



**April 19, 2016**

### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE/TRACKER REPORT #3**

As I reported at the Board of Directors meeting last week, we expected the Legislature to quickly change their priorities and begin to focus on fiscal matters and not continue to pursue policy matters. That's exactly what happened in the House these past few days as they focused on completing their Committee Omnibus bills. The Public Safety bill can be found in HF 291, authored by Committee Chair Tony Cornish. It was quickly heard in his committee last week, approved on a partisan vote, and referred to the Committee on Ways and Means, where a very unusual move was made yesterday: The combining of several different Committee Omnibus bills into one bill. Public Safety was combined with bills from Committees on Health and Human Services and State Government,

K-12 education was combined with Higher Education, and Jobs, Agriculture and Environment were combined with Natural Resources. All three bills will move through the appropriate committees yet this week and then move to the House floor for debate and final action. Final action is expected to follow past practice this Session with a totally partisan vote. Since the Republican House action differs substantially from the expected Senate Omnibus bills, almost everything the Legislature has heard this year will end up in a Conference Committee where final decisions will be made by just a few members of the Legislature without public input for the most part. Any compromise legislation is of course, subject to veto by Governor Dayton, so don't have any high expectations from this current Legislature.

Even the funding portion of these bills is significantly different. The Republicans bill calls for cuts in most budgets, and all of the surplus being used for business tax cuts and a smaller amount to deal with the Transportation issues. Thus, you can expect this to be one of the focuses of the Fall Elections.

Back to the Public Safety Committee bill for a moment. The funding portion of the bill makes some cuts with the rationale as quoted by Rep. Cornish that "the theory behind this bill is that this was not a funding year, and we were fairly generous last year, so we did not provide any funding per se to the agencies."

The policy portion of that bill contains only three bills that were heard in Committee:

HF 3385 (Heintzeman) which would increase penalties for driving unlicensed, making it a gross misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in Jail and a fine of up to \$ 3,000 - if in the course of driving without a license, there is an accident that results in substantial bodily harm or someone's death, or if someone is convicted of driving without a valid license for at least a third time. Currently, these are misdemeanors with a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail.

HF 1948 (Urdahl) would increase the fine for failure to stop for a school bus, increasing the fine from \$300 to \$500.

HF 3369 (Lohmer) would assist a business in the St. Croix River Valley by allowing sensory testing services to possess and serve alcohol as a part of their business.

There are at least two bills that I'd expect will be adopted by the full House. HF 2690 (Kelly) which would require an Ignition Interlock program for repeat offenders in order to reinstate driving

privileges. The bill was heard yesterday in the House Ways and Means and now moves to the floor. The other bill is HF 2652 (Cornish, Hilstrom and Newberger) This bill clarifies the Fourth Degree Assault against a peace officer, defines peace officer as a person who is licensed under section 626.845, Subd. 1, and makes the offense a felony which may result in a sentence to imprisonment for not more than three years or to a fine up to \$ 6,000, or both. This bill is also on the General Register and ready for floor action if placed on the daily agenda by the House leadership. The Senate companion bill is SF 2227 and has been passed by the Judiciary Division and ready for floor action.

We never from day to day which bills may be presented for floor debate, so as both chambers now emphasize their efforts on the supplemental budget bill and forming a bonding bill that can be compromised on, we'll watch for floor action on other policy bills. We'll have another update pending further action by the Legislature.

Feel free to contact me with your questions or comments. Thanks for your support!

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