
Briefly

The Minnesota Senate Week in Review

March 14, 1997

Brief floorsession held

Senators gathered for a floor session Mon., Mar. 10, and cleared several items from the Senate Calendar, the Consent Calendar and General Orders. Members also granted concurrence and repassage to one bill.

S.F. 202, authored by Sen. David Ten Eyck (DFL-East Gull Lake), validates certain conveyances by religious corporations, requires published notice of dispositions of certain real property in a marriage dissolution action, regulates property held in revocable trusts upon the dissolution of marriages and regulates specific devises and distributions of property under the Uniform Probate Code. The bill was given concurrence and repassage on a 61-0 roll call vote.

Nine bills were granted final passage on the Senate Calendar. S.F. 145, authored by Sen. Linda Runbeck (R-Circle Pines), makes technical and administrative changes to laws relating to reemployment insurance and provides for civil and criminal penalties. S.F. 128, carried by Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora), modifies provisions that prohibit hunter, trapper and angler harassment. S.F. 424, sponsored by Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul), provides for the certification of eligibility for a position under county rules. S.F. 78, authored by Sen. John Marty (DFL-Roseville), changes some provisions concerning absentee ballots. S.F. 85, carried by Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul), provides for payment of claims against the state. S.F. 302, sponsored by Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls.), allows certain community health clinics to offer health care services on a prepaid basis. S.F. 129, authored by Sen. Martha Robertson (R-Minnetonka), provides for Under-21 Minnesota identification cards. S.F. 96, carried by Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley), changes certain rulemaking requirements relating to public safety. S.F. 700, authored by Sen. Cal Larson (R-Fergus Falls), provides that the offices of mayor of a statutory city and fire chief of an independent nonprofit firefighting corporation are not incompatible under specific circumstances.

One bill on the Consent Calendar also gained final passage. S.F. 463, carried by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), allows the St. Paul Education Center and Teacher Training Institute to rent out portions of the building during evenings and weekends to offset the costs of operations.

Nine additional bills were given prelimi-

nary passage on General Orders. S.F. 368, carried by Sen. Ember Junge (DFL-New Hope), provides immunity from civil liability for persons who preside at alternative dispute resolution proceedings. S.F. 624, also sponsored by Junge, modernizing and standardizing the law regulating professional business organizations. S.F. 417, sponsored by Sen. Roger D. Moe (DFL-Erskine), authorizes and economic development authority in Becker County. S.F. 504, carried by Sen. Bob Lessard (DFL-Int'l. Falls), permits the city of Nashwauk to own and operate a gas utility. S.F. 124, carried by Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy), authorizes towns to charge and collect certain service charges. S.F. 641, sponsored by Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls.), requires a peer of the treating mental health or substance abuse provider to review a utilization review organization's determination not to certify a mental health or substance abuse service. S.F. 745, authored by Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato), allows certain towns and cities to transfer their local board of review duties and responsibilities to the county. S.F. 221, carried by Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples), changes the appointment authority for the executive director of the Board of Private Detective and Protective Agents. S.F. 305, sponsored by Sen. Jane Krentz (DFL-May Township), modifies and clarifies provisions governing lawsuits by prison inmates.

Primary by mail rejected

By a margin of 4 votes, the Senate rejected a proposal Thurs., Mar. 13, allowing presidential primary voting by mail.

Sen. Douglas Johnson (DFL-Tower), sponsor of S.F. 80, said the current caucus system is an "unfair and archaic way of electing" the President of the United States. He said it's time for Minnesota "to give up a system that allows parties to dictate who we elect." Johnson offered an amendment making a voter's primary party choice private information. Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins) opposed the amendment, saying "a party is made up of people who participate in party activities, not just people who vote on a single day." He added that voters "ought to be willing to own up to which party they belong to." Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls.) also opposed the amendment and commented on the exclusion of independent voters because of the party affiliation disclosure requirement. He said "independents should

be disenfranchised in a primary election. The point of a primary election is for a party to choose its nominee." Spear added that independents have the right to vote in a general election. The amendment was rejected on a voice vote.

Continuing with the bill, Johnson said it changes the presidential primary date to March 1 so that Minnesota voters can have more influence in deciding the nominee. Kelley spoke again in favor of retaining a caucus system, saying that voters need to talk to each other to decide the issues and that can't be done in the privacy of their homes. He said that in the Athenian democracy, people had to show up at the forum in order to vote and they couldn't "just send in their slate." He added that a primary election favors well-financed campaigns that can afford an advertising campaign and that the law should favor grassroots campaigns. Johnson countered that his bill doesn't eliminate caucuses to decide state and local office elections.

Sen. Ember Junge (DFL-New Hope) shifted the focus of the debate to the mail-in ballot aspect, saying that a mail-in election school district election in her district encountered numerous problems. Sen. Mark Ourada (R-Buffalo) concurred, saying democracy takes work and voting is a right, responsibility and a privilege. He urged Senators to reject the ease of mail-in balloting. Spear cautioned Senators about a danger of mail-in voting for a presidential primary. He said that with the two-week time period allowed under the bill for sending in ballots, a voter may vote for a candidate who drops out before the votes are counted. On a roll call vote, the Senate rejected the bill which was on General Orders 30-34.

In other action as the Committee of the Whole, the Senate recommended the passage of H.F. 473, carried by Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul). Wiger said the bill allows the Metropolitan Council to implement a health and wellness program for its employees.

The Senate also granted final passage to all bills given preliminary passage on General Orders Mon., Mar. 10. Members also granted concurrence and repassage to S.F. 315. The bill, authored by Sen. David Knutson (R-Burnsville), conforms state laws to federal Treasury Dept. laws. Finally, members adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 7, the "Price of Government" resolution.

Committee update

Agriculture and Rural Development

Homestead bill okayed

A bill increasing the size of agricultural homestead property that qualifies for a reduced class rate was advanced by the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee Thurs., Mar. 6. Chaired by Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples), the committee also approved bills on gasoline tax and turfgrass research.

S.F. 719, authored by Sen. Keith Langseth (DFL-Glyndon), raises from 320 acres to 480 acres the size of agricultural homestead property eligible for lower tax rates. Langseth said, "Some farmers are saying that because of high taxes, it's getting to the point where you're renting your land from the government." Sen. Charles Berg (Ind-Chokio) made a motion to amend the bill to increase the eligible property size to 640 acres. He said, "I don't know many farmers who have less than 640 acres." The motion was defeated. The bill was approved and referred to the Committee on Taxes.

Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) presented S.F. 648, a bill that exempts farmers from paying tax on gasoline received in on-farm bulk storage tanks when used for tax-exempt purposes. Chris Leifeld, director of legislative affairs for the Minnesota Farmers Union, testified in support of the bill, and said, "Cash flow is getting tighter and tighter in rural Minnesota. This would be another tool to help farmers." The bill was okayed and re-referred to the Committee on Taxes.

S.F. 836, authored by Sen. LeRoy Stumpf (DFL-Thief River Falls), provides continuing support for turfgrass research and development. Stumpf said, "Minnesota is the third leading state in turfgrass production, and this research helps to strengthen that position." The bill was referred to the Agriculture and Budget Division.

Stumpf also presented S.F. 108 for discussion only. The bill appropriates money for seed potato inspection. He said, "There is a need for additional facilities for seed potato inspection, and the potato industry is ready to step in and pay its share. The bill authorizes a one-time appropriation of \$250,000 for the state contribution." The bill was laid over for further consideration.

Dairy diagnostic overview

The Carver County Diagnostic Team presented an overview of its work to the Agriculture and Rural Development Committee Tues., Mar. 11. The committee, chaired by Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples), also advanced two bills.

"We have a tragedy on our hands," said Sams, referring to the state of the dairy industry in Minnesota. "In December, 120 dairy farms were lost; in January, 90. We have got to take a bipartisan approach toward finding a solution to keep dairy

farming alive in Minnesota," he said. Sams introduced the Carver County Diagnostic Team as an example of a successful program focused on helping the dairy industry.

Vernon Oraskovich, an extension educator and part of the team, opened the presentation and said, "The dairy diagnostic process is a team approach to problem solving on the dairy farm. With this program, we have seen increases in profitability and production, improved efficiencies, and changes in attitude on farms. And for every \$1 generated on a farm, \$7 passes through the community." He said, "The ultimate goal of the program is to be self-sustaining—no public funding or grants."

Two bills regarding dairy development were presented to the committee. S.F. 429, authored by Sams, appropriates money to fund dairy diagnostic teams. Sen. Steve Dille (R-Dassel), presented S.F. 322, a bill that establishes a dairy development grant program and appropriates \$3.6 million for the program. After some discussion, Sams proposed a delete-all amendment for S.F. 429 embracing the language from Dille's bill. The amendment was adopted and the bill was advanced to the Senate floor. S.F. 322 was amended to include the appropriations from both bills, and was referred to the Environment and Agriculture Budget Division.

Commerce

Health care bills continued

The Commerce Subcommittee on Insurance, chaired by Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato), continued to hear, Mon., Mar. 10, two similar bills relating to health care consumer protection and assistance. The bills will be acted on at a later time.

S.F. 320, sponsored by Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan), and S.F. 819, sponsored by Sen. Steven Morse (DFL-Dakota), both create a statewide health care consumer assistance office and program. The bills also prohibit contracts that restrict communication between providers and their patients; require disclosure to patients of health care provider financial incentives; prohibit contracts or agreements that prevent a provider from communicating with a patient regarding their health, care, or treatment options if the provider is acting in good faith; and require health plan companies to provide continuity of care and access to specialty care for some enrollees. S.F. 320 specifically creates a tax offset for the MCHA assessment to reduce the premium tax burden on certain health insurance purchases; establishes a process for reviewing state-mandated health plan benefits; expands eligibility of Minnesota Care Programs; authorizes public information projects to inform uninsured persons about the availability of health coverage; and authorizes emergency medical services pilot projects.

Wiener offered two amendments to S.F. 320. The amendments include provisions

that do not require specific disclosure by a health care company of amounts paid to providers, require that the proposed State-wide Office of Consumer Assistance immediately refer consumers enrolled in a state employee health plan to the appropriate state agency contact-person for assistance, remove language establishing pilot projects seeking methods of reimbursing emergency medical providers; change the meaning of a health benefit proposal statutorily requiring a health plan to provide or increase the amount of coverage that must be delivered by a specific type of provider, and provide to the legislature a complete and timely analysis of all ramifications of any mandated health benefit proposal. The subcommittee adopted the amendments.

Wiener offered a third amendment to S.F. 320. The amendment clarifies the status of the comprehensive health care association under Medical Assistance and General Assistance Medical Care. The subcommittee adopted the amendment and laid the bill over pending further discussion.

Sen. Steven Morse (DFL-Dakota), author of S.F. 819, offered an amendment that clarifies the definition of patient; deletes the definition of financial risk that is inconsistent with federal regulations; changes language requiring disclosure of provider financial incentives; deletes additional requirements, such as survey findings, from billings and explanations sent to patients; and deletes the certificate of compliance requirements for organizations that have contracts with the state.

John Marty (DFL-Roseville), offered an amendment to S.F. 819 including language requiring health plan enrollees to be provided with the general nature of reimbursement methodologies used by the health plan to pay providers, requires health care providers to provide a summary of any complaint resolution process available to patients, requires health care providers to inform patients of any specialist referral procedures that will coordinate the patient's primary and specialty care, requires the health care consumer assistance program to conduct a voluntary survey of self-insured plans to determine their compliance with existing law, and prohibits the denial of non-emergency health coverage and provide for medical services that a reasonable person would believe to be necessary. The amendment failed.

Sen. Edward Oliver (R-Deephaven), offered an amendment that he said would restore the bills' original intent of creating consumer protection. The amendment establishes an informal complaint resolution process, addresses medically urgent complaints, requires a health plan company to make available to enrollees an internal appeals process to resolve consumer complaints, requires health plan companies to make available to enrollees an alternative dispute resolution process to appeal health plan company internal appeal decisions, and provides that an enrollee may appeal a

response to a complaint through the company's internal appeal process. The committee approved the amendment and laid the bill over for further consideration.

At a subsequent meeting Weds., Mar. 12, the panel approved both bills and forwarded them to the full Commerce Committee. Subcommittee action came after members adopted amendments clarifying that labor unions and self-insureds were exempt from the bills provisions. In addition, members adopted an amendment to S.F. 320 that deleted provisions that were contained in S.F. 819. Members also adopted an amendment to S.F. 320 that deleted provisions relating to Medical Assistance and MCHA eligibility.

Subcommittee members also endorsed S.F. 960, a third measure providing for patient protection. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls.), in addition to other consumer protections also requires health plan companies to provide continuity of care and access to specialty care for certain enrollees. The measure was also advanced to the full committee.

Four bills advance

The Commerce Committee, chaired by Sen. Sam. Solon (DFL-Duluth), approved four bills, Tues., Mar. 11.

S.F. 762, authored by Solon, separates and moves language relating specifically to disability or income protection coverage out of the provisions covering medical insurance. Solon said that the original language, drafted in 1937, does not differentiate between health insurance, that addresses medical problems, and disability coverage that deals with income loss. He said that the bill makes no substantial change to current law. The committee approved the bill and sent it to the Senate floor.

S.F. 731, sponsored by Keith Langseth (DFL-Glyndon), provides a subtraction from taxable income for the purchase of long-term care insurance policies having a lump-sum, single-premium. Langseth said that a tax subtraction on such policies would encourage persons to purchase the coverage to protect their assets and to discourage the transfer of their assets prior to their becoming ill. The committee re-referred the bill to the Committee on Taxes.

S.F. 865, sponsored by Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan), establishes terms relating to the operation of rent-to-own businesses within the state. Wiener said that the bill allows those with poor or no credit ratings to purchase products that they might otherwise go without. Senators Allen Spear (DFL-Mpls.) and John Marty (DFL-Roseville) opposed the bill. Both Spear and Marty pointed out what they felt to be usurious and exploitative rates charged to those individuals who can least afford to pay. Wiener offered an amendment to the bill allowing rent-to-own customers to reduce costs through procuring cash or credit terms from sources other than the rent-to-own.

The committee adopted the amendment and sent the bill to the Senate floor.

S.F. 860, sponsored by Sen. Edward Oliver (R-Deephaven), authorizes the registration in Minnesota of small corporate security offerings of \$5 or more when the aggregate offering price of the securities does not exceed \$1 million. The committee approved the bill and sent it to the Senate floor.

Crime Prevention

Background checks bills advance

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) explained that S.F. 950, a bill to amend the school employee background check law, is the result of collaborative effort between the MEA, MFT, the Department of Children, Families and Learning and Legislators. The bill was heard at the Mon., Mar. 12, meeting of the Crime Prevention Committee. The bill allows school hiring authorities to share information from background checks if certain criteria are met. According to the bill, nonstate residents offered employment in a Minnesota school must be subject, at their own expense, to a background check through the BCA and the other state's equivalent. The bill was approved by the committee, chaired by Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls.), and was sent to the floor.

S.F. 395, authored by Sen. Claire Robling (R-Prior Lake) expands current law that requires persons convicted of certain crimes to provide a biological specimen for the purpose of DNA analysis prior to being released from prison. Robling's bill includes those convicted of committing first-degree murder while committing certain types of sexual conduct. The bill was recommended to pass and sent to the floor.

Spear presented S.F. 31, a bill concerning non-funded probation provisions, which passed the Senate last session but did not make it to the House floor. The bill formalizes the current practice of defaulting responsibility for adult felons in non-CCA counties to the Department of Corrections and mandates probation providers to compile a uniform database. It requires that the commissioner of corrections review provider procedures before issuing caseload reduction grants.

The bill increases county responsibility, requiring counties to provide adult misdemeanor and juvenile probation services. Joel Alter of the Legislative Auditor's office spoke about the complexity of Minnesota's probation system, which utilizes 42 different providers and multiple funding streams. Other states, he said, are less complex. The Spear bill was approved and sent to the floor.

S.F. 330, also authored by Spear, extends state tort limits to non-profit corrections treatment facilities. Spear said the continued existence of many supplementary non-profit programs will be in jeopardy if they don't get some relief in terms of liability. The bill was approved with recommendation to pass and re-referred to the Judiciary Committee.

Sen. Ember Junge (DFL-New Hope) presented S.F. 609. The bill provides that violators of orders for protection issued out of state can be convicted in Minnesota. The bill was approved and sent to the floor.

S.F. 234, a bill authored by Sen. Steven Morse (DFL-Dakota) stiffens requirements for background checks for nursing home and home health workers. Jerry Kerber of the Department of Human Services said the bill represents the suggestions of a task force comprised of home care professionals, the Department of Health, and county attorneys, among other participants. The bill lists the crimes that would be considered legitimate barriers to hire. Also, the bill specifies the length of the look-back periods, which are longer depending on the severity of the crime. Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls.) mentioned that sometimes convictions are pled down and not indicative of the seriousness of the crime.

Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls.) expressed some concern for past offenders who genuinely seek rehabilitation but are not given the chance to reintegrate. Her comments were echoed by Dan Cain, who heads a chemical rehab program. He told the committee that the bill codifies what is already a procedural problem. He detailed the pitfalls of the comprehensive approach, saying that some crimes are not related to the job for which an applicant is applying. "I would rather see a check-bouncer being a chemical dependency counselor than a wife-beater carrying a gun." Furthermore, he said, a rehabilitated offender can be an important role model in some types of programs.

The bill was laid over for further discussion.

Prison privatization debated

"We're prison people," John Rees, vice president of new business development for Corrections Corporation of America, said when asked by Chair Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls.) if CCA would consider managing a state-built prison at Rush City. The Crime Prevention Committee held an evening meeting Mon., Mar. 10, to hear responses to an earlier presentation by the private firm proposing to build and run the state's new maximum security facility.

The Department of Administration made its case for staying the course of planned construction. "Every day past March 15th that state waits increases escalation of expenses," said Building Construction Director Bruce Taber. He reminded the panel that the state has already spent \$7.5 million on draining and creating wetlands at the site in preparation for the complex's east housing pad.

"We aren't going to attack CCA," Deputy Commissioner of Corrections Dennis Benson said, "We believe some privatization around the margins is fiscally responsible." He went on to add, however, that the department could not, after conferring with unions, analyzing treatment programs and other requirements, "responsibly run a close

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custody prison at \$55 a day." Spear asked for clarification, "You couldn't do it at that price or no one could?" Benson responded that "the department does not support privatization at this custody level in Minnesota." What happens, said Benson, when prison populations level off? When for-profit companies don't see a profit?

David Crist of the DOC spoke on CCA programming, detailing their use of "quiet chairs" and "relationship chairs" and "companionship contracts." He said, "We had a program like that in Minnesota in the seventies, but we phased it out because it didn't work." When Sen. Thomas Neuville (R-Northfield) countered that CCA listed a recidivism rate for program participants much lower than Minnesota rates, Crist said that CCA wasn't counting rearrests, which Minnesota's auditors had included.

AFSCME representative Tom Beer took CCA to task for what he called blatantly anti-union policies. He said that in addition to contracting primarily in right-to-work states with little unionized labor, the company has and will continue to invoke the Plant Guard Rule to derail unionization. The NLRB rule, according to Beer, specifies that unless the hiring entity gives permission, private sector guards cannot belong to a union other than an exclusive guard union. This is why, he said, AFSCME is not able to represent guards at Appleton.

Rees reiterated the company's promise to run the prison at \$55 per day, including debt service. Rees was flanked by CCA's new labor expert, Mike Grodifen who assured the panel that CCA brass is indeed comfortable with union labor. In closing, Rees reminded the panel that CCA would build a prison for \$55 million, as opposed to the state's \$89 million estimate.

Background checks okayed

The Crime Prevention Committee, chaired by Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls.), heard four bills Wed. Mar. 12.

S.F. 234, a Dept. of Human Services licensing bill dealing with background checks, authored by Sen. Steven Morse (DFL-Dakota) was the subject of debate in the wake of compelling testimony at the committee's Mon., Mar. 10 hearing. Emphasizing that the bill simply standardizes procedures already in the rules, Minnesota Health and Housing Association representative Nicole Otto pointed out the bill's improvements over current law. "Right now," she told the panel, "a housekeeper is not subject to background checks, but a nurse's aid is. The housekeeper has as much access to the vulnerable individual and items of value, and there is no reason that person should not have to clear a background check." She also pointed out that the bill gives hiring entities much more leeway in reconsideration of background check findings. "Now," she said, "there is disqualification of 15 years for all crimes. The bill classifies crimes by severity and assigns shorter look-backs for less serious convictions."

Sen. Ellen Andersen (DFL-St. Paul) expressed concern about bill provisions allowing for disqualification based on preponderance of evidence. Morse said the opportunity for subjectivity already exists in rule. When Sens. Warren Limmer and Anderson voiced reservations about voting for the bill without closer examination, Otto suggested that the body approve the bill and form a task force to revisit flawed sections. Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls) concurred, saying that bill language requiring things like expeditious investigation of allegations against employees makes it worthy of passage. The bill was okayed and re-referred to the Governmental Operations Committee.

Fifteen-year old former gang member Jonathan Yamour testified in support of Berglin's bill, S.F. 172, requesting funding for youth service grants that would allow for non-monetary compensation for community service in depressed communities. Yamour said that after his best friend was killed, he began doing community service to get positive. Representatives from Commonweal, a barter-for-community service organization in the process of setting up a self-funding cycle of service for merchant discounts testified that support was strong in the community. State money, said Berglin would pay for adult supervision and program oversight. The bill was approved and re-referred to the Crime Prevention and Judiciary Budget Division.

S.F. 944, authored by Sen. Jane Krentz (DFL-May Township), requires that law enforcement agencies having knowledge of a juvenile using tobacco must report it to the child's school, which in turn must refer the matter to the drug counseling program within the school. Sen. Thomas Neuville (R-Northfield) questioned the seriousness of smoking. "It's against the law," said Krentz, "If you don't like the law, then we should change the law." Neuville then suggested citing the juveniles. Sen. Ember Junge (DFL-New Hope) responded, "It's already illegal for them to smoke, and they do get cited. This just makes sure schools have knowledge of the activity." The bill was approved and re-referred to the Children, Families and Learning Committee.

Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) presented S.F. 271, requesting continued funding for cities grants, which fund crime prevention programs in class one cities. LaRue Fields of the Minneapolis Urban League said her curfew center educates juveniles that, "it's not okay to be hanging out on the street at two a.m." Fields said the program has saved lives. The bill was approved and re-referred to the Budget Division.

Economic Development Budget Division

Citizenship bill okayed

A bill establishing a statewide citizenship program was approved Weds. Mar. 12, by the Economic Development Budget Division. Chaired by Sen. Tracy Beckman (DFL-Brice), the committee also

reviewed the Dept. of Commerce budget.

S.F. 331, authored by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), is a bill that authorizes the establishment and funding of a statewide citizenship promotion program. Anderson proposed an amendment making the councils of color--the Councils of Asian-Pacific Minnesotans, Black Americans, and Chicano-Latino Affairs--the administrators of the program. The amendment was adopted. Jim Anderson from the Ramsey County Human Services Office spoke in support of the bill and said, "We need to establish a statewide approach to the issue of citizenship. Most of the programs now in place are too small to meet the demand and to operate on a statewide level. There is such a backlog of people waiting for citizenship that with an intensive effort for four years, we'll catch up." Lee Pao Xiong, Director of the Council on Asian-Pacific Americans, said, "This is not only about welfare reform and helping people who will be affected by it. There are people all over the state who are not in poverty and who want to be a part of the political process, to be Americans." An amendment, proposed by Sen. Linda Runbeck (R-Circle Pines), mandating all administrative jobs funded by the bill to be temporary positions was adopted. The bill as amended was okayed and advanced to the Jobs, Energy, and Community Development Committee.

Tammy McGlone of the Dept. of Commerce presented the department's budget initiatives. The agency budget plan includes license fee standardization, an increase in self-insurance fees, wage and expense increases of 2.5 percent, and an increase in funding for the Petroleum Tank Release Cleanup Fund Program.

Education Finance

School administrator testify

Chair Keith Langseth and the Education Finance Committee got an opportunity Wed., Mar. 12 to ask prominent school administrators what they and teachers on the front lines want in the way of state policy and resources.

Leading the stream of testimony, Superintendent of St. Paul Public Schools Curman Gaines began by profiling his district. We have, in St. Paul, attributes of older systems, but we've learned from them and are trying to avoid some pitfalls." The student population of 43,700 is, he said, growing at a rate of 1,100 per year. Enrollment is 54 percent students of color vs. the St. Paul population, which is 20 percent persons of color. Levies, he said, have not passed in the city, and the reason is that residents can't afford more taxes. "I don't believe that's necessarily true," he said, "but when the taxpayers speak, we have to listen." When asked by Sen. Martha Robertson (R-Minnetonka) about the district's dropout rate, Gaines said that although it is officially tabulated at 40 percent, he finds the method of calculation misleading because of the mobility of the

inner-city population. "These kids are counted as dropouts if they leave the system mid-year, but we know that their reasons for leaving may have to do with other factors than whether they were succeeding in school," he said. Among other things, Gaines asked the panel for more flexibility in terms of charter schools and discretionary dollars for districts.

Peter Hutchinson of the Public Strategies Group joked that when he was first contracted to head the Minneapolis Public Schools, some referred to him as the "Sup du Jour." That kind of cynicism, he said, is the upshot of the sort of quick-change policymaking that has become all too familiar to school systems across the country. The Minneapolis schools have tremendous obstacles, he said, pointing out that the number of kids in special education in Minneapolis and the district's pool of non-English speaking students could qualify as the 27th and 28th largest districts in the state. Results of the past year's assessments, however, have shown the largest gains in the last six years in terms of decreasing the gap between students at lower and higher income levels.

Hutchinson describes PSC's efforts to empower sites in the district while maintaining the centralized kinds of purchasing and umbrella programs that benefit from a larger scale and make good economic sense. He called for continuation of state performance grants that have been used to successfully levy vast improvements in school performance.

District philosophy, he said, has been to achieve a structure in which employees are either teaching or directly supporting teaching. He said the greatest challenge is breaking with past procedure, as when the district implemented its block-scheduled days. "It was important to stand back and recognize that 45 minute class periods are not a hard and fast rule," he said. When asked what the Legislature could do to help, Hutchinson replied concisely, "Resource these schools."

Election Laws

Campaign finance reform bill fails

On Mon., Mar. 10, Chair John Marty continued presentation of his campaign finance reform bill, S.F. 708. After a successful author's amendment allowing for lobbying on a constitutional amendment to be governed by lobbying laws during session and by political action committee laws during a campaign, Marty offered an amendment specifying that a campaign committee cannot make independent expenditures to influence other campaigns. Sen. Ember Junge (DFL-New Hope) spoke in opposition to the language, saying that transfers of funds are already illegal.

Junge also opposed bill language which she said weakens the parties by encouraging the creation of affiliates that would not be subject to the same restrictions. Junge

suggested deleting independent expenditure language. She referenced Marty's previous attempts to regulate such spending across the board, but said that in the wake of court-determined unconstitutionality, remedies are now piecemeal and thus, discriminating.

The bill's main function is to substitute fines for criminal penalties in the case of late filings or violations of spending limits. Junge suggested that the default \$1,000 penalty amount proposed in the bill is too high, and posited that a minor accounting error could result in an extreme fine. She and Sen. Carol Flynn (DFL-Mpls.) asked that counsel draft language invoking some sort of reasonability standard with regard to the penalty the Ethical Practices Board would be empowered to exact. The language was fashioned but the bill was defeated on a voice vote.

Junge presented S.F. 478, another campaign finance reform bill, many provisions of which were included in last year's large reform package vetoed by the governor. The bill provides for penalty of payback of state campaign subsidy for violation of the Fair Campaign Practices Act. Junge, who does not support mail balloting, provides in the bill for voters to cast votes 30 days prior to an election at a polling place designated by the counties. The bill makes it illegal to publish material intending to influence the outcome of an election which is false or with reckless disregard for whether it is false.

Junge attempts with the bill to remedially address two situations arising in the legislature during the past year. In response to the recent findings that former Rep. Jeff Bertram had abused the campaign contribution reimbursement program by distributing refund vouchers to non-contributors, Junge's bill clearly defines such distribution as a gross misdemeanor.

Junge said the bill also attempts to respond to the circumstances of the John Derus election contest by authorizing the courts to process claims against third party action during elections. Sen. Mark Ourada (R-Buffalo) objected, saying that the power to govern legislative office elections rests with the Legislature itself. Junge indicated that the Legislature is exercising that power by putting policy into law. Flynn also expressed concern about bill language in this area, saying it may be too specific to the kind of third party activity evidenced in the Derus case. She mentioned other types of third party actions and suggested the committee might want to consider broader third party possibilities before approving bill language. The bill was laid over for further consideration.

Environment and Natural Resources

Septic systems discussed

"The Pollution Control Agency (PCA) held hearings about the problem, and this bill is the result," said Sen. Leonard Price (DFL-Woodbury) about his bill, S.F. 389,

establishing individual sewage treatment system (ISTS) standards. The bill was heard in the Environment and Natural Resources Committee, Mon., Mar. 10.

Price highlighted a section that he called a "giant provision" in the bill that allows local governments to adopt standards other than those developed by the PCA. He said the local standards can take into consideration such factors as soil classification, vegetation, system type and usage, local well placement and system density. Sen. Steve Dille (R-Dassel) said that the bill gives the PCA commissioner "review and comment" authority over the local standards, but asked if the commissioner did not have approval authority. PCA representative Gretchen Sabel said that is correct.

Roseau County Board member Jeff Pelowski testified about the local inspection provisions of the bill. He said he supports the bill, but considered the local inspection requirement to be an unfunded mandate. He said that Roseau County could not afford the estimated \$100,000 for two more inspectors. Sen. Steve Morse (DFL-Dakota) asked if the bill requires site visitation by inspectors. Sabel said that sites could be inspected by photographs and the inspectors aren't required to be on site.

Committee Chair Bob Lessard (DFL-Int'l Falls) laid the bill over for further consideration.

Toxics compromise advances

A bill representing a compromise between environmental and business interests on Minnesota's Toxics in Products (TIP) law was approved by the Environment and Natural Resources Committee at the Weds., Mar. 12, meeting, but only after the committee rejected a repeal of the law. The bill, S.F. 184, carried by Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora), now goes to the Environment and Agriculture Budget Division for further consideration.

Stevens initially presented his alternative, S.F. 183, a bill repealing the toxics law. He said that under the law, manufacturers located outside the state can sell their banned products in the state, but Minnesota companies are prohibited from manufacturing those products. The repealer bill was laid aside to discuss the compromise bill.

Stevens said that the toxics regulated by the law are lead, mercury, cadmium and chromium, and that products containing those toxics will be banned after July 1, 1998. Cathy Berg Moeger of the Pollution Control Agency (PCA), said that S.F. 184 establishes a toxics advisory council to review products subject to the ban for which the manufacturer can find no alternative. The council will then recommend that the PCA commissioner either ban the product or grant an exemption.

Mike Robertson, representing the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber favors a repeal of TIP, but added that he "could live with the compromise agreement." Brett Smith of the Sierra Club

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said good faith efforts went into reaching the compromise and that he was "taken aback by the 'dual track' strategy" of moving both bills. Committee Chair Bob Lessard (DFL-Int'l. Falls) said that although TIP "doesn't make sense," he didn't like the idea of tying the compromise to the repeal. Stevens defended the strategy, saying last year he only proceeded with a compromise bill but "it got steamrolled in the other body." He said the repealer bill is his "ace in the hole." The committee rejected the dual track strategy and only approved the compromise bill.

The panel also heard S.F. 900, sponsored by Sen. Janet Johnson (DFL-North Branch). The bill deletes references to a defunct toxics information clearinghouse, and replaces them with other references. The bill was approved and sent to the Senate floor.

Family and Early Childhood Education Budget Division

Childcare bills heard

Early Childhood Education Budget Division members heard two bills relating to child care, Fri., Mar. 7.

S.F. 690, authored by Sen. Linda Higgins (DFL-Mpls.), gives first priority for child care assistance, under the sliding fee program, to parents receiving basic sliding fee assistance in the county of their residence, but who move to a different county. Under the bill, the county of former residence must continue to provide basic sliding fee assistance to the parents until funding is available in the new county. Other provisions of the bill give second priority to eligible non-AFDC families in need of further education to pursue employment, and a third priority designation is given to parents who have completed their AFDC transition year.

The bill was laid over pending the arrival of information about the bill's fiscal impact on counties.

Sen. Sandra Pappas (DFL-St. Paul), authored S.F. 870, a bill providing for the establishment of child care service integration demonstration projects serving children age 12 years and under. The bill provides that the three-year demonstration projects must integrate HeadStart, special needs programs, family child care centers, learning readiness, and early childhood education programs and expands access to the basic child care sliding fee program. In addition, the bill requires that child care integration plans must incorporate career development for child care providers, include measurable outcomes, and requires that between 70 and 80 percent of funds appropriated for the plans be used to increase the sliding fee scale to 125 percent of the state's medium income for use in project communities.

Pappas provided the division, chaired by Sen. Pat Piper (DFL-Austin), a demonstration of varied challenges confronting child care providers when she invited providers

and their pre-school and school-age children to participate in the meeting.

S.F. 870 was laid over for further discussion.

Homeless persons bill okayed

Early Childhood Education Budget Division approved a bill relating to assistance for homeless people, Weds., Mar. 12. S.F. 403, authored by Sen. Ellen Anderson (DFL-St. Paul), establishes an emergency services grant program to provide homeless persons with essential services and emergency shelter; assists organizations to improve the quality of existing shelters; makes available other emergency housing; requires the commissioner of Children Families and Learning to make grants to ensure that emergency services are available state-wide; and requires grant recipients to make available to the commissioner information on the number of persons seeking emergency shelter and the reasons why. The bill also appropriates an as yet undetermined amount to the commissioner for the emergency services grant program, the transitional housing program, and for the housing development fund, to be used for homeless prevention and assistance.

Sue Watlov Phillips, legislative chair, Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless, told the division, chaired by Sen. Pat Piper (DFL-Austin), that she could not adequately emphasize the bill's historical importance in relation to welfare reform.

Watlov said that there are about 12,000 homeless people within the state at any given time. She said that Minnesotans spending more than 30 percent of their incomes on housing are at risk of becoming homeless, and that 59 percent of new jobs created between 1990 and 1993 pay wages far below what is needed to support a housing unit without a public subsidy. In addition, Watlov said that approximately 24 percent of school-age homeless children are reported to have learning problems.

Piper offered an amendment transferring administration of the bill's provisions from the commissioner of Economic Security to the commissioner of Children, Families and Learning. The amendment was adopted. The committee approved the bill, as amended, and recommended it for inclusion in the omnibus Family and Early Childhood Budget Division bill.

Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs

Mighty Ducks bill flies

Thurs., Mar. 6, the Government Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee heard testimony on S.F. 405, the "Mighty Ducks" bill, authored by Chair James Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul). Members also approved S.F. 457, a recodification of Chapter 148B, sponsored by Sen. Dan Betzold (DFL-Fridley). The latter measure separates provisions related to the Social Work from

those related to the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy.

During his explanation of the "Mighty Ducks" bill, Metzen said the bill provides for a third year of financing to be used by communities as leverage to fund local hockey rinks. He said the amount appropriated last session, \$5 million, has been used to raise \$60 million. Members of a young hockey team testified that they must now practice at five in the morning or outside because their town doesn't have a rink. Under the bill, the new money will be used to build 16 new rinks and renovate 20 more. The bill was approved with a recommendation to pass and sent to the Government Operations Budget Division.

Sen. Steve Kelley presented S.F. 428, a bill to expand the state's web site, North Star Online. Some of the bill's provisions include increasing the site's utility by ensuring that government agencies use common tools and techniques for creation of homepages and employ the same search engines. "This isn't mindless conformity," said Kelley, "it's convenient similarity for sites." The bill also establishes a Minnesota Internet Center to provide technological outreach for communities and individuals needing advice and resource assistance while linking to the Internet. Kelley offered an amendment allowing the state to fund a study on the feasibility of providing every Minnesotan an e-mail address. Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora) suggested the study also rank the desirability of e-mail. The amendment was approved. The bill calls also for a pilot MNCard project to allow integration of personal information onto a single, multi-functional employee card. Kelley said appropriations include \$1.3 million for North Star expansion, \$1 million for the Internet Center and \$250,000 for the MNCard. The bill was laid over for consideration.

Gang strike force okayed

A bill authorizing a criminal gang strike force and oversight council continued to be discussed at the Tues., Mar. 11, Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee meeting. The measure, S.F. 218, creates and appropriates money to the Criminal Gang Oversight Council, which in turn, is authorized to create a law enforcement and prosecutorial strike force. Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul) is the chief author of the measure.

Sen. Linda Runbeck (R-Circle Pines) asked Kelly how the council would be funded. He explained that approximately \$6 million to \$7 million will be drawn from the general fund, and he added that the bill was a high priority for the Legislature's and governor's crime prevention program.

Runbeck offered an amendment to sunset the council June 30, 2001, to ensure that the Senate can review the efficacy of the strike force. The amendment was adopted and the bill was re-referred to the Judiciary Committee.

In other business, Chair James Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul) invited Sen. Dean Johnson (R-Willmar) to present S.F. 4, a bill that clarifies the tuition reimbursement rate for the Minnesota National Guard. General Gary LeBlanc, Dept. of Military Affairs, explained that the state has been able to keep its military strength levels high when other states have experienced difficulty in attracting and retaining personnel. This is due, in part, to the incentives program the state funds to attract quality people. However, the Guard has had difficulty attracting medical students because the medical school tuition reimbursement rates were not enticing. Therefore, the bill allows the department to reimburse up to 50 percent of medical school tuition costs to attract more doctors for military service. LeBlanc assured members that the bill requires no new money and that the new reimbursement rates are taken out of the current incentives program funds. The measure was approved and advanced to the floor.

Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul) presented the Dept. of Administration's housekeeping bill, S.F. 420, for consideration. Wiger offered two amendments—a technical clean-up amendment and language to authorize a new mail distribution system—and both were adopted.

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) suggested that the repealer language was not appropriate for a housekeeping bill, and he moved to delete the section. The Betzold amendment prevailed.

The measure was then approved and referred to the floor.

Finally, Sen. Roy Terwilliger (R-Edina) presented S.F. 412, a bill that modifies salary provisions for certain public officials and employees. After he explained the scope of the measure, Robertson offered an amendment to include legislators' salaries on the list affected by consumer price index calculations. The amendment was adopted, but does not take effect until the year 2001 because legislators cannot vote to give themselves salary increases. The bill was approved and re-referred to the Judiciary Committee.

Northstar on-line bill okayed

Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins) presented two bills at the Weds., Mar. 12, Governmental Operations and Veterans Affairs Committee meeting, chaired by Sen. James Metzen (DFL-South St. Paul). First, Kelley presented S.F. 240. Specifically, the bill authorizes the use of digital signatures in transacting state business. The bill was approved with dispatch and referred to the floor.

Kelley then turned to S.F. 428. The bill had been held over from a previous meeting due to data privacy concerns from members. Under the bill, a North Star governmental on-line service is established. The bill also creates the MNCARD project, a demonstration program for a "smart card" that will allow state employees to transact business with the state.

Sen. Martha Robertson (R-Minnetonka) offered an amendment to delete a section that requires the expansion of the MNCARD project past the demonstration phase, along with language appropriating money to the Office of Technology to expand the program. The amendment was adopted, and the bill was then re-referred to the Judiciary Committee.

Runbeck then presented S.F. 100, a bill that officially establishes the Office of Technology. She was accompanied by a representative from the office, Executive Director John Gunyou, as she reviewed the scope of the bill. Gunyou explained that the bill ensures that the office is essentially the state's technology policy navigator. "The office has no direct implementation authority. We are strictly advisory," he said. He also said that under the bill, the Information Policy Office is moved to reside within the Office of Technology so that the state's advisory and policy functions are contained in the same place.

Representatives from three stakeholders—the Minnesota High Technology Council, the Minnesota Telephone Association, and the Northwest Technical College—spoke of their support for the creation of the office.

The bill was laid over for further discussion.

Health and Family Security

Welfare amendments offered

The chief author of S.F. 1, Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd), said, "I am ready to entertain amendments that members have," as discussion on the welfare reform bill continued at the Thurs., Mar. 6, Health and Family Security Committee meeting. The day's agenda was scheduled to allow members to continue offering amendments, and because of the volume of proposed amendments, the morning meeting recessed and resumed in the evening.

Under the welfare reform bill, the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) is expanded statewide beginning July 1, 1997. MFIP is not considered an entitlement however, the commissioner of human services must report annually on Jan. 15 on the status of MFIP funding. The bill extends benefits to everyone residing legally in the U.S. except persons defined as nonimmigrants. All grants are paid with federal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) dollars where permitted, or with state funds. There is also a 60-month lifetime limit on assistance, as required by federal law. Furthermore, a 30-day residency requirement is established with exceptions only for unusual hardship. Following the first 30 days, the new residents are paid the grant from either the previous state or Minnesota, whichever is lower. The bill specifies that drug felons are ineligible for assistance until two years after serving their sentence. Counties must implement an education and training program by July 1, 1997, and the work activity that is required

in order to be eligible for MFIP is defined broadly to include anything in an approved plan that is tied to an employment goal. Under an employment plan, post-secondary education assistance is generally limited to 12 months, but up to 24 months is permitted in special cases.

Sen. Martha Robertson (R-Minnetonka) was the first to offer an amendment revising certain property limitations for MFIP recipients. Currently, an individual is limited to a maximum of \$2,000 in assets in order to still qualify for assistance. "So for those people who are ongoing recipients of aid, the incentive to save money is taken out," she said, "The incentive is to spend income instead of save it." The amendment allows on-going recipients to save up to \$5,000 and remain eligible to continue receiving aid. The Robertson motion prevailed.

"It is so important that people have enough to eat," said Sen. Becky Lourey (DFL-Kerrick) as she offered her Temporary Hunger Prevention and Community Development Initiative (THPCD). The amendment establishes a Minnesota administered food stamp program to assist people when they no longer are eligible for the federal food stamps. "The THPCD provides a nutritional safety net for residents who are without the resources to meet their basic nutritional needs." Lourey explained that in all cases, the amount of the assistance received will equal the amount of benefits lost by an individual or household because of changes in the federal food stamp program. The program will serve those up to 130 percent of the poverty line, and legal non-citizens are also eligible. In addition, Lourey said that at least 50 percent of the benefits must be used to purchase Minnesota produced products.

Sen. Steven Morse (DFL-Dakota) offered an amendment to the Lourey amendment that, he said, "Creates a win, win, win situation for the state." He explained that of the food benefit amount provided per eligible individual under the THPCD program, \$35 must be in coupons that only can be redeemed for products with the "Minnesota Grown" label. Morse said that with this amendment, we are ensuring that people are being fed, that they are eating nutritional food, and that a guaranteed portion of the state's funding will be spent on Minnesota produced products. The Morse motion was adopted on to the Lourey amendment. Sen. Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls.) suggested to Lourey that she introduce the food stamp program as a separate bill because there is insufficient funds in the federal government's TANF block grant to support the program if it were to be included as part of S.F. 1. Berglin said the idea, though necessary, should compete for funding with other programs in the general fund. Staff predicted that the program would cost approximately \$30 million per biennium. Lourey said she preferred to attach the amendment to the welfare bill

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and would consider offering a separate piece of legislation. Members discussed the pros and cons of the THPCD program, and the Lourey amendment was adopted.

Berglin moved to amend the bill with language that clarifies which people are eligible for \$63 a month in supplemental assistance after they become ineligible for the federal food stamp program. Specifically, the amendment adds exemptions for legal immigrants who are on a waiting list for citizenship and language classes, and for immigrants who have applied for, but were not granted, a citizenship waiver. The amendment was approved.

Robertson offered an amendment that establishes an allocation method in the event federal sanctions are applied against the state for failure to meet set performance standards. The amendment also directs the Dept. of Human Services (DHS) to establish standards by Jan. 1, 1998, and to evaluate county performance. The motion prevailed.

Chair John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) offered an amendment to exempt migrant workers from the 30-day residency requirement. He explained that as long as the worker can show documentation proving he or she had worked in the state within the last 24 months, the person would be eligible for benefits and General Assistance (GA) medical care. However, because he did not know what costs the amendment would incur, he withdrew it for later consideration.

Samuelson successfully offered an amendment that sets an Oct. 1, 1997 start date for statewide implementation of MFIP. It also allows counties to delay the implementation of the education and training services (E&T) component of MFIP beyond Oct. 1, 1997. Under the amendment, if a county presents reasons for the delay to DHS, the county may delay implementation until Jan. 1, 1998. Furthermore, exemptions are made for a single parent with a child under the age of 1. Two parent families are required to begin a county administered E&T program immediately, and single parents are allowed a three month delay before beginning an E&T program. The amendment also sets the earned income disregard at 37 percent. Additionally, the approximate exit point from the MFIP is set at 120 percent of federal poverty guidelines. Attached to the Samuelson amendment was a fiscal spreadsheet detailing both the federal and state expenditures for MFIP under S.F. 1. Samuelson explained that the fiscal information was provided so that members understand that there is little money for additional programs, and that the state was just barely meeting its federal match funding requirements. Any additional amendments that affect the funding formula may compromise the bill's fragile structure, he said.

Intense and emotional discussion ensued after Morse moved to delete the contingent welfare plan language from the bill. "I have a difficult time justifying a contingency plan that seems like a punitive measure," Morse said. Samuelson responded, "As much as I

don't like the language either, I oppose the Morse amendment. We need to have something in place so we are not a magnet for the whole country." According to Samuelson and Deborah Huskins, assistant commissioner for DHS, in order for Minnesota to be able to provide a welfare program deemed adequate for Minnesota citizens, strict residency requirements must be in place to discourage people from other states from moving to Minnesota and overloading that state's system. However, DHS expects at least one lawsuit to be filed soon after the bill is enacted that challenges the constitutionality of the residency requirements. In the event that a suit is filed, the presiding judge has the authority to enjoin the residency requirements until the case is settled. However, Samuelson and Huskins explained that the state would have to go ahead with implementing MFIP, and in that case, Minnesota's benefits would be significantly higher than many other states; Minnesota would become a magnet drawing recipients from around the country and the state could not afford the increased caseload. Therefore, the bill includes the contingent plan that specifies that if the residency requirements are enjoined, benefits under MFIP are drastically cut in order to serve as a disincentive for people considering migrating to Minnesota. "We need to have a measure in place that sends a message to the judge to keep the residency requirements in place, at least until the Supreme Court hears the case," Huskins said. Morse responded, "I support residency requirements, but I can't justify putting a \$100 million program on the line to save an estimated \$1.5 million if the requirements are enjoined. It's inappropriate to delegate our legislative decision making to a judge." The Morse motion to delete the contingent plan language failed.

Welfare bill advanced

In the final day of action on S.F. 1, the welfare reform bill, members of the Health and Family Security Committee entertained many amendments, adopted several changes, listened to powerful testimony, and eventually approved the measure. Chair John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) indicated at the outset of the Fri., Mar. 7, meeting that he intended to finish considering amendments offered by members and then to listen to a final round of public testimony before members voted.

The bill's chief author, Sen. Don Samuelson (DFL-Brainerd), first offered an amendment to provide two counties the option to continue or discontinue the Work First programs they are presently administering. The amendment also allows caretakers, who are participating in an education program, to postpone their job search with the approval of a job counselor. The amendment was adopted.

Sen. Martha Robertson (R-Minnetonka) offered an amendment that combined several initiatives into one package. Under the amendment, when a person applies for

welfare benefits with a county, they are required to state their previous address. Then, if the person has migrated from another state, the county agency is required to call the previous state to see if there are any sanctions marked on the applicant's record. The Robertson amendment also changes the current STRIDE program by opening the eligibility requirements to all welfare recipients, as long as there are funds available. Robertson said this is intended to serve as an interim vehicle to assist people with job training until the counties begin implementing their education and training (E&T) programs. The amendment prevailed.

Sen. Dallas Sams (DFL-Staples) successfully offered an amendment to an earlier Robertson amendment adopted at the Wed., Mar. 5, meeting, but not before lengthy discussion. The earlier Robertson amendment required counties to offer at least two E&T service provider options. Sams said this formula may work in the metropolitan counties, but the rural areas with low population density will have difficulty following the letter of the law. In some cases, a rural county will be fortunate to have one option to provide clients. Therefore, the Sams amendment makes an exception in the Robertson amendment to allow counties "utilizing workforce centers that use multiple employment providers and offer multiple service options" to skirt the two service provider requirement.

Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester) said she was concerned that the Sams amendment dilutes the original intent of the Robertson amendment and would limit the amount of choice the counties would be required to provide people when designing their E&T programs. "My concern is providing choice so clients have multiple options," she said. Therefore, she moved to add language to the Sams amendment that allows the counties to count the workforce centers as multiple providers as long as they can "document that participants have choice among employment and training services designed to meet their specialized needs." After the Kiscaden motion as adopted, the Sams amendment was approved.

Hottinger returned to an earlier amendment he had offered at the Thurs., Mar. 6, meeting. Here offered an amendment that exempts migrant workers from the 30-day residency requirement as long as they can document that they have worked in Minnesota within the last 24 months. The amendment had been withdrawn due to concerns over its fiscal impact, but after Deborah Huskins, assistant commissioner, Dept. of Human Services (DHS), explained that it will have little or no impact on General Assistance (GA) or on the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), the amendment was adopted.

"The public has embraced the Minnesota grown concept and food program, and my commitment to food is still alive," said Sen. Becky Lourey (DFL-Kerrick). Because she did not want to hurt the state's financial

commitment to MFTP, Lourey moved to delete the state administered food program that had been amended on to the bill at the Thurs., Mar. 6, meeting. As she thanked members and the public for their support, Lourey announced that she will introduce the concept as a separate piece of legislation.

After members were finished offering amendments, Hottinger invited several people from the public to provide brief statements about their concerns.

One of the people who testified, Mim Mueller, explained that she is a single mom and a welfare recipient. "I have been complaining for a long time that we don't hear the voices of the welfare recipients," she said. However, she said, her impressions of the welfare reform process have been surprisingly positive, and after observing members for the week, she said, "I didn't expect anyone to be on my side, but this week has restored my belief that politicians are looking out for my interests." As for her concerns, she said she was troubled that in the name of flexibility, the counties are given complete control and authority over how this program will be enacted. "It has not been my experience that counties have provided high quality client services."

Brian Rusche, representing the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, spoke against the contingency plan language. "I find it morally unsupportable. I understand that you're trying to get the attention of a judge in the event that the residency requirements are enjoined. But it is beyond my comprehension how we can put the basic supports for families and children on the table as our chips. These kind of brutal, drastic cuts, that will come into play as an axe because your work does not pass constitutional muster, is not taking responsibility for your work. We must find some other way to get the judge's attention."

Hottinger had allotted additional time to allow members to discuss the bill following public testimony. When discussion was interrupted by people in the audience, he said, "If we have continued interruptions, I'm afraid we will not have additional debate to put this in perspective, and I don't think that will be in the audience's interests or ours." However, the interruptions continued, so when Hottinger called the vote on the motion to re-refer S.F. 1 to the Human Resources Finance Committee, the motion was approved.

Health occupations bill okayed

On Tues., Mar. 11, Chair John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato) asked Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester) to continue her presentation on S.F. 228 at the Health and Family Security Committee meeting. Under the bill, several changes are made to sections regulating speech-language pathologists and audiologists, the office of mental health practice, alcohol and drug counselors, and hearing instrument dispensers. Discussion on the bill had been held over from a

previous meeting where two amendments had been adopted. Sen. Becky Lourey (DFL-Kerrick) then offered an amendment that exempts registered audiologists from the Hearing Instrument Dispenser Certification Program. Tom Keliher, from the Minnesota Audiology Association, explained that the association is concerned about the significant fee increases that are part of the program this year. He added that the registered audiologists already pay fees to the Dept. of Health for other programs. The amendment was approved and the bill was re-referred to the Governmental Operations Committee.

Sen. Roger Moe (DFL-Erskine) also presented a bill, S.F. 888, that establishes an American Indian Diabetes Prevention Advisory Task Force. Specifically, the task force is required to advise the commissioner of health on the design of grade school curricula in order to educate American Indian children on the risk factors associated with diabetes. The measure appropriates \$90,000 in FY 98 to the commissioner to fund the task force, and an additional \$90,000 is made available for FY 99 if the appropriation is matched dollar for dollar by nonstate money. The bill was approved and re-referred to the Health and Family Security Budget Division.

"H.F. 447 requires health plan companies to offer women direct access to OB/GYN services," said the bill's author, Sen. Deanna Weiner (DFL-Eagan). Kiscaden said she was concerned that the bill was a health mandate and that "consumers have the responsibility to go to their employers and their health plans and ask that these type of services be provided." She said that the overall trend is to have the Legislature make every kind of health care decision. The measure was approved and advanced to the floor.

Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley) offered S.F. 93 for consideration. The bill, he said, is a technical measure from the Dept. of Human Services and makes amendments to sections dealing with state liens for public assistance, medical assistance, and claims against the estate. Members approved the bill and sent it to the floor.

Human Resources Finance

Departmental budget overviews

Chair Linda Berglin (DFL-Mpls.) invited representatives from the Depts. of Economic Security and Health to provide brief budget overviews at the Thurs., Mar. 6, Human Resources Finance Committee meeting.

Heidi Stennes, director of Communications and Governmental Affairs at the Dept. of Economic Security, said the governor recommends a biennial appropriation of \$72.4 million. She also outlined the responsibilities of the various departmental branches--State Services for the Blind, Rehabilitation Services, Workforce Exchange, Workforce Preparation, Production, and Support.

Patrick Nelson, deputy commissioner of

commerce, had been asked to explain one of the Dept. of Economic Security's initiatives. He explained that the governor has recommended allocating \$8 million each year from the Dislocated Worker Fund to cover the deficits of the Minnesota Comprehensive Health Association (MCHA).

Commissioner Anne Barry, Dept. of Health, moved quickly to review the new budget initiatives for the department following the new February forecast. She said \$4 million has been requested for the biennium to establish a Fetal Alcohol Syndrome program to provide treatment for pregnant women. In addition, \$3 million has been requested to set up a community immunization registry. Two million dollars has been requested to establish Juvenile Assessment Centers to intervene in cases to reduce the number of adolescents in the juvenile justice system. A one time appropriation of \$650,000 has been requested to make up the federal cuts to the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program. Finally, an additional \$2.2 million has been requested for the biennium to expand the Family Planning Special Project Grant Program.

Higher Education Budget Division

Regents reform discussed

The Higher Education Budget Division began its discussion Tues., Mar. 11, of four bills proposing changes to the selection process for the University of Minnesota Board of Regents. The committee, chaired by Sen. LeRoy Stumpf (DFL-Thief River Falls), also heard the continuation of budget presentations from HESO and MnSCU.

Dr. Robert Poch, Director of HESO, concluded his budget review by emphasizing a continued need for additional staff resources to support information technology. Judith Eaton, Chancellor of MnSCU, continued her presentation and said, "The Electronic Academy is a cornerstone of our commitment to improving performance via technology, combining instructional technology, telecommunications learning, spending on infrastructure, new ventures, and technology grants." In response to a question from Sen. Sam Solon (DFL-Duluth), she reviewed progress on contract negotiations with faculty and staff and said, "Right now there are two unresolved major issues--compensation and workload." The MnSCU presentation was continued to the next meeting.

Two of four bills changing the regent selection process were presented to the committee. S.F. 889, authored by Sen. David Ten Eyck (DFL-East Gull Lake), reduces from 24 to 16 the membership of the Regent Candidate Advisory Council. The bill delegates five appointments each to the council from the Senate Majority leader and the Speaker of the House; four from the governor, and one member each appointed by the Senate and House minority leaders. Under Ten Eyck's proposal, geographic

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considerations in the regent selection would be limited to outstate, metro and at-large designations and not be influenced by congressional district. The bill was laid over for further discussion.

Sen. Dean Johnson (R-Willmar), presented S.F. 811. His bill calls for four council members each to be appointed by the Senate Rules Committee and Speaker of the House, eight members appointed by the governor, and eight appointed by combined boards of the University of Minnesota Alumni Association and the University of Minnesota Foundation. The council, under the legislation, would recommend candidates to the governor, who could approve the recommendations and forward them to the Legislature, or disapprove and request new recommendations. The bill was laid over for further consideration.

Regents discussion continued

The Higher Education Budget Division continued to hear presentations of bills reforming the regent selection process, Weds., Mar. 12. The committee was presented with three proposals, bringing the total to five.

Sen. Ember Reichgott Junge (DFL-New Hope), presented S.F. 935, a bill that makes changes to the University of Minnesota's Regent Candidate Advisory Council. The bill specifies that one-third of the council members are selected by the Governor, one-third by the Senate and House leadership, and one-third by the University's Alumni Association and the U of M Foundation. It also eliminates all constituency-based considerations in the selection process. Junge said, "This proposal, based on a report from the U of M Alumni Association Citizens' Committee on Regent Selection, makes the screening process more thorough and objective. And it distinguishes between a governance role and a political representation role for the regents. We have to ask ourselves, Do we want the regents to govern, or do we want them to represent constituencies?"

S.F. 905, authored by Sen. Richard Cohen (DFL-St. Paul), also prohibits constituency-based considerations, including those regarding faculty and student seats. Cohen said, "Under this legislation, two ex-officio regents, one each representing the students and the faculty, will be appointed." He said, "I think each of the proposals regarding this process has some merit, and I hope we can make a change this year that incorporates the best parts of each of them." Mary McLeod, chair of the Regent Candidate Advisory Council, said, "The council has a major concern about the congressional caucuses for screening regent candidates, and we think they should be eliminated. We often heard from some excellent, potential candidates who said they were not 'politically well-connected enough' to get through the caucus."

Senate Majority Leader Roger Moe (DFL-Erskine) proposed a measure that amends

the Minnesota Constitution to give the governor the power to appoint candidates to the at-large positions on the Board of Regents. Moe stated that he would introduce the legislation in the Senate and said, "This legislation won't get away from district representation on the board, but we could get away from the congressional caucuses." The five regent reform bills were laid over for further consideration.

Jobs, Energy, and Community Development

Brownfield cleanup bill advanced

The Jobs, Energy, and Community Development Committee okayed a contamination cleanup bill Thurs., Mar. 6. Chaired by Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton), the committee also advanced a bill relating to transmission lines.

S.F. 319, authored by Sen. Randy Kelly (DFL-St. Paul), modifies requirements of the contamination cleanup program and provides for redevelopment and job creation grants with a \$60 million appropriation from the lottery fund. Kelly said, "It's time we cleaned up lands that we've been polluting for the last 100 years. The sites in our inner cities that are near large pockets of the unemployed and the people most affected by welfare reform need to be cleaned up, developed, and get jobs found for the people who need them."

A number of people spoke in support of the bill, including the mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul. Sharon Sayles Belton, mayor of Minneapolis, said, "The problem in Minneapolis is not a lack of demand—it's a lack of clean land. We don't have to recruit companies; we have companies here waiting for land to be cleaned up so they can expand." The mayor of St. Paul, Norm Coleman, said, "Our economic vitality is tied into reclaiming polluted lands." Lorrie Lauder, representing the St. Paul Port Authority, said, "The companies who move onto these lands provide good jobs at livable wages, anywhere from \$10 to \$23 per hour." The bill was approved and re-referred to the Economic Development Budget Division.

Earlier in the meeting, Sen. Janet Johnson (DFL-North Branch) presented S.F. 590, a bill that permits the addition of high voltage transmission lines across the state border. Johnson said, "This bill doesn't loosen our standards throughout the state; it is unique to cross-border projects which require transmission lines." The bill was advanced to the Senate floor.

Assistance bill presented

A bill expanding telephone assistance programs was presented to the Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee Tues., Mar. 11. Chaired by Sen. Steven Novak (DFL-New Brighton), the committee also heard testimony on a bill regarding the University of Minnesota's proposed steam plant.

S.F. 740, authored by Sen. Steve Kelley (DFL-Hopkins), expands the eligibility for the state telephone assistance program to a poverty-qualified household including persons under the age of 18. The bill also raises the maximum surcharge from 10 to 20 cents a month. Kelley introduced an amendment that adds the development and implementation of three pilot programs to provide voice mail services to individuals meeting poverty-level criteria. Geri Suddereth, representing Twin Cities Community Voice Mail, testified in support of the bill and said, "Homeless and other poverty challenged people need phone service for three principle reasons—to find housing, jobs, and, and to protect victims of domestic abuse." The amendment and the bill were laid over for further consideration.

Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller (DFL-Minneapolis) presented S.F. 483, which provides \$6 million to the University of Minnesota to relocate its proposed steam heating plant off the riverfront. Mayor Sharon Sayles-Belton, of Minneapolis, stated her support of the bill and said, "We would like to see the plant moved to another site to preserve the historic nature of St. Anthony Falls and the part of the river that flows through the central core of downtown Minneapolis." Pogemiller pointed out that the University and the city were at odds over the project and said, "This facility is not river dependent. It's an issue of cost and timing." JoAnne Jensen, a senior vice president at the University of Minnesota, said, "We cannot afford further delays. The \$6 million proposed by Minneapolis still falls \$40 million short of what we need to relocate the plant, not to mention the delays in site selection, bids, and the permit process." The bill was laid over for further consideration.

Judiciary

Open hearings discussed

The Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls.), continued to hear testimony during afternoon and evening hearings, Mon., Mar. 10., on a bill amending the juvenile court process. SF. 747, authored by Sen. David Knutson (R-Burnsville), provides a uniform process for children in need of protection or services, provides certain notice in voluntary placements, modifies the reasonable efforts requirement when a child has been placed outside the home, clarifies and modifies time requirements for permanency planning, provides relatives earlier notice of permanency planning for a child, modifies grounds for termination of parental rights, provides a putative father registry, provides individual placement decisions for each child, provides administrative review of child abuse determinations, provides access to certain data on children, and opens hearings and court records in child protection matters.

In addition to S.F. 747, S.F. 855, also sponsored by Knutson, provides specifically for open juvenile court hearings and records

in proceedings involving children in need of protection or services and incorporates the recommendations of the Minnesota Supreme Court Foster Care and Adoption Task Force. The task force recommendations gave rise to language contained in both bills providing that child abuse and neglect hearings that were previously closed, may become public. The controversial language drew opposing viewpoints from state judges, guardians ad litem and social workers.

According to the published task force study, the majority of task force members believe that juvenile protection is largely unaccountable because it's a closed system and impervious to public scrutiny. The study states that although the closed system's purpose is to provide a protective, rehabilitative environment for parents and children by shielding them from scrutiny and stigmatization, it also allows abuses to continue. In addition, the study states that, because the juvenile protection system is closed, child abuse and neglect decisions are not truly based on a set of community standards.

Sen. Deanna Wiener (DFL-Eagan), said that she has concerns about allowing such information to enter the public domain and the possible effect of the information on children's lives now and later in their lives.

Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester), said that open hearings and the potential for media coverage may discourage relatives, who are familiar with the domestic situation, from reporting information. She said that the system is woefully underfunded, and that more funding is what is needed to assure that the system can function as it is intended. Kiscaden added that the purpose of closed hearings is to allow a child a second chance, and that, in an age of electronic information, what befalls a child may affect aspects of their adult lives.

Knutson said that publicity will promote public awareness concerning the improper handling of various children's cases, and that it may facilitate needed funding. He offered an amendment requiring open juvenile hearings in the Fourth Judicial District until the year 2000. The amendment provides that the Supreme Court will evaluate the open hearing process following its completion, and allows other judicial districts to open juvenile hearings if the district determines them beneficial to the child.

Sen. Leo Foley (DFL-Anoka), amended Knutson's amendment to allow discretionary, instead of mandatory, open hearings in the Fourth Judicial District, and to disallow other judicial districts from participation in open hearings. The committee approved the amendment.

Kiscaden offered an amendment allowing only individuals that provide social services or who are otherwise involved in child's care or education to attend child protection hearings, provided that they agree not to disclose hearing information. Language providing for a contempt of court penalty for individuals violating the privacy agreement was also incorporated into the amendment.

The committee agreed and adopted the amendment.

Relating to adoption provisions contained within S.F. 747, the committee adopted amendments, offered by Knutson, requiring that relatives and adults with whom a child is currently residing shall be notified in preparation of permanent placement hearings and in termination of parental rights petitions; defining a birth relative to mean a parent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, or a relationship established by blood or marriage; providing that the court shall appoint counsel at public expense for parents and legal guardians if they are unable to afford counsel; appointing two adults who were in the foster or adoptive care system to a child protection funding task force; requiring the court to appoint counsel if the child is age 12 or older, or 10 or 11 years of age and determined by the court to be sufficiently mature to participate in the proceedings; requiring interested individuals filing child protection petitions with the court to state their relationship to the child and other parties; and allowing the court to reject petitions that appear to be motivated solely to modify custody between the parents.

Kiscaden offered further amendments to S.F. 747. One amendment provides for the court to determine a child's preferences for an attorney when the child is of suitable age to express a preference. Another amendment assures the notification of parents of permanent placement determination hearings. The committee adopted the amendments, and S.F. 747 and S.F. 855 were laid over pending further discussion.

In other action, the committee heard a bill that would amend Minnesota law to comply with federal requirements regarding adoptive and foster care placement. S.F. 210, authored by Knutson, specifies that no Minnesota law may deny any person the opportunity to become an adoptive or foster parent on the basis of race, color, or national origin of the person or child. The bill also prohibits delaying or denying placement of a child on the basis of race, color or natural origin of the adoptive parent or foster parent. Knutson offered an amendment that makes it clear that relatives and important friends must be considered in child placement. The committee approved the bill as amended and re-referred it to the Health and Family Security Committee.

S.F. 813, authored by Ranum, authorizes communication or consent agreements between adoptive parents and birth parents, provides transfer of custody of a child to a relative by a consent decree, modifies the definition of family, and provides for a relative conference and relative care agreement following a report of child abuse or neglect.

Ranum offered an amendment preventing civil action to end a contact agreement between adoptive parents and birth parents unless proof is presented that the parties have attempted to resolve their differences through mediation. A second amendment,

by Ranum, defines "birth relative" as meaning a minor child's parent, stepparent, grandparent, brother, sister, uncle or aunt, and states that the relationship may be by blood or marriage.

Ranum said that the second amendment is intended to fit with the committee's apparent acceptance of that birth relative definition, and to insert it into S.F. 747. The committee laid the bill over pending agreement on language.

Children's bills gain

Members of the Judiciary Committee, chaired by Sen. Jane Ranum (DFL-Mpls.), met Weds., Mar. 12, to consider several bills dealing with children in need of protective services, out of home placements and adoption.

S.F. 747, authored by Sen. David Knutson (R-Burnsville), provides a uniform process for children in need of protection or service petitions. The bill also provides for notice in voluntary placements, clarifies and modifies time requirements for permanency planning, modifies grounds for termination of parental rights, provides for individualized placement decisions for each child and provides administrative review of child abuse determinations. Debate centered, primarily on an amendment placed on the bill at an earlier hearing regarding legal representation for children. The earlier amendment required the appointment of an attorney for children over the age of 12 and made the appointment optional for children aged 10 or 11. Sen. Allan Spear (DFL-Mpls.) offered an amendment to strike the language limiting the optional appointment of an attorney for 10 and 11 year olds. Spear said that some eight or nine year olds could be sufficiently mature to work with an attorney and that it was unnecessary to limit the bill. The amendment was adopted. Most debate on the bill had occurred at an earlier meeting. The measure was approved and re-referred to the Health and Family Security Committee.

Members also approved S.F. 855, a bill that originally opened CHIPS proceedings to the public. The bill, also authored by Knutson, was amended at a previous meeting to allow individuals who provide social services to the child or who are otherwise involved in the care or education of the child to attend the hearings, provided they agree not to disclose information from the hearing. The measure also was previously amended to require each district court administrator to conduct a survey of child protection services and provide a summary to each county board. An amendment, offered by Knutson, to open the proceedings to the public if it was determined to be in the best interest of the child failed to gain committee approval. The measure was approved and referred to the Crime Prevention and Judiciary Budget Division.

S.F. 813, authored by Ranum, was also approved and re-referred to the Health and Family Security Committee. The measure

Committee update

provides for the transfer of custody of a child to a relative by a consent decree, authorizes communication or contact agreements between adoptive parents and birth relatives and provides for a relative conference and relative care agreement following a report of child abuse or neglect.

A final bill relating to children was also endorsed by the panel. S.F. 122, sponsored by Sen. Martha Robertson (R-Minnetonka), requires notification of a child's placement or adoption to the other birth parent, requires background checks for adoption, defines the content of the postplacement assessment and report, permits court-ordered grandparent visitation with an adopted child, provides for recognition of adoption which occurs in a foreign country, and clarifies the definition of relative. The measure was re-referred to the Health and Family Security Committee.

Members also advanced two additional measures. S.F. 92, authored by Sen. Don Betzold (DFL-Fridley), is a technical bill providing for the disclosure and inspection of certain tax data. S.F. 278, authored by Sen. Sheila Kiscaden (R-Rochester), exempts local governments from paying a filing fee in forfeiture actions resulting from DWI-related offenses. S.F. 92 was approved and re-referred to the Crime Prevention Committee and S.F. 278 was approved and re-referred to the Human Resources Finance Committee.

K-12 Education Budget Division

On Fri., Mar. 7, Chair Lawrence Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls.) and the K-12 Budget Division heard from Department of Children, Families and Learning Commissioner Robert Wedl on the governor's budget proposal.

The governor's initiatives include: maintaining high-level learning standards through graduation standards and staff development, expanding access and school choices by removing charter school caps and restrictions, giving parents and teachers more power over education spending by offering tax credits and shelters, holding schools accountable for results through statewide testing, rewarding success through accountability measures, increasing the use of technology by equipping sites with cutting-edge computing capability, and achieving revenue redistribution through shifted formula weightings and portable funding.

The panel discussed the breakdown in funding that occurs when the Legislature tries to target money to certain areas. Sen. Gen Olson (R-Minnetrista) brought up the fact that even if the Legislature votes to shift formula weighting to provide a higher state funding of younger students, the districts will still receive the money in aggregate and are not bound to spend percentages as weighted. Wedl recognized the panel's frustrations but said changes are on the way. For example, he

said, the department now has the capability to ensure that compensatory revenue goes straight to the schools with the eligible students.

On the topic of non-English speakers, Pogemiller suggested that it might be beneficial to assess the impact of immigration waves over time in terms of supplemental funding for areas where a need may arise at first but then eventually plateau.

Discussion of pupil weighting resumed before adjournment, with Wedl discussing a possible hold harmless approach that would ensure that districts with fewer younger than older students were not unfairly hit by revenue readjustment.

Due to lack of time the bill was laid over for further discussion.

Policy bill discussed

Sen. Linda Sheid presented S.F. 623, an administrative and policy bill generated by the Department of Children, Families and Learning to the K-12 Education Budget Division, Wed. Mar. 12.

Provisions of the bill approved for inclusion in the omnibus education bill include a nonresident transportation provision eliminating the requirement that parents must appeal to the state before their children can receive free transportation from a non-resident district for travel within their resident district; a hold harmless provision for consolidating schools; First Grade Preparedness eligibility terms; entitlement for four-year-olds to receive transport to preparedness programs; annualization of data for districts operating less than a full year during the base year; elimination of two special education revenue programs to simplify reporting burdens; repealers of the sunsets on the American Indian Education Committee and the Multicultural Education Committee; permission for direct Indian post-secondary preparedness granting instead of requiring public school sponsorship; and metro magnet school granting.

The committee, chaired by Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls.), voted to hold over for further discussion sections providing for proposed bus purchase set asides and as well as the elimination of a repealer of the year 2000 sunset on current the education funding enacted in 1992.

S.F. 623 was laid over for further discussion due to lack of time.

Purpose of testing discussed

Is statewide testing, asked Rep. Becky Kelso (DFL-Shakopee), a public statement or an individual progress indicator? The Subcommittee on Statewide Testing, chaired by Kelso and Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller (DFL-Mpls.) dealt with this question Thurs., Mar. 6, hearing testimony from stakeholders regarding upcoming state testing policy. Discussion also cleaved to suggestions and terminology from a commissioned report by Robert Bruininks of the University of Minnesota's College of

Education and Human Development. His study is a consideration of the feasibility and design of accountability measures that could be used to evaluate the performance of Minnesota schools. Testing is one component of his research.

"The MEA does support broad-based, multi-indicator tests, said Cheryl Furrer of the Minnesota Teachers Association. Vernae Hasbargen of the Minnesota Rural Education Association testified that the state's profile of learning element of the graduation rule will be the true reformer of the system. "Testing and grad standards are same old same old," she said. Hasbargen took the opportunity to also urge Legislators to be cautious in using test scores to promote competition between schools. "Sharing will be discouraged," she said, "if schools are aggressively competing."

Coalition for Children with Disabilities representative Bob Brick said the state must dictate that all students take the test, or explicitly provide for alternate methods of testing students with disabilities. Otherwise, he said, there is a very real danger of kids being routed into special education or even being held back by schools fearing lower overall class or school performance.

The business community was represented by the Minnesota Business Partnership's Duane Benson, who said that in a recent survey of its member employers, 42 percent indicated that high school graduates did not have adequate skills to begin working at the expected levels. David Swan, a business owner, echoed this observation, but said the state should not be spending money on assessment. "Testing will not accomplish the goal of employability," he said.

Bob Meeks of the School Boards Association spoke in support of testing, but gave the panel one caveat, "If we don't use this test to boost student performance, than let's not do it," he said. In presenting his findings, Robert Bruininks agreed. "the most difficult issue," he said, "is ensuring the connection between assessment and teaching and learning." Bruininks said presently schools do not use common sets of standards. The question of whether tests should be primarily diagnostic or public, he said, is in some ways up to the the Legislature. By way of affirmation, he said reported results of last year's pilot standards testing were not as discouraging as they might initially seem. "Last year," he said, "80 percent of students below the cut score were within ten points of it. These students are doing pretty well, as well as they ever have in history. We have to keep this in mind as we ask ourselves the serious questions of how we can raise the bar."

Local and Metropolitan Government Committee

Land used discussed

The Local and Metropolitan Government Committee continued its discussion of land use initiatives Mon., Mar. 10. Chaired by Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy), the

committee also advanced a number of bills.

S.F. 738, authored by Sen. Steven Morse (DFL-Dakota), and S.F. 820, presented by Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato), are both land use bills. David Weirens, policy analyst for the Association of Minnesota Counties, said, "While we have concerns with both bills, we are confident that S.F. 738, has the more community-based approach of the two." Jim Solem of the Metropolitan Council said, "We think the Hottinger bill is the more effective, mostly because of the timing as it calls for something to be done now." Glenn Dorfmann, speaking on behalf of the Minnesota Association of Realtors said, "We support both bills. There is a need for land use planning, but there are two things to consider--first, any sort of boundary line needs to be carefully considered, because once you draw a line, the price of land inside the line goes up; and secondly, local government should be involved in the planning process." The bills were laid over for further consideration.

S.F. 612, authored by Sen. Charles Wiger (DFL-North St. Paul), authorizes the Washington County Board to make the offices of recorder and auditor/treasurer appointive rather than elective. The bill was approved, however, and advanced to the Senate floor.

Disposition of other bills proceeded quickly. S.F. 691, presented by Sen. David Knutson (R-Burnsville), adds certain duties to the office of state demographer. The bill was advanced to the Senate floor. S.F. 200, authored by Sen. Linda Scheid (DFL-Brooklyn Park), provides for the collection, by the Brooklyn Park Economic Development Authority, of delinquent condominium assessments. The bill was re-referred to the Committee on Taxes. Sen. Dan Stevens (R-Mora) authored S.F. 810, a bill relating to net debt limits of local government. The bill was okayed and advanced to the Committee on Taxes.

Four bills okayed

Four bills were presented to the Local and Metropolitan Government Committee Weds., Mar. 12. The committee, chaired by Sen. Jim Vickerman (DFL-Tracy) advanced the four bills.

S.F. 647, authored by Sen. Leonard Price (DFL-Woodbury), permits property owners in Washington County to have personal information, such as names and addresses, deleted from lists sold by the county to marketing and telemarketing firms. The possibility of extending the option statewide was discussed by the members, some of whom said they will raise the matter with their constituents. The bill was advanced in its original form to the Senate floor.

Vickerman authored two bills. S.F. 1071 authorizes the removal of remains buried in the old Maplewood Cemetery in Luverne for reburial in the new Maplewood Cemetery. The legislation is needed because Minnesota cemetery law is silent on the process for disinterment and reburial. The bill was okayed and advanced to the Senate floor.

S.F. 869 authorizes towns and counties to create boundary commissions. Boundary commissions are permitted only to cities under current law. After an oral amendment clarifying the language to prevent overlapping jurisdictions, the bill as amended was approved and advanced to the Senate floor.

Sen. Sandra Pappas (DFL-St. Paul) presented S.F. 525, a bill expanding evaluation criteria used by the Metropolitan Council in procuring wastewater treatment facilities. The bill also provides for internal competitive proposals to be classified as confidential data. The latter provision gives employees of a political subdivision an opportunity to bid on a proposal with the same assurances of confidentiality as other entities may expect to receive, a provision not covered under statute at this time.

Committee on Taxes

Two bills advance

The Subcommittee on Income and Sales Tax, chaired by Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing) moved three bills, Tues., Mar. 11.

H.F. 293, sponsored by Sen. William Belanger (R-Bloomington), makes primarily technical changes. The subcommittee approved the bill and referred it to the Committee on Taxes.

S.F. 541, sponsored by Sen. Warren Limmer (R-Maple Grove), imposes regulations on payroll service firms that collect withholding taxes for more than one employer for the purpose of filing and depositing returns for those employers with the commissioner of revenue. The committee approved the bill and sent it to the Committee on Taxes.

S.F. 237, sponsored by Sen. John Hottinger (DFL-Mankato), provides an income tax credit to individuals of up to 50 percent for contributions made to nonprofit institutions of higher learning that are located within the state, or to nonprofit organizations that are operated exclusively for the benefit of state institutions of higher education. The credit allowance prompted discussion among some Senators who said that the credit was reasonable, and among others who said that it was too high, and that other contribution incentives should be explored. The bill was laid over pending further information and discussion.

Three bills advance

The Committee on Taxes, chaired by Sen. Douglas Johnson (DFL-Tower), moved three bills, Weds., Mar. 12.

S.F. 541, sponsored by Sen. Warren Limmer (R-Maple Grove), imposes regulations on payroll service firms that collect withholding taxes for more than one employer for the purpose of filing and depositing returns for those employers with the commissioner of revenue. The committee approved the bill and sent it to the Committee on Governmental Operations and Budget.

S.F. 456, sponsored by William Belanger (R-Bloomington), allows special taxing districts to make up amounts in their current-year levy certification; requires the taxpayer to bring action in county tax court for a disputed amount and allows the treasurer, instead of the county board, to refund erroneous payments; and provides that cities having a 1995 population of 500 or less are exempted from the local performance aid program. The committee approved the bill and sent it to the Senate floor.

H.F. 293, also sponsored by Belanger, makes primarily technical and administrative changes. The committee approved the bill and sent it to the Senate floor.

Transportation Budget Division

License bill advances

The Transportation Budget Division, chaired by Sen. Janet Johnson (DFL-North Branch), approved a bill Weds., Mar. 12, involving a new driver's licensing process.

S.F. 599, authored by Sen. Ember Junge (DFL-New Hope), establishes youth-oriented driver improvement clinics, requires drivers under age 18 to hold instruction permits for 12 violation-free months before receiving a two-wheeled vehicle endorsement, establishes a graduated licensing system with a provisional licensing phase, requires a two-phase driver's education program, restricts driving privileges for holders of instruction permits and provisional licenses, and requires a violation-free period before advancement to the next license stage.

The division approved an amendment to set the provisional license fee at \$9.50. The bill was approved and sent to the Transportation Committee.

S.F. 804, sponsored by Sen. Steve Murphy (DFL-Red Wing), exempts port development project plans from the statutory requirement that they be reviewed by the Legislature following their entry into an assistance agreement by the commissioner of transportation. The bill authorizes the commissioner to pay dredging costs necessary to open a new commercial navigation facility project, provides access to on-shore facilities from existing channels, and provides for fleeting operations.

The division approved the bill for incorporation into the Transportation Budget Division bill.

S.F. 496, authored by Sen. Dennis Frederickson (R-New Ulm) allows payment of a vehicle registration tax to be prorated from the time a used vehicle becomes subject to taxation upon transfer from a motor vehicle dealer, and permits a dealer to avoid paying registration tax when it would otherwise become due on a vehicle that is not used, but is held solely for sale. The bill further states that after the vehicle is sold, leased or rented, the new owner or lessee must pay the prorated tax for the remainder of the year. The committee laid the bill over pending further information.

Preview

The Minnesota Senate Week at a Glance

Monday, March 17

Ad Hoc Committee on Information Technology

Chair: Sen. Steve Kelley

8:30 a.m. Room 112 Capitol

Agenda: Discussion on MNet; overview of Minnesota Year 2000 Project.

Rules and Administration Subcommittee on Committees

Chair: Sen. Roger D. Moe

8:45 a.m. Room 107 Capitol

Agenda: Appointments.

Rules and Administration Committee

Chair: Sen. Roger D. Moe

9 a.m. Room 107 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 90-Cohen: Legislative committees and commissions. Personnel issues, appointments.

The Senate will meet at 10 a.m.

Commerce Subcommittee on Insurance

Chair: Sen. John Hottinger

12 noon Room 123 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 1208-Berglin: Minnesota Care. S.F. 920-Morse: Regulating health plans, modifying growth limit regulations.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Chair: Sen. Bob Lessard

12 noon Room 107 Capitol

Agenda: Sale of tax forfeited lands: S.F. 307-Ten Eyck: Cass County. S.F. 778-Lourey: Aitkin County. S.F. 846-Sams: Becker County. S.F. 867-Hottinger: Conveyance of tax-forfeited land to city of Mankato. S.F. 187-Samuels: Crow Wing County. S.F. 309-Stevens: Mille Lacs County. S.F. 1128-Lessard: Private sale of state lands to wild rice lessees.

Judiciary Committee

Chair: Sen. Jane Ranum

12 noon Room 15 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 97-Betzold: Tuberculosis isolation and detention. S.F. 199-Foley: Mortuary science. S.F. 877-Foley: Seat belts and child passenger restraint systems evidence admissibility. SF 627-Ranum: Expert review.

Crime Prevention Committee

Chair: Sen. Allan Spear

2 p.m. Room 15 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 133-Kelly: Crime victim impact statement, notification, reparations, extension of victim and witness council. S.F. 364-Knutson: Crime victim notification, victim and witness council extension, juvenile data, burden of proof in child custody, visitation sought by offender. S.F. 772-Kelly, R.C.: Authority of Ombudsman for Corrections in local facilities. S.F. 933-Spear: HS graduation incentives program. S.F. 1020-Spear: Youth anti-violence theater grant program. S.F. 1175-Ranum: Juvenile court authority over school districts.

Local and Metropolitan Government Committee

Chair: Sen. Jim Vickerman

2 p.m. Room 107 Capitol

Agenda: H.F. 117/S.F. 6-Junge: Local government licensing of tobacco sales. S.F. 389-Price: Individual sewage treatment systems. S.F. 535-Wiger: Redesign and employee compensation for exceeding redesign plan goals. S.F. 723-Vickerman: Regional development commissions. S.F. 1116-Higgins: Wireless service providers.

Human Resources Finance Committee

Chair: Sen. Linda Berglin

4 p.m. Room 15 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 1-Samuels: Welfare reform bill.

Environment and Agriculture Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Steven Morse

6:30pm Room 107 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 63-Vickerman: Beaver damage control board. S.F. 453-Frederickson: Carry forward of SCORE block grants by OEA. S.F. 720-Dille: Livestock odor research. S.F. 287-Lessard: Snowmobile registration fees and gas tax revenues to snowmobiles. S.F. 377-Betzold: City of Fridley loan forgiveness. S.F. 184-Stevens: Toxics in products law modifications.

Judiciary Subcommittee on Family Law

Chair: Sen. Leo Foley

6:30 p.m. Room 112

Agenda: S.F. 554-Knutson: Changes to child support enforcements. S.F. 830-Cohen: Classifying data on certain obligors. S.F. 913-Cohen: Child support enforcement data disclosure. S.F. 912-Lourey: Providing for parent education and cooperation for the children program pilot projects.

Local and Metropolitan Government Committee

Chair: Sen. Jim Vickerman

6:30 p.m. Room 15 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 1140-Janezich: Baseball stadium.

Tuesday, March 18

Environment and Agriculture Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Steven Morse

8 a.m. Room 123 Capitol

Agenda: DNR budget overview

Family and Early Childhood Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Pat Piper

8 a.m. Room 15 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 870-Pappas: Child care demonstration projects. S.F. 716-Pappas: Adult basic education. S.F. 797-Lourey: Community collaborative appropriation. S.F. 1193-Foley: Providing stipends to neighborhood organizations for the delivery of services to children and families. S.F. 981-Lourey: Child care development education loans; and child care provider training initiatives. S.F. 1088-Higgins: Early childhood family education programs. S.F. 690-Higgins: Basicsliding fee program; portability issues; establishing eligibility priority.

Higher Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. LeRoy Stumpf

8 a.m. Room 107 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 289-Berglin: Welfare reform and

higher education. S.F. 1075-Murphy: HESO budget. S.F. 692-Hottinger: Tuition reduction. S.F. 713-Kelley, S.P.: Clarifying MnSCU mission. S.F. 1313-Stumpf: National Service Scholars. S.F. 1144-Larson: HESO, regulation of private business, trade and correspondence schools.

K-12 Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller

8 a.m. Room 112 Capitol

Agenda: To be announced.

Health and Family Security Committee

Chair: Sen. John Hottinger

10 a.m. Room 15 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 760-Kiscaden: DHS health care for elderly and disabled. S.F. 1161-Berglin: Expanding MA eligibility for the elderly waiver program. Presentation on nursing home moratorium by Linda Sutherland, director of Facility and Provider Compliance Division, DHS.

Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee

Chair: Sen. Steven Novak

10 a.m. Room 123 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 756-Johnson, D.H.: Prohibiting landlords from including lease provisions penalizing tenants for seeking police. S.F. 18-Kelly: Minimum wage.

Governmental Operations and Veterans Committee

Chair: Sen. James Metzen

12 noon Room 15 Capitol

Agenda: To be announced.

Transportation Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Janet Johnson

12 noon Room 112 Capitol

Agenda: MnDot Metro Division discussion on unmet needs in Metro Area. S.F. 861-Flynn: Changing CSAH formula; changing gasoline tax rates; allowing for Metro Area sales tax. S.F. 520-Kelley, S.: Motor vehicles sales dedication to transportation fund constitutional amendment. S.F. 1329-Johnson, D.E.: Motor fuel tax increase for transportation and transit purposes.

Agriculture and Rural Development Committee

Chair: Sen. Dallas Sams

2 p.m. Room 107 Capitol

Agenda: S.F. 1181-Moe, R.D.: Industrial hemp regulation and licensing. S.F. 904-Murphy: Mercury manometer replacement. S.F. 1102-Stumpf: Bakeries in retail food stores regulations. S.F. 1111-Fishbach: Changing well water testing requirements for milk producers.

Commerce Committee

Chair: Sen. Sam Solon

2 p.m. Room 112 Capitol

Agenda: SF 316-Junge: Prohibiting certain brand labels of liquor; prohibiting certain bottle sizes, regulating home delivery of alcoholic beverages.

Rules and Administration Subcommittee on Senate Information Systems

Chair: Sen. Leonard Price
2 p.m. Room 125 Capitol
Agenda: To be announced.

Health and Family Security Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Don Samuelson
4 p.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: Public testimony on budget.

Health and Family Security Committee

Chair: Sen. John Hottinger
6 p.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 36-Sams: Assisted living facilities. S.F. 313-Belle Plaine nursing home moratorium exception. S.F. 376-Samuelson: Modifying provisions for the nursing home medical assistance certification moratorium. S.F. 495-Novak: Diabetes outpatient self-management coverage. S.F. 1146-Solon: Miller-Dwan medical center asset transfer. S.F. 589-Fredrickson: Nursing facility payment rates. S.F. 799-Johnson, D.E.: Kandyohi nursing facility reimbursement rate change. S.F. 806-Klies: Hospital construction moratorium. S.F. 915-Berglin: Providing a nursing facility rate exception. S.F. 1174-Berglin: Nursing home moratorium exception.

Judiciary Subcommittee on Data Privacy and Information Policy

Chair: Sen. Don Betzold
7:30 p.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 982-Ranum: Recommendations of the Criminal Justice Information Policy work group. S.F. 428-Kelley: North Star on-line service. S.F. 100-Runbeck: Minnesota Office of Technology. S.F. 502-Betzold: Legislative task force to make recommendations on information policy.

Wednesday, March 19

Family and Early Childhood Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Pat Piper
8 a.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 1042-Scheid: Child care facility improvement grants, and capacity building grants. S.F. 623-Scheid: Children, Families and learning Administrative bill, Articles 3 and 4. S.F. 289-Berglin: Child care assistance under TANF program.

Higher Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. LeRoy Stumpf
8 a.m. Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: Presentations on U of M Specials. S.F. 1035-Kleis: St. Cloud Hospital/Mayo family practice residency. S.F. 1054-Murphy: Technical education diplomas.

K-12 Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller
8 a.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: To be announced.

Governmental Operations and Veterans Committee

Chair: Sen. James Metzen
10 a.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: To be announced.

Transportation Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Janet Johnson
10 a.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: Continuation of Tuesday's agenda. S.F. 1097-Pappas: Revolving loan account.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Chair: Sen. Bob Lessard
12 noon Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 574-Scheid: Angling assistance to disabled. S.F. 288-Lessard: Youth residents deer hunting. S.F. 1115-Novak: Repealing hazardous products labeling law.

Judiciary Committee

Chair: Sen. Jane Ranum
12 noon Room 15
Agenda: To be announced.

Crime Prevention Committee

Chair: Sen. Allan Spear
2 p.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 375-Belanger: Fleeing a peace officer while driving a motorized recreational vehicle. S.F. 812-Kelly: Modifying sex offender community notification law. S.F. 881-Kelly: Extending sex offender community notification to federal offenders. S.F. 993-Piper: HIV prevention relating to correctional officers, crime victims, and intravenous drug users.

Commerce Committee

Chair: Sen. Sam Solon
2 p.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 339-Metzen: Omnibus banking bill (also includes S.F. 872 and S.F. 282). S.F. 868-Higgins: Minneapolis Building contractors. S.F. 1094-Scheid: Regulating compensation by licensee to tenants for referrals.

Governmental Operations Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Leonard Price
2 p.m. 125 Capitol
Agenda: Budget presentations: Capitol Area Architectural & Planning Board, Ethical Practices Board and Arts Board.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

Chair: Sen. Steven Morse
2 p.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 51-Janezich/H.F. 73-Rukavina: Eveleth Police and Fire. S.F. 798-Johnson, D.H./H.F. 907-Garcia: Richfield Fire. S.F. 1113-Solon: Duluth Fire. S.F. 1183-Kelly, R.C./H.F. 1267-Osthoff: St. Paul Police and Fire. H.F. 1273-Knoblach: Local Police and Fire legal expenses. S.F. 717-Metzen/H.F. 796-Delmont: Deferred compensation.

Local and Metropolitan Government Committee

Chair: Sen. Jim Vickerman
2 p.m. Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 738-Morse and S.F. 820-Hottinger: Land use planning bill.

Crime Prevention and Judiciary Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Randy Kelly
4 p.m. Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: To be announced.

Economic Development Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Tracy Beckman
4 p.m. Room 118 Capitol
Agenda: Dept. of Public Service budget.

Education Finance Committee

Chair: Sen. Keith Langseth
4 p.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: Family involvement educational programs.

Health and Family Security Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Don Samuelson

4 p.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: Testimony on governor's budget.

Property Taxes and Local Government Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Sandra Pappas
4 p.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: LGA and HACA proposals.

Health and Family Security Committee

Chair: Sen. John Hottinger
6 p.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 1158-Kiscaden: Changing provisions for families and children health care. (Consumer protection health care bills if passed out of commerce committee.) S.F. 122-Robertson: DHS adoption bill. S.F. 210-Knutson: DHS foster care/heritage act. S.F. 813-Ranum: Relative care and open adoption agreements. S.F. 747-Knutson: Providing a uniform process for CHIPS children.

Joint Senate Local and Metropolitan Government Committee and House Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs Committee

Chairs: Sen. Jim Vickerman and Rep. Ann Rest
7 p.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: Presentation on "State of the State" of Minnesota Indian Tribes.

Judiciary Committee

Chair: Sen. Jane Ranum
7 p.m. Room - to be announced
Agenda: To be announced.

Thursday, March 20

The Senate will meet at 8 a.m.

Health and Family Security Committee

Chair: Sen. John Hottinger
10 a.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 328-Lourey: DHS surcharge/provider tax bill. Testimony on provider tax.

Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee

Chair: Sen. Steven Novak
10 a.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. XXXX: Convention center. Housing, economic development, job training initiatives.

Governmental Operations and Veterans Committee

Chair: Sen. James Metzen
12 noon Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: To be announced.

Transportation Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Janet Johnson
12 noon Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 1189-Flynn: Transit assistance. S.F. 984-Flynn: Delinquent traffic offense fines.

Agriculture and Rural Development Committee

Chair: Sen. Dallas Sams
2 p.m. Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 338-Sams: Agricultural land ownership limitation changes for corporations, LLCs, pension or investment funds, and limited partnerships. S.F. 560-Pariseau: Changing fertilizer fees and reporting requirements. S.F. 1292-Morse: Rural dispute resolution procedure. S.F. 1134-Sams: Feedlot permit rules.

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Commerce Committee

Chair: Sen. Sam Solon
2 p.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: Omnibus Liquor bill: S.F. 277-Solon: Importing malt liquor to a central distribution warehouse—also containing the following liquor bills: S.F. 149-Lourey: Modifying time of day for sale of liquor; S.F. 162-Langseth: 3 liquor licenses in Moorhead; S.F. 469-Lesewski: Modifying liability insurance for liquor retailers; S.F. 1221-Oliver: Sale of 3.2 malt liquor on Sundays 10 am; S.F. 1270-Janezich: Sale of liquor at community events by an on-sale license holder; S.F. 1326-Wiger: Allowing liquor to be sold at St. Paul Civic Center during professional sporting events.

Environment and Agriculture Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Steven Morse
4 p.m. Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: DNR budget overview. S.F. 317-Ten Eyck: Wind damage mitigation. S.F. 538-Johnson, D.J.: White pine forests appropriation.

Health and Family Security Committee

Chair: Sen. John Hottinger
6 p.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 991-Piper: HIV education and prevention. Bills from other committees.

Local and Metropolitan Government Committee

Chair: Sen. Jim Vickerman
6 p.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 1140-Janezich: Baseball stadium.

Crime Prevention Committee

Chair: Sen. Allan Spear
7 p.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 285-Marty: DWI license plate impoundment and forfeiture. S.F. 372-Junge: DWI felony. S.F. 579-Marty: DWI suspicionless stops. S.F. 587-Knutson: Two-year enhanced DWI gross misdemeanor. S.F. 614-Neuville: DWI revocation period, license reinstatement. S.F. 632-Knutson: DWI license plate impoundment expansion. S.F. 633-Knutson: Recreational vehicle, motorboat DWI implied consent; DWI priors and evidence. S.F. 942-Junge: DWI evidence; expansion of forfeiture priors; BAC on driving record. S.F. 947-Neuville: Double revocation, up to \$1,000 assessment penalties for over 0.20 BAC violators. S.F. 956-Knutson: Commercial

vehicle DWI violations. S.F. 959-Spear: Comprehensive enhanced penalties and requirements for over 0.20 BAC DWI violators. S.F. 962-Wiener: 0.06 per se BAC for criminal vehicular homicide or injury if driver has prior DWI's. S.F. 985-Foley: DWI procedures; health professional reporting of DWI injuries.

Friday, March 21

Family and Early Childhood Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Pat Piper
8 a.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. XXXX-Piper: Family and early childhood education omnibus budget bill.

Higher Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. LeRoy Stumpf
8 a.m. Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 521-Ten Eyck: Repayment of law school loans. S.F. 701-Pariseau: Changing residency requirement for Minnesotans after military duty. S.F. 326-Stumpf: Wheat scab research. S.F. 833-Larson: Audits of student associations; revoking some mandatory fees.

K-12 Education Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Lawrence Pogemiller
8 a.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: To be announced.

Health and Family Security Committee

Chair: Sen. John Hottinger
10 a.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 391-Solon: ICF/MR reimbursement geographic designation change. S.F. 28-Samuels: ICF rate imposition. S.F. 552-Samuels: Nursing home reimbursement. S.F. 921-Morse: Establishing an alternative quality assurance pilot project in Southeastern MN. S.F. 754-Betzold: Separate annual audit exception for a county operated day training and habilitation program. S.F. 1034-Betzold: Two intermediate care facilities reconfiguration project. S.F. 1160-Lesewski: Lyon County ICF downsizing project.

Jobs, Energy and Community Development Committee

Chair: Sen. Steven Novak
10 a.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: Telecommunication issues.

Environment and Natural Resources Committee

Chair: Sen. Bob Lessard
12 noon Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 63-Vickerman: Beaver damage control board. S.F. 1346-Dille: State review of county feedlots. S.F. 892-Lessard: Shooting hours for migratory game birds. S.F. 448-Janezich: Expanding membership on Mineral Coordinating Committee. Other bills may be added.

Crime Prevention and Judiciary Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Randy Kelly
2 p.m. Room 15 Capitol
Agenda: To be announced.

Judiciary Subcommittee on Family Law

Chair: Sen. Leo Foley
2 p.m. Room 123 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 930-Junge: Providing requirements for family visitation centers. S.F. 241-Kiscaden: Modifying the definition of domestic abuse.

Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement

Chair: Sen. Steven Morse
2 p.m. Room 112 Capitol
Agenda: S.F. 995-Morse/H.F. 1129-Kahn: TRA, change in sabbatical leave contribution amounts. S.F. 997-Morse/H.F. 1128-Kahn: Higher education supplemental plan, modification in contribution rate. S.F. 922-Morse/H.F. 1127-Kahn: IRAP, various administrative changes. S.F. 996-Morse/H.F. 1130-Kahn: IRAP and higher education supplemental plan, various administrative changes. S.F. 1171-Morse/H.F. 1270-Kahn: TRA and IRAP, modification in reporting and remittance requirements.

Property Taxes and Local Government Budget Division

Chair: Sen. Sandra Pappas
2 p.m. Room 107 Capitol
Agenda: FIF bills.

Judiciary Subcommittee on Data Privacy and Information Policy

Chair: Sen. Don Betzold
4:30 p.m. Room 125 Capitol
Agenda: To be announced.