



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
MINNESOTA



CAPITOL
LETTER

MAY 4, 2018

NEWS DASHBOARD

Sexual Harassment

Rep. Rod Hamilton [reported a sexual harassment claim](#) made against him in a police report. The Human Resources Department of the legislature has begun the complaint process under the new House Policy on Discrimination and Harassment. Meanwhile, Rep. Hamilton has been removed as Chair of the House Agriculture Committee.

Bonding

House majority [has released](#) its bonding plan.

Mega-Omnibus Bill

The supplemental budget bill (SF 3656) is [four separate omnibus bills combined into one](#). [Critics argue](#) such a bill, if it became law, would violate the Single Subject Clause of [the Minnesota Constitution, article IV](#), section 17: "No law shall embrace more than one subject..." Before retiring from the legislature, former Rep. Thissen [had similar concerns](#) about the lack of transparency at the legislature.

Education

- The Omnibus Education Finance bills [HF 4328](#) and [SF 3928](#) include many bills introduced and rolled over by the House Education Finance Committee or Senate Education committee. The House Education Bill has passed but there were several amendments such as [a five-star rating system](#), which was defeated in the Senate on a motion by Sen. Susan Kent. Commissioner of Education Brenda Cassellius is opposed to the five-star rating system.
- 59 school districts are facing budget shortfalls, and Rep. Paul Thissen had requested emergency for some of those districts before [being appointed to the Minnesota Supreme Court](#). Governor Dayton [has asked lawmakers](#) for \$138 million in emergency funding for Minnesota School Districts.
- Governor Dayton also has urged lawmakers to remove the school safety legislation from other controversial bills. He has asked legislators to ensure that the safety of our schools is primary for districts.
- The Legislative Auditor also [released a Report on Early Childhood programs](#) in Minnesota. The report can be summarized by one of its key findings: *"The array of early childhood programs is complex and fragmented, due in part to differences in the way programs are funded and variation in their eligibility and other requirements. For example, although the programs are primarily aimed at low income families, they define income eligibility differently."*

BILL TRACKING: VOTING RIGHTS & ELECTION LAW

Relevant position(s): The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. Support improvements in election laws regulating election procedures, voting, and school district elections. Allow citizens living in the community on probation or parole to vote.

HF4104

Mail balloting in any town or city with fewer than 400 registered voters authorized.

- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** Ellen Silva and Marcy Woodruff - Heard in House Government Operations & Elections Committee on 4/11/2018. This bill allows any town or city with fewer than 400 registered voters to use mail balloting. Currently this is allowed only for cities/towns outside of the 7-county metro area; this bill is simply to extend that permission to those towns/cities in the metro area, too. Secretary of State Steve Simon testified that his office supports giving all towns who meet the parameters of the law the OPTION of mail-in balloting. A Dakota County election official and a representative of the Association of Townships also testified in support of this bill. No real discussion or disagreement. Informational discussion only, so no vote taken.
- **Last Action:** Author added Hansen
- **Action Date:** 4/12/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/972458>

SF3839

Statewide voter registration system modernizing, securing and updating appropriation

- **Position:** Support
- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** This bill would provide critical funding to modernize the Statewide Vote Registration System, allowing Minnesota to receive additional federal funding as well. Some of the money would go to cybersecurity.
- **Last Action:** Joint rule 2.03, referred to Rules and Administration
- **Action Date:** 4/12/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/973937>

SF3021

Elections administration technical changes

- **Position:** Monitor
- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** This is the Senate Elections Omnibus Bill. Mostly noncontroversial. However, one provision alters how cities and towns could switch from even-year elections to odd-year elections. League of Minnesota Cities was neutral on the bill, as was Secretary of State. Only one city testified against, with several private citizens from that city testifying in favor. DFL members opposed this amendment, but it passed on a party-line vote. Due to that single provision, DFL members opposed the bill, and it passed on a party-line vote.
- **Last Action:** Second Reading
- **Action Date:** 4/9/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/966800>

BILL TRACKING: MONEY IN POLITICS

Relevant position(s): Support improvements in election laws regulating campaign finance.

HF4385

Omnibus tax bill.

- **Position:** Amend
- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** Parts of this bill would repeal or defund the political contribution refund program. The program allows small donors who donate \$50 to a candidate to receive a refund from the state. This ensures that more people participate in funding campaigns and that candidates do not have to rely on big money and special interests to fund their campaigns.
- **Last Action:** Third reading Passed vote: 34-32
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/977412>

SF3306

Campaign finance additional definitions; disclosure, independent expenditures, noncampaign disbursements, reporting, coordinated and noncoordinated expenditures, and miscellaneous campaign finance modifications

- **Position:** Amend
- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** Overall a good bill, but there were a few provisions that were not ideal. LWV Minnesota staff and Common Cause Minnesota has worked to improve the bill to remove a provision that would allow created an exemption to coordination for candidates to provide potential donor lists to Super PACs. Unfortunately, legislators on both sides of the aisle resisted the proposed change or claimed it was unnecessary.
<http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/SessionDaily/Story/13312>
- **Last Action:** Returned from House
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/969497>

SF3656

Omnibus supplemental budget bill

- **Position:** Amend
- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** One provision of this bill prohibits the Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board from proposing rules to interpret our campaign finance laws. Taking away this ability means the Board may only adopt rules where no interpretation is required. This would result in a challenge to virtually every rule adopted by the board. Clear rules enforced by the Board provide a level playing field for everyone.
- **Last Action:** Bill was passed as amended vote: 77-49
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/972243>

BILL TRACKING: FAIR MAPS

SF3656

Omnibus supplemental budget bill

- **Position:** Amend
- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** One provision in this bill would add mediocre redistricting principles into law. For example, there would be no provision preventing preferential treatment of a party or candidate. Thus, the principles would allow the legislature to engage in partisan gerrymandering. More complete principles could be adopted instead.
- **Last Action:** Bill was passed as amended vote: 77-49
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/972243>

BILL TRACKING: NATURAL RESOURCES

Relevant Position(s): Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, waste management and water resources.

HF2802

Regulatory certainty provided to municipalities that construct publicly owned treatment works to comply with new or modified effluent limitations.

- **Position:** Oppose
- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** Gwen Myers - On February 28, the House Environment & Natural Resources Committee heard HF 2802. The bill concerns regulations for municipalities that construct publicly owned treatment works to comply with new or modified sewage limitations. The statute would not require compliance for 16 years for certain facilities. The League of Minnesota Cities testified in favor. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency was neutral. The Minnesota Center on Environmental Advocacy opposed, noting that a similar provision was adopted last session but was found by an Administrative Law Judge to have violated the federal Clean Water Act. The bill was sent to the General Register.
- **Last Action:** House rule 1.21, placed on Calendar for the Day Tuesday, May 08, 2018
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/958083>

HF2940

Legislative approval required for water pollution fees.

- **Last Action:** House rule 1.21, placed on Calendar for the Day Tuesday, May 08, 2018
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/959948>

HF4003

Enforcement of water appropriation permit conditions temporarily prohibited.

- **Last Action:** House rule 1.21, placed on Calendar for the Day Tuesday, May 08, 2018
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/971726>

SF3596

Minimum biodiesel content level for diesel fuel modification at certain times; number 1 diesel exemption extension

- **Last Action:** House rule 1.21, placed on Calendar for the Day Tuesday, May 08, 2018
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/971320>

HF3280

Wild rice water findings established and listing authorized, application of water quality standards nullified and restricted, report required, and money appropriated.

- **Notes from LWV Minnesota:** <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/SessionDaily/Story/13323>
- **Last Action:** Senate conferees Eichorn; Ingebrigtsen; Tomassoni
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/963979>

BILL TRACKING: HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HF3689

Birth defect information system changes made.

- **Position:** Julia Wallace - Some discussion about data on fetal death. (see <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/SessionDaily/Story/13202>). Disagreement between committee members on assumption of transparency (opt-out) vs. opt-in. Rep. Lucero spoke on this bill and others stating there is a "culture shift" and people now want to restrict data and have the choice to opt in. Chair Scott agreed. An amendment Scott had proposed was withdrawn. Rep. Hilstrom and Rep. Dehn spoke for an assumption of openness (i.e., opt-out).
- **Last Action:** House rule 1.21, placed on Calendar for the Day Monday, May 07, 2018
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/969134>

SF614

Minnesota athletic trainers act modifications

- **Last Action:** Third Reading Passed
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/809060>

SF3019

Tribal vital record keeping provisions modifications

- **Last Action:** Third Reading Passed
- **Action Date:** 5/3/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/964867>

HF3389

Child support modification presumptions modified.

- **Last Action:** Third reading Passed vote: 65-0
- **Action Date:** 5/2/2018
- **More Info:** <https://www.billtrack50.com/BillDetail/965741>