate experimented with a more horizontal committee structure to allow more members to participate in the budget setting process. As a result, the Senate named 13 policy committees, 10 budget divisions, 3 finance committees and a committee on taxes. The policy committees referred bills with budgetary implications to

associated budget divisions that develop omnibus spending bills. The omnibus bills were again reviewed by policy committees before being referred to one of the finance committees or the tax panel. A number of members, while referring to the structure as “a noble experiment,” felt that the organization of the committees was not the most efficient nor the most effective way to manage the flow of legislation.

As a result, the organizational committee charged with developing the committee structure for the 2001 Legislative Session made a number of significant changes to encourage the more efficient flow of legislation and to reflect the changing subject matter of bills before the Legislature.

The new structure provides for a total of 11 policy committees, 8 tax and finance budget divisions and a tax committee, a finance committee, a capital investment committee and an education committee.

Under the structure endorsed for the 2001 session, the bills developed by the E-12 Education Budget Division and

the Higher Education Budget Division will be sent to the Education Committee. Bills developed in four other budget divisions—environment and agriculture; health, human services and corrections; state government and economic development; and transportation and public safety—will be directed to the Finance Committee. Tax bills, developed by the Income and Sales Tax Budget Division and the Property Tax Budget Division are directed to the full Tax Committee.

In addition to revamping the process for budget and tax bills, the organizing committee also created, for the first time, a Capital Investment Committee. The panel has jurisdiction over all bills appropriating money for the acquisition and betterment of public lands and buildings and other public improvements of a capital nature, whether from the proceeds of state general obligation bonds or from the general fund or another operating fund. The new committee, then, allows for extensive review of all bonding bills.

Continued on page 17

Senate Committee Roster 2001

Agriculture, General Legislation and Veterans Affairs Committee

Chair: Murphy **Vice Chair:** Ring
Office: 306 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-7405
Meets: Weds., Fri., 9 a.m. - 12 noon, 107 Capitol
Members: 12

Berg	Johnson, D.E.	Sams
Dille	Lesewski	Scheevel
Fowler	Lourey	Vickerman
Fischbach		

Capital Investment Committee

Chair: Langseth **Vice Chair:** Wiger
Office: 122 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-9612
Meets: Tues., Thurs., 1 - 3:45 p.m., 123 Capitol
Members: 13

Bachmann	Johnson, Douglas	Price
Berglin	Kierlin	Samuelson
Cohen	Kiscaden	Wiener
Dille	Larson	

Commerce Committee

Chair: Solon **Vice Chair:** Scheid
Office: 303 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-5776
Meets: Weds., Fri., 9 a.m. - 12 noon, 112 Capitol
Members: 14

Belanger	Lessard	Pappas
Hottinger	Marty	Reiter
Kierlin	Metzen	Samuelson
Larson	Oliver	Wiener

Crime Prevention Committee

Chair: Ranum **Vice Chair:** Foley
Office: 120 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-4842
Meets: Weds., Fri., 9 a.m. - 12 noon, 15 Capitol
Members: 12

Berglin	Kleis	Olson
Betzold	Krentz	Neuville
Chaudhary	Limmer	Schwab
Kelly, R.C.		

Education Committee

Chair: Pappas **Vice Chair:** Lourey
Office: 120 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-1802
Meets: Mon., Weds., 1 - 3:45 p.m., 123 Capitol
Members: 35

Bachmann	Langseth	Robling
Chaudhary	Larson	Sabo
Cohen	Lesewski	Scheevel
Fowler	Limmer	Scheid
Johnson, Debbie	Murphy	Schwab
Kelley, S.P.	Olson	Solon
Kierlin	Pogemiller	Stumpf
Kinkel	Price	Terwilliger
Kleis	Ranum	Tomassoni
Knutson	Rest	Wiener
Krentz	Robertson	Wiger

E-12 Education Budget Division

Chair: Stumpf **Vice Chair:** Rest
Office: G-24 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-8660
Meets: Mon., Weds., 1 - 3: 45 p.m. Room 112 Capitol
Members: 18

Bachmann	Lourey	Sabo
Chaudhary	Olson	Scheevel
Johnson, Debbie	Pappas	Schwab
Krentz	Ranum	Tomassoni
Knutson	Robertson	Wiger
Langseth		

Higher Education Budget Division

Chair: Wiener **Vice Chair:** Kinkel
Office: 303 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 297-8073
Meets: Mon., Weds., 1 - 3:45 p.m., Room 107 Capitol
Members: 17

Cohen	Larson	Price
Fowler	Lesewski	Robling
Kelley, S.P.	Limmer	Scheid
Kierlin	Murphy	Solon
Kleis	Pogemiller	Terwilliger

Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Chair: Krentz **Vice Chair:** Tomassoni
Office: 111 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-1113
Meets: Tues., Thurs., 9 a.m. - 12 noon, 107 Capitol
Members: 18

Anderson	Knutson	Price
Berg	Lessard	Ring
Dille	Olson	Stevens
Frederickson	Pariseau	Stumpf
Higgins	Pogemiller	Vickerman
Kinkel		

Finance Committee

Chair: Johnson, Douglas **Vice Chair:** Johnson, D.H.
Office: 205 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-8881
Meets: Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., 4 - 7 p.m., 123 Capitol
Members: 37

Anderson	Kleis	Ring
Berg	Knutson	Robertson
Berglin	Krentz	Robling
Chaudhary	Langseth	Sabo
Cohen	Larson	Sams
Day	Lourey	Solon
Dille	Metzen	Stevens
Frederickson	Neuville	Terwilliger
Higgins	Ourada	Vickerman
Johnson, D.E.	Pariseau	Wiener
Kelly, R.C.	Price	Wiger
Kiscaden	Ranum	

Environment and Agriculture Budget Division

Chair: Price **Vice Chair:** Rest
Office: 235 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-4167
Meets: Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., 4 - 7 p.m., 125 Capitol
Members: 10

Berg	Higgins	Pariseau
Dille	Johnson, Douglas	Ring
Frederickson	Krentz	Wiger

Health, Human Services and Corrections Budget Division

Chair: Berglin **Vice Chair:** Rest
Office: 309 Capitol **Phone:** (651) 296-4151
Meets: Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., 4 - 7 p.m., Room 123 Capitol
Members: 8

Kiscaden	Sams
Lourey	Stevens
Neuville	Wiener
Ranum	

State Government, Economic Development and the Judiciary**Budget Division****Chair:** Cohen**Office:** 317 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-5308**Meets:** Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., 4 - 7 p.m., 107 Capitol**Members:** 10

Anderson	Knutson	Robertson
Johnson, D.H.	Larson	Solon
Kleis	Metzen	Vickerman

Transportation and Public Safety Budget Division**Chair:** Johnson, D.E.**Office:** 124 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-1738**Meets:** Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., 4 - 7 p.m., Room 112 Capitol**Members:** 9

Chaudhary	Ourada
Day	Robling
Kelly, R.C.	Sabo
Langseth	Terwilliger

Health and Family Security Committee**Chair:** Sams**Vice Chair:** Higgins**Office:** 328 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-1323**Meets:** Mon., Weds., 1 - 3:45 p.m., 15 Capitol**Members:** 11

Berglin	Hottinger	Pariseau
Fischbach	Kiscaden	Ring
Foley	Lourey	Stevens

Jobs, Housing and Community Development Committee**Chair:** Anderson**Vice Chair:** Sabo**Office:** 120 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-1767**Meets:** Weds., Fri., 9 a.m. - 12 noon, 123 Capitol**Members:** 14

Bachmann	Johnson, Debbie	Orfield
Frederickson	Johnson, Douglas	Robertson
Higgins	Knutson	Terwilliger
Johnson, D.H.	Moe, R.D.	Wiger

Judiciary Committee**Chair:** Marty**Vice Chair:** Foley**Office:** 325 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-5712**Meets:** Tues., Thurs., 9 a.m. - 12 noon, 15 Capitol**Members:** 10

Betzold	Limmer
Cohen	Neuville
Fischbach	Orfield
Kiscaden	Ranum

Rules and Administration Committee**Chair:** Moe, R.D.**Vice Chair:** Hottinger**Office:** 208 Capitol**Phone:** 296-2577**Meets:** On call (Mon., 8 a.m. - 12 noon; Fri., 1 - 3:45 p.m.), 107 Capitol**Members:** 23

Belanger	Johnson, Douglas	Pariseau
Berg	Langseth	Pogemiller
Berglin	Larson	Ranum
Cohen	Marty	Samuelson
Day	Metzen	Solon
Frederickson	Olson	Stumpf
Johnson, D.E.	Pappas	Vickerman

State and Local Government Operations Committee**Chair:** Vickerman**Vice Chair:** Orfield**Office:** 226 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-4150**Meets:** Tues., Thurs., 1 - 3:45 p.m., 107 Capitol**Members:** 13

Betzold	Reiter	Solon
Day	Rest	Stevens
Fowler	Robertson	Stumpf
Pogemiller	Robling	

Tax Committee**Chair:** Pogemiller**Vice Chair:** Fowler**Office:** 235 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-7809**Meets:** Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., 4 - 7 p.m., 15 Capitol**Members:** 30

Bachmann	Lesewski	Pappas
Belanger	Lessard	Reiter
Betzold	Limmer	Rest
Fischbach	Marty	Samuelson
Foley	Moe, R.D.	Scheevel
Hottinger	Murphy	Scheid
Johnson, Debbie	Oliver	Schwab
Kelley, S.P.	Olson	Stumpf
Kierlin	Orfield	Tomassoni
Kinkel		

Income and Sales Tax Budget Division**Chair:** Betzold**Office:** G-9 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-4147**Meets:** Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., 4 - 7 p.m., Room 318 Capitol**Members:** 13

Fowler	Lessard	Orfield
Fischbach	Limmer	Reiter
Kierlin	Marty	Schwab
Kinkel	Murphy	Tomassoni

Property Tax Budget Division**Chair:** Samuelson**Office:** 120 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-4875**Meets:** Mon., Tues., Weds., Thurs., 4 - 7 p.m., Room 15 Capitol**Members:** 17

Bachmann	Lesewski	Pogemiller
Belanger	Moe, R.D.	Rest
Foley	Oliver	Scheevel
Hottinger	Olson	Scheid
Johnson, Debbie	Pappas	Stumpf
Kelley, S.P.		

Telecommunications, Energy and Utilities Committee**Chair:** Metzen**Vice Chair:** Kelley, S.P.**Office:** 322 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-4175**Meets:** Tues., Thurs., 1 - 3:45 p.m., 15 Capitol**Members:** 16

Anderson	Lesewski	Pariseau
Frederickson	Lessard	Sams
Johnson, D.H.	Marty	Scheevel
Kelly, R.C.	Oliver	Tomassoni
Kinkel	Ourada	

Transportation Committee**Chair:** Kelly, R.C.**Vice Chair:** Chaudhary**Office:** 323 Capitol**Phone:** (651) 296-5285**Meets:** Tues., Thurs., 9 a.m. - 12 noon, 112 Capitol**Members:** 18

Belanger	Metzen	Robling
Day	Murphy	Sabo
Johnson, D.H.	Ourada	Samuelson
Johnson, D.E.	Pappas	Schwab
Johnson, Debbie	Reiter	Terwilliger
Langseth		

Budget Surplus, Tax Reform, Energy Top Legislative Agenda

by Sen. Roger D. Moe
Majority Leader



This is a remarkable time in the Minnesota Senate. Due to the first-ever rotation of committee chairs, we are going through a great deal of organizational change in virtually every area of state budgeting and policy. A sense of uncertainty exists for people who closely follow the legislative process year in and year out.

These changes come at a time when the Legislature will be dealing with many immediate concerns, as well as some complex, long-term issues. In preparing for the fiscal year 2002-03 biennial budget, the public and many interest groups have extremely high expectations. At the same time, deepening concerns about the strength of the national economy could dampen hopes.

Beyond the usual, substantial demands surrounding the two-year budget cycle, the Legislature is likely to grapple with emerging issues related to transportation and transit, tax reform and school financing, and meeting energy needs. With the 10-year federal

census behind us, we will be drawing new political boundaries in redistricting.

On all of the issues confronting state lawmakers, it is my hope that those of us involved in tri-partisan power-sharing will continue to work together, as we did in the past two years, carving out a middle ground that serves the best interests of all Minnesotans.

Taking a Cautious Approach to the Projected Surplus

We should be hopeful that the state economy will remain very good, and continue running stronger than the nation's overall performance. However, we should be prepared for the increasing possibility that the state economy could suffer a slowdown.

Based on the extremely optimistic approach taken by the State of Minnesota's economic consultant, the November budget forecast indicates that the state surplus could reach \$924 million by the end of the current fiscal year on June 30, 2001.

The consultant, Data Resources Inc.

(DRI), predicts a strong state economy for the next three years, so the surplus is projected to grow another \$2 billion during the next two-year budget period, from mid-2001 to mid-2003.

It is important to understand that the latest projected surplus is not considered similar to other recent budget surpluses. In the earlier instances, one-time events such as the tobacco settlement and the windfall triggered by changes in federal capital gains tax law were given credit for the favorable impact on the state's finances.

Rebates were a fiscally responsible approach to distributing the one-time revenues available. Permanent tax cuts or new spending programs were not an option. However, the DRI forecast this time indicates that the surplus now accumulating is a reflection of the rosy overall outlook. Unlike the past, our options regarding the surplus are open.

Given the additional economic uncertainty since the November forecast

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Surplus Will Drive Senate Republican Agenda

by Sen. Dick Day
Minority Leader

The elephant in the room as we head into the 2001 Legislative Session is another huge budget surplus and anticipated excess revenues totaling more than \$2 billion in the next couple of years. Senate Republicans believe this level of overtaxation of Minnesotans is inexcusable and a clear indication that we need to take another look at the way we tax and spend. Democrats have already talked of using this windfall on new and expanded programs. Republicans, on the other hand, will vigorously support a rebate of the nearly \$1 billion available in June 2001 along with significant across the board tax cuts.

Otherwise, the message from the voters in the November election seems to be that they are relatively satisfied with the status quo in state government, and they gave elected officials no mandate for major change. Senate Republicans, nevertheless, will strive as always to find the most effective and efficient means to accomplish our goals, with state government sometimes as a provider, sometimes as a partner, and

sometimes just getting out of the way.

Our first order of business will be to establish an acceptable "price of government." At the beginning of each biennial budget session, Legislators are required by law to agree on a maximum percent of total state personal income that is consumed by government. Republicans will attempt to reduce this percentage again for our 2002-2003 budget. This cap on total state and local revenue helps ensure that we bring discipline to the budgeting process.

The most prominent tax issue this session will be the governor's proposal to reform our property tax system to enable the state to take on the bulk of education costs from local governments. The proposal creates an \$880 million hole in the budget which Gov. Ventura contemplates filling with a reduced but expanded sales tax. The proposal deserves a thorough discussion but is not without controversy. If we adopt the governor's plan, we will have a limited ability to cut other taxes—income, sales and the so-called "sick tax," the tax on healthcare

providers.

Minnesotans did ask us to address two needs: affordable prescription drugs and privacy protections. We will again offer our Fair Medicare Act, which will reduce the cost of prescription drugs for up to 500,000 seniors. And we will propose restrictions on the sale by the state of personal data for commercial purposes. It is likely as well that we will have further discussions of "opt in" and "opt out," whereby the consumer can make personal data available to vendors that he chooses.

We typically spend the lion's share of the state budget in two areas: education, both K-12 and higher ed, and for social services for the poor, elderly and disabled. I am also hopeful that we will dedicate a significant amount to our serious transportation needs and believe that we should allot 50 percent of the motor vehicle excise tax for this purpose.

How to provide and fund the

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Majority Preview

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was announced, it is my hope that we will refrain from making any promises until we get the February forecast which will help determine the size of the final biennial budget balance, and become the basis for the next two-year budget.

Until then, the public should be given the opportunity to discuss the various options available. Sending out another rebate check is only one of the several options available.

As we move forward with the biennial budget process, I am confident that the three-way power-sharing arrangement will continue yielding the right mix of tax reductions and essential investments. Based on the judgment of the voters in November, Minnesotans apparently agree that we have taken a prudent approach to the budget.

Tax and School Finance Reform

Beyond the immediate concerns of the biennial budget process and the current surplus, the Legislature will be grappling with the governor's "Big Plan" regarding property tax reform and state financing of K-12 education.

Although we do not yet know specific details of the proposal, we are aware that the governor would like to eliminate local property tax obligations for the funding of core education. In recent years, the Legislature already has steadily reduced the local portion of school funding.

When the state embarks on highly complex policy and budget reform, the goals cannot be achieved overnight. There is nothing wrong with taking an incremental approach. In fact, it is necessary in order to achieve fundamental reform.

Gov. Ventura has already done a service to the state by advancing the discussion on the need for school finance and tax reform. The Legislature should be willing to work with the administration to further shape and refine the ideas brought forward in the "Big Plan."

Meeting Energy Needs

In much the same way as the state surplus and budget process have both immediate and complicated long-term considerations, so does Minnesota's energy policy.

In the near term, we will need to address problems caused by the bitterly cold weather and steeply rising energy costs. The Legislature is likely to consider providing home heating assistance for families caught in a bind, as well as encouraging weatherization to reduce the burden of future energy costs.

In the long run, Minnesota will have to confront the realities of federal utility deregulation. Our state could face potential electricity shortages and volatile energy prices much like the problems already encountered in California if we don't start planning for future needs.

The planning and transition to greater energy capacity that includes alternative energy options will take several years to complete. If we continue to say to ourselves that "everything is going along just fine," we are likely to get in a difficult bind that will take a long time and considerable effort to correct.

Improving Our Transportation System

Another potential threat to Minnesota's quality of life is the gradual decline of our transportation system. Our state commitment to transportation needs has eroded over time, and the results are becoming more readily apparent every year.

Congestion in the Twin Cities area is steadily increasing, and the region is falling further behind other major metropolitan areas that have successfully implemented overall, coordinated multi-modal transportation systems. Throughout the state, we have not kept up with necessary improvements and basic maintenance of the road and bridge system due to ever-increasing pressures.

Confronting the deficiencies in the state transportation system is a massive undertaking that cannot be accomplished in a day or a year. If we hope to get a handle on this problem, we have to get on with it starting in 2001.

Conclusion

Along with the emerging issues discussed above, the Legislature will be dealing with a long list of ongoing concerns in the areas of crime prevention, protecting our natural resources, and "bread and butter" issues such as the needs of early childhood, K-12 and higher education, health care for seniors and the disabled, raising the minimum

wage, workforce development and affordable housing. Once again, our plate is full.

Minority Preview

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quality education that Minnesotans expect for their children is always a top concern for Legislators. State aid to schools totals \$8.3 billion, fully one-third of our current budget, and the state is already committed to an increase of \$527 million, 6.4%, for the next biennium. In the 2001 Legislative Session we will be looking also for solutions for school districts with declining enrollments and attempting to resolve funding inequities between districts.

We modified the Profile of Learning last year to allow local flexibility, but many parents, teachers and school boards remain unhappy with the content and implementation of the Profile. Efforts will be made this session to further refine the Profile in keeping with our belief in high standards for our students.

Beyond these nuts and bolts issues, I expect that we will again address the problem of a stadium and of a state-run casino. Minnesotans undoubtedly believe that they have spoken on this subject when they resoundingly rejected public funding of a stadium. However, certain interests who believe sports are an important part of a desirable entertainment mix in the Twin Cities are already calling on Legislators to make their case. Proceeds from a state-run casino might become attractive as a source of revenue, not only for a stadium, but for other important programs.

Other issues will come before us, including fine-tuning the state's welfare program, electric utility deregulation, labeling for genetically engineered products, telecommunications reform, joint and several liability law, and felony DWIs. Senate Republicans look forward to the challenges of the upcoming legislative session as we search for innovative, cost-effective methods to provide essential government services. I hope all Minnesotans will take the time to contact their Legislators to ask questions, request information, or express opinions. Your participation is vital to our work.



The chairs of the major tax and appropriations committees: (clockwise from top left), Lawrence Pogemiller, Taxes; Sandra Pappas, Education; Keith Langseth, Capital Investment; Douglas Johnson, Finance.



Restructuring

Continued from page 11

The new committee structure also reflects the changing times with a new policy committee devoted to the technology explosion in the telecommunications, energy and utilities industries. The committee charged with considering agricultural issues has been expanded to include general legislation and veterans affairs under its purview. There is also emphasis on the emerging issues relating to affordable housing with the new Jobs, Housing and Community Development Committee. The operations of state government and issues

relating to local government have been combined under the jurisdiction of the State and Local Government Operations Committee.

Another significant change in the committee structure is evident in the addition of two prominent subcommittees under the jurisdiction of the Rules and Administration Committee—the Subcommittee on Elections and the Subcommittee on Redistricting. One of the major issues confronting the Legislature this year is the redrawing of Senate and House election district lines to reflect shifts in population detailed in the federal census that took place in the year 2000. The subcommittee is charged

with developing the Senate plan for redistricting that will be used in the 2002 general election.

Two additional budget divisions, the Income and Sales Tax Budget Division and the Property Tax Budget Division, indicate additional emphasis on the examination of revenue raising issues. The full Tax Committee will review the final products of the two budget divisions in order to develop the tax portion of the state budget.

The Legislature adopted the new committee structure on the first day of the legislative session and set the stage to begin work on the bills and issues that will define the 2001-2002 biennium.

Minnesota Senate 2001

Party	Phone	Name	Room	District	Party	Phone	Name	Room	District
DFL	296-5537	Ellen R. Anderson	120 Cap.	66	DFL	296-5645	John Marty	325 Cap.	54
R	296-4351	Michele M. Bachmann	125 SOB	56	DFL	296-4370	James P. Metzen	322 Cap.	39
R	296-5975	William V. Belanger, Jr.	113 SOB	41	DFL	296-2577	Roger D. Moe	208 Cap.	2
R	296-5094	Charles A. Berg	25 SOB	13	DFL	296-4264	Steve Murphy	306 Cap.	29
DFL	296-4261	Linda Berglin	309 Cap.	61	R	296-1279	Thomas M. Neuville	123 SOB	25
DFL	296-2556	Don Betzold	G-9 Cap.	48	R	296-4837	Edward C. Oliver	117 SOB	43
DFL	296-4334	Satveer Chaudhary	325 Cap.	52	R	296-1282	Gen Olson	119 SOB	34
DFL	296-5931	Richard J. Cohen	317 Cap.	64	DFL	296-4191	Myron Orfield	227 Cap.	60
R	296-9457	Dick Day	147 SOB	28	R	296-5981	Mark Ourada	145 SOB	19
R	296-4131	Steve Dille	103 SOB	20	DFL	296-1802	Sandra L. Pappas	120 Cap.	65
R	296-2084	Michelle L. Fischbach	15 SOB	14	R	296-5252	Pat Pariseau	109 SOB	37
DFL	296-4154	Leo T. Foley	G-24 Cap.	49	DFL	296-7809	Lawrence J. Pogemiller	235 Cap.	59
DFL	296-5713	Chuck Fowler	G-9 Cap.	26	DFL	297-8060	Leonard R. Price	235 Cap.	57
R	296-8138	Dennis R. Frederickson	139 SOB	23	DFL	297-8061	Jane B. Ranum	120 Cap.	63
DFL	296-9246	Linda Higgins	328 Cap.	58	R	296-1253	Mady Reiter	132D SOB	53
DFL	296-6153	John C. Hottinger	205 Cap.	24	DFL	296-2889	Ann H. Rest	G-24 Cap.	46
DFL	296-9261	David H. Johnson	124 Cap.	40	DFL	296-5419	Twyla L. Ring	306 Cap.	18
DFL	296-3826	Dean E. Johnson	124B Cap.	15	R	296-4314	Martha R. Robertson	141 SOB	45
R	296-3219	Debbie J. Johnson	149 SOB	50	R	296-4123	Claire A. Robling	143 SOB	35
DFL	296-8881	Douglas J. Johnson	205 Cap.	6	DFL	296-4274	Julie A. Sabo	317 Cap.	62
DFL	297-8065	Steve Kelley	321 Cap.	44	DFL	297-8063	Dallas C. Sams	328 Cap.	11
DFL	296-5285	Randy C. Kelly	323 Cap.	67	DFL	296-4875	Don Samuelson	120 Cap.	12
R	296-5649	Bob Kierlin	127 SOB	32	R	296-3903	Kenric J. Scheevel	129 SOB	31
DFL	296-4913	Anthony G. "Tony" Kinkel	G-9 Cap.	4	DFL	296-8869	Linda Scheid	303 Cap.	47
R	296-4848	Sheila M. Kiscaden	135 SOB	30	R	296-9248	Grace S. Schwab	151 SOB	27
R	296-6455	Dave Kleis	107 SOB	16	DFL	296-4188	Sam G. Solon	303 Cap.	7
R	296-4120	David L. Knutson	133 SOB	36	R	296-8075	Dan Stevens	105 SOB	17
DFL	296-7061	Jane Krentz	111 Cap.	51	DFL	296-8660	LeRoy A. Stumpf	G-24 Cap.	1
DFL	296-3205	Keith Langseth	122 Cap.	9	R	296-6238	Roy Terwilliger	115 SOB	42
R	296-5655	Cal Larson	153 SOB	10	DFL	296-8017	David J. Tomassoni	111 Cap.	5
R	296-4125	Arlene J. Lesewski	131 SOB	21	DFL	296-5650	Jim Vickerman	226 Cap.	22
IND	296-4136	Bob Lessard	G-51 SOB	3	DFL	297-8073	Deanna L. Wiener	303 Cap.	38
R	296-2159	Warren Limmer	155 SOB	33	DFL	296-6820	Charles W. Wiger	301 Cap.	55
DFL	296-0293	Becky Lourey	G-9 Cap.	8					

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