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Senator Chamberlain Legislative Update

Sen. Roger Chamberlain <Sen.Roger.Chamberlain@senate.mn>

Fri, Mar 13, 2015 at 2:55 PM

To: Senator Roger Chamberlain <sen_roger_chamberlain_list@senlistserv.senate.mn>

Dear Neighbors:

It was a hectic week at the legislature, and committees are meeting frequently to hear as many bills as possible before committee deadlines. Here is a recap of some of the major issues that were discussed this week.

White Bear Lake Water Level Legislation

On Thursday, I authored a bill that will address the larger water management issue in our region. First, while it is important to address the ground water issue, we believe it needs to be done smartly. The DNR & Met Council have proposed drastic changes that will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. The problem needs a comprehensive solution involving the entire metro area not a piecemeal approach. Our proposal will streamline the process, include the entire metro region, and temporarily suspend some DNR and met council action until we receive a final report.

White Bear Lake is an important natural asset and we must find a final solution. The legislation I'm co-authoring [SF 1641](#) will include money for feasibility and design of a regional wastewater treatment system. This is something that has been discussed and I have supported for some time. It would allow us to keep the water in our area. Waste water would be treated and used to recharge the aquifer and White Bear Lake as needed.



On Wednesday, I had a hearing for my dyslexia reading instruction tax credit bill in the Tax Reform committee. [SF 271](#) would allow parents to use a \$3,000 tax credit to help pay for the reading tutor services that dyslexic students need.

In this same committee, I also had a hearing on [SF 1244](#). This bill would increase education tax credit and deduction amounts because they have not been increased in years. Furthermore, it would allow parents to use these dollars for tuition. I think these overdue increases will allow parents to have greater control over their children's education.

Protecting at risk children

On Thursday, the Minnesota Senate unanimously passed [House File 8](#), which fast tracks two of the key recommendations from the Governor's Task Force on the Protection of Children.

The bill contains two key provisions:

- * It repeals a law passed last year that prohibits the use of screened-out maltreatment reports by caseworkers.
- * It clarifies that the health and safety of children are the number one consideration when reports of neglect and maltreatment are received. This is a change from current law, which focuses on engaging the family's capabilities.

This important bill will allow caseworkers to form a more complete picture and consider all important information when making decisions. Our child protection laws should focus on the health and safety of the child above all else.

Reinforcing our children's safety and privacy at school

On Monday, Senate Republicans introduced the "Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act" to address serious concerns regarding a controversial new policy from the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL).

Last December, the MSHSL issued a new ruling allowing transgender students to play on a sports team other than the team of the student's biological sex. In effect, it allows male students who identify as female to play on girls' sports teams.

The ruling was met with resistance from parents and families who were worried about what effect it would have on locker room and shower situations, and how the ruling would impact private and nonpublic schools. Before the final vote on the policy, the MSHSL was presented with a petition of 6,000 names opposing the changes, but the Board proceeded to adopt the plan anyway.

In addition to parent apprehension, the ruling also appears to be in conflict with state statutes.

The "Student Safety and Physical Privacy Act," which has been assigned [Senate File 1543](#), clarifies state law and sends a message to parents that we are listening to their concerns. It is a commonsense bill that protects students' basic safety and privacy rights by codifying what high schools are already doing.

I support this bill because it is clear Minnesota families are unhappy with the Board's decision. A recent statewide poll from Public Opinion Strategies showed only 29 percent of respondents supported the MSHSL ruling, while 76 percent support the changes in our bill.

Important Dates This Session

March 28-April 6– Easter/Passover Break

April 24th– Last Bill Deadline

May 18th– Adjournment

If you would like to learn more about legislation I'm carrying, you can visit my senate web site at www.senate.mn/senatorchamberlain. You can also send me an email at sen.roger.chamberlain@senate.mn, find me on Facebook at [facebook.com/senator.roger.chamberlain](https://www.facebook.com/senator.roger.chamberlain), or on Twitter at twitter.com/rcchamberlain1.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me any time. It is a privilege to serve as your State Senator.

Sincerely,

Roger

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