

Welcome - LWV of Dakota County

MIX AND MINGLE

- Use this time to get to know each other or meet someone new!
- Find new ways to engage with LWV of Dakota County. Sign up at the back table for:
 - **Volunteer opportunities** such as leadership team and event planning teams
 - **Voter Registration Team**
 - **Observer Corps**
 - **Book Club**



LWV of Dakota County

Member/Public Meeting
June 4, 2019



Meeting Agenda

- Welcome/Call to Order
- Nonpartisan Policy Reminder
- Featured Topic: Recap of Minnesota's 2019 Legislative Session
- Voter Registration Update
- Observer Corps Update
- CMAL Update
- Wrap-Up



Nonpartisan Reminder

- Keep your comments non-partisan. **Talk about ideas – not partisan labels.**
- **Promote political actions that are not party-specific** such as researching a topic, educating voters or contacting lawmakers in general regarding an issue.
- **Refrain from endorsing or opposing specific candidates or elected officials.**
- **Only state facts, not judgments about the facts**, when it is not possible to avoid mentioning a specific candidate, lawmaker, or party.
- **Avoid discussing your individual activities supporting or opposing any candidate or party.**



Featured Topic:

Recap of Minnesota's 2019 Legislative Session

Nick Harper

Civic Engagement Director
League of Women Voters
of Minnesota





2019 Legislative Wrap-Up

Nick Harper
Civic Engagement Director
May 31, 2019

Big Picture Timeline



Early May	Week of May 13	May 19	May 20	May 21-23	May 24-25
Some conference committees begin to meet. Tribunal begins/continues to meet.	Tribunal begins to summon conference committee chairs.	Tribunal makes a Grand Deal that frames further negotiations.	Regular Session ends under constitution.	Chairs negotiate until/unless Tribunal intervenes. New deals made for each omnibus.	Special Session for 21 hours straight (10am-7am).

Tribunal = new nickname for Governor Tim Walz, Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, and Speaker of the House Melissa Hortman. Called the Tribunal because they summoned conference committee chairs to meetings for “judgments.”

Legislative Priorities



1. Complete Census Count
2. Fair District Maps
3. Election Administration & Infrastructure
4. Restore the Vote
5. Automatic Voter Registration
6. Legislative Transparency

Theme Song



You can't always get
what you want /

But if you try sometime
you find /

You get what you need!



Complete Census Count



Support adequate state and local action and funding to ensure a complete and accurate count of Minnesota's population in the 2020 census.

Sought funding to Minnesota Census Mobilization Partnership for public outreach, especially to historically undercounted communities.

Complete Census Count



Goal	Original Bill	Governor's Budget	House Omnibus	Senate Omnibus	Final Omnibus
\$2.5 M	... (TBD)	\$1.6 M	\$2 M	\$0	\$1.6 M

Support redistricting principles and methods that provide effective representation and prevent gerrymandering.

Fair District Maps



- Multiple bills were introduced this session, some good, some not so good, some outright bad.
- Our preferred bill: HF 1605 (Klevorn, DFL-Plymouth) establishing redistricting principles and an advisory commission with 12 public members and 5 retired judges.
- Place into House State Government Omnibus.
- Senate State Government Committee had a hearing on redistricting reform, but not on our preferred bill. No bills were included in the Senate State Government Omnibus.
- Died during negotiations.
- Expect a better bill next session.

Election Administration & Infrastructure



Support improved election infrastructure, including increased funding for cybersecurity, clear guidance to election officials on how to execute all election laws, and increased confidence and turnout for eligible voters.

1. HAVA Election Cybersecurity Funding
2. Voter Privacy for Presidential Nominating Primary
3. Voting Rights Act Compliance & Voter Assistance
4. Elections Technical Changes Bill
5. “Political” Apparel Clarifications

Election Administration & Infrastructure – Election Security



- \$6.6 million in HAVA election cybersecurity funds, which are federal funds that only require a 5% match. Planned use is for modernization of the Statewide Voter Registration System, as well as other cybersecurity and voter accessibility initiatives.
- HF14 provided full \$6.6M.
- SF241 provided only \$1.5M, and attached some policy language.
- Went to conference committee. Senate refused to meet.
- House included \$6.6M in the House State Government Omnibus.

Election Administration & Infrastructure – Election Security



Goal	Original Bill	House Omnibus	Senate Omnibus	Final Omnibus
\$6.6 M	\$6.6 M	\$6.6 M	\$0	\$6.6 M

Election Administration & Infrastructure – Voter Privacy



- Last session, the legislature implemented a presidential nominating primary.
- Minnesota voters will use an election-like method, not caucuses, to support a candidate for a party's presidential nomination.
- Under the law passed last session, a voters' party preference (DFL, Republican, etc.) would have been public, not only to political parties, but also employers, neighbors, church groups, friends, family, etc.
- Now party preference is private except to political parties. The information is available to parties so that they can know who participate in the party's primary.

Election Administration & Infrastructure – Voter Assistance



- Minnesota law permits a person to assist up to three voters to mark their ballots.
- Relied upon by disabled voters (either physical or sight) and voters whose first language is not English.
- Federal law (Voting Rights Act) dictates the only limits on who can assist a voter. Multiple courts have held additional qualifications or a numerical limit violates the Voting Rights Act.
- HF 94 (Vang, DFL-Brooklyn Center) would have removed Minnesota's numerical limit and ensured compliance with the Voting Rights Act.
- Did not get a hearing in the Senate. Died in negotiations.
- Expect work again on this next session, or litigation to require compliance.

Election Administration & Infrastructure – Political Apparel



- In *Minnesota Voters Alliance v. Mansky*, SCOTUS held that Minnesota's interpretation of "political" apparel was too vague.
- SCOTUS clarified that Minnesota, like other states, could prohibit apparel with things about any candidate, political party, or ballot question on the ballot.
- HF 2327 (Bahner, DFL-Maple Grove) would have clarified the law so that it would be apparel that relates to a candidate, political party, or ballot question on the ballot.
- Did not get a hearing in either chamber.

Restore the Vote



Support re-enfranchisement of individuals with past felony convictions when they are living in their communities.

- HF 40 (Dehn, DFL-Minneapolis)
- Placed into House State Government Omnibus.
- Senate had no hearings.
- Died during negotiations.
- Will receive attention again next year.

Automatic Voter Registration



*Support the automatic registration of eligible voters
when they interact with government agencies.*

- HF 45 (Schultz, DFL-Duluth)
- A few other versions did not get hearings.
- Placed into House State Government Omnibus.
- Senate had no hearings.
- Died during negotiations.

Legislative Transparency



Support improving legislative rules and practices to improve transparency and public participation, including ending the use of large omnibus bills or late-session rush.

- HF 986 (Bahr, R-East Bethel) proposed a constitutional amendment for the single subject clause. Received one informational hearing in the House.
- No meetings for Subcommittee on Legislative Process Reform due to events outside members' control.
- Expect more work on this issue from the legislature this summer and next session.

We Got What We Needed



1. HAVA Election Cybersecurity Funding
2. Census Outreach Funding
3. Voter Privacy for Presidential Nominating Primary

These three issues HAD to be addressed this year.

The Basics – Two Houses, Two Parties



Senate



Republican



House

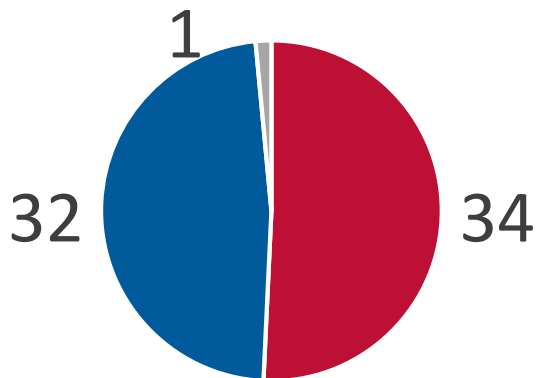


Democratic-Farmer-
Labor

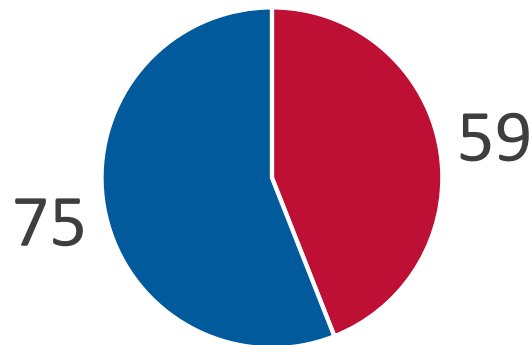
The Basics – Two Houses, Two Parties



Senate



House



The Basics – Leadership



Speaker of
the House
–
Melissa
Hortman

*Preside
s*



House
Minority
Leader
–
Kurt Daudt



House
Majority
Leader
–
Ryan
Winkler



Senate
Majority
Leader
–
Paul Gazelka



Senate
Minority
Leader
–
Tom Bakk



Senate
President
–
Jeremy
Miller

*Preside
s*

There's also Assistant or Deputy Leaders. And Whips “whip” the votes, i.e., makes sure legislators from a caucus vote the way the caucus wants them to

The Basics – Committees



- Like many organizations, legislators work on issues in small groups to decide on details and get the initial phase of public input
- Committee members, to some degree, are supposed to be more knowledgeable about the committee issues
- Most amendments are supposed to happen in committee before the bill reaches the Floor
- Committee Chairs hold a significant amount of power – they preside over committee hearings, decide which bills get heard in committee, and can limit public testimony

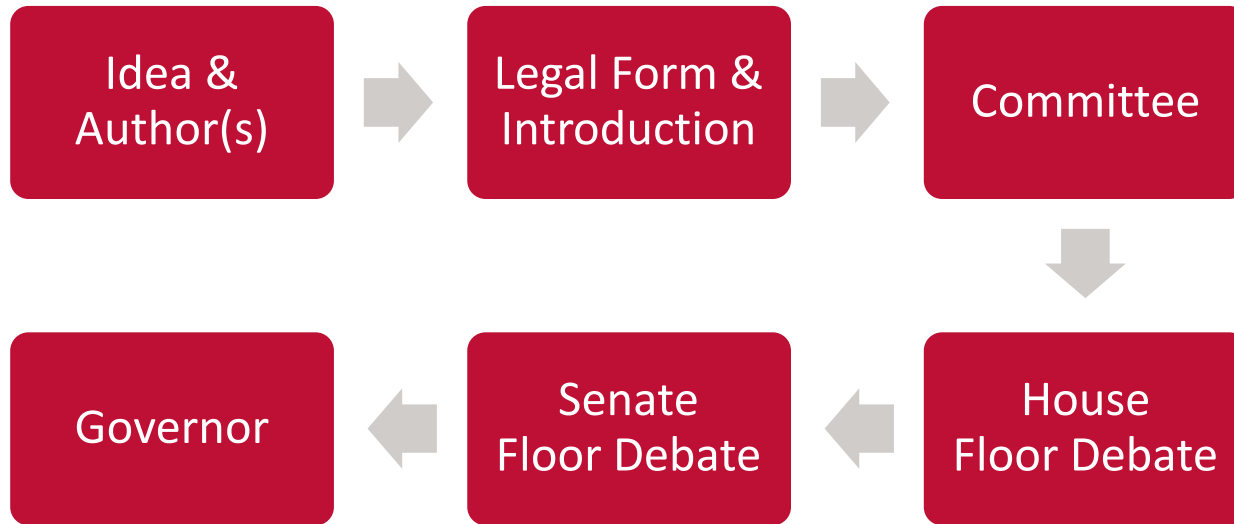
The Basics – Rules



- Each legislative chamber has its own set of rules for process, committee structure, deadlines, etc.
- There is also a set of Joint Rules that apply to both legislative chambers for certain circumstances (e.g., conference committees)
- Minnesota Constitution, Article IV, Section 7: “Each house may determine the rules of its proceedings...”
- This means that one legislature typically cannot bind a future legislature to a set of rules.

The Process

The Ideal Legislative Process



The Real Legislative Process



The Deadlines



- No deadline for the introduction of bills; can introduce new bills on the last day of session
- First Deadline – committees to act favorably on bills in the house of origin
- Second Deadline – committees to act favorably on bills, or companions of bills, that met the first deadline in the other house
- Third Deadline – committees to act favorably on major appropriation and finance bills
- Session Must Adjourn – the first Monday after the third Saturday in May
- Often amendments to bills must be pre-filed, to ensure plenty of time to read them before debate

The Public

Public Participation in the Process



- Come up with a bill idea
- Find a bill author
- Call legislators before committee
- Testify at committee
- Call legislators before a floor vote
- Call legislators before a conference committee
- Call the Governor before signature or veto

Minnesotans can both educate and lobby legislators. But know this: You are part of the “firehose.” Legislators are barraged with a TON of information VERY quickly.

When can Minnesotans get involved?



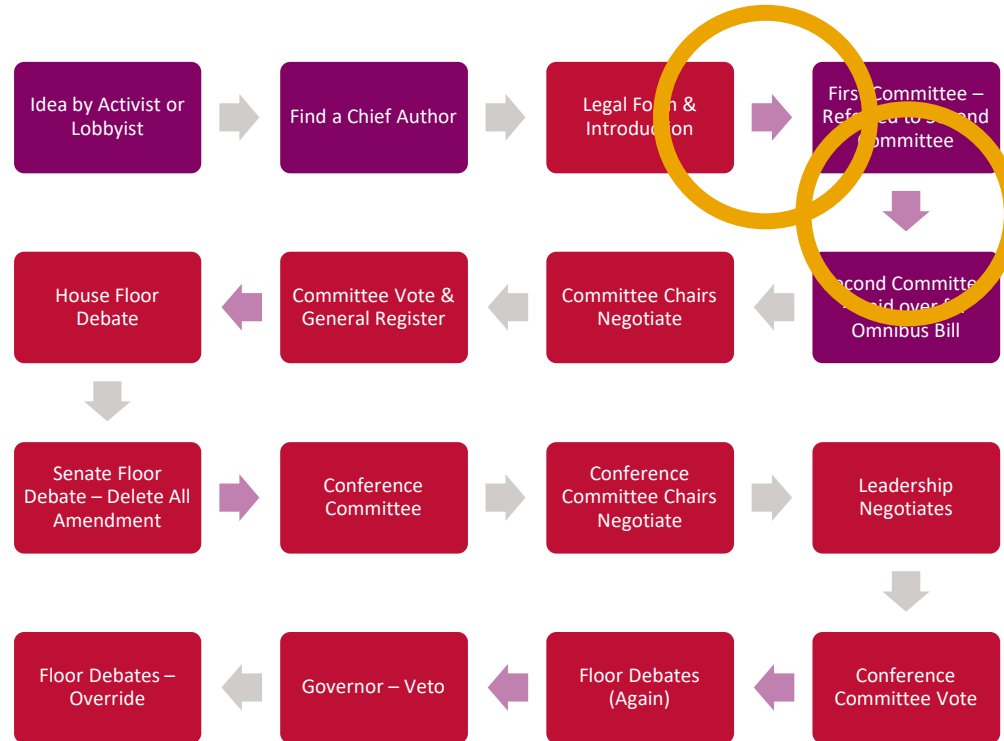
Come up with an idea



Find a bill author



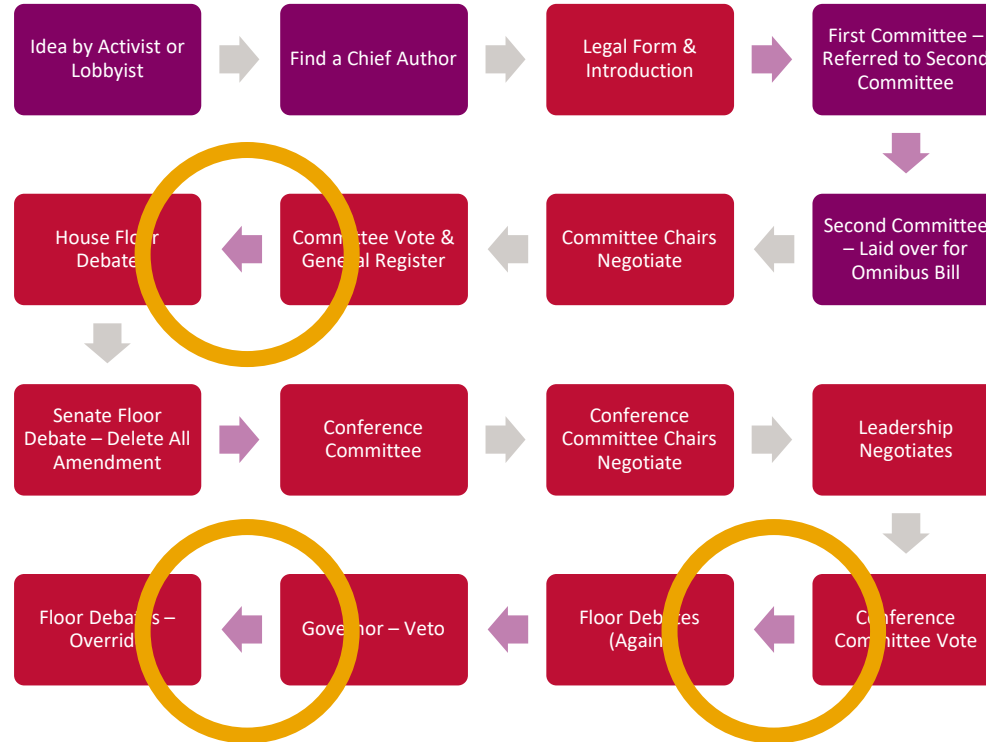
Call legislators before committee



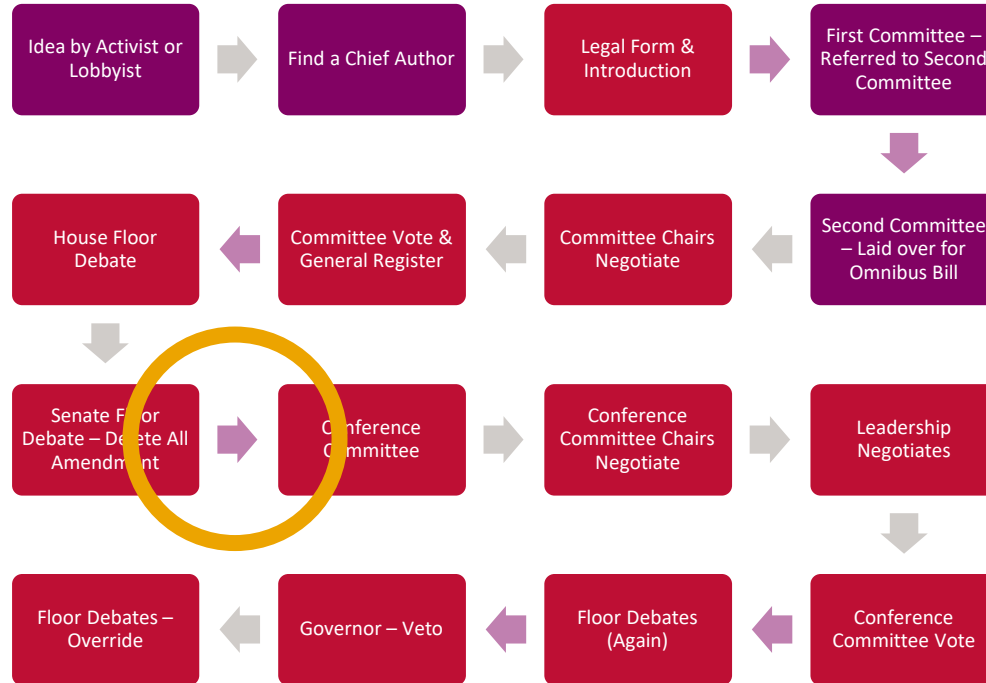
Testify at committee



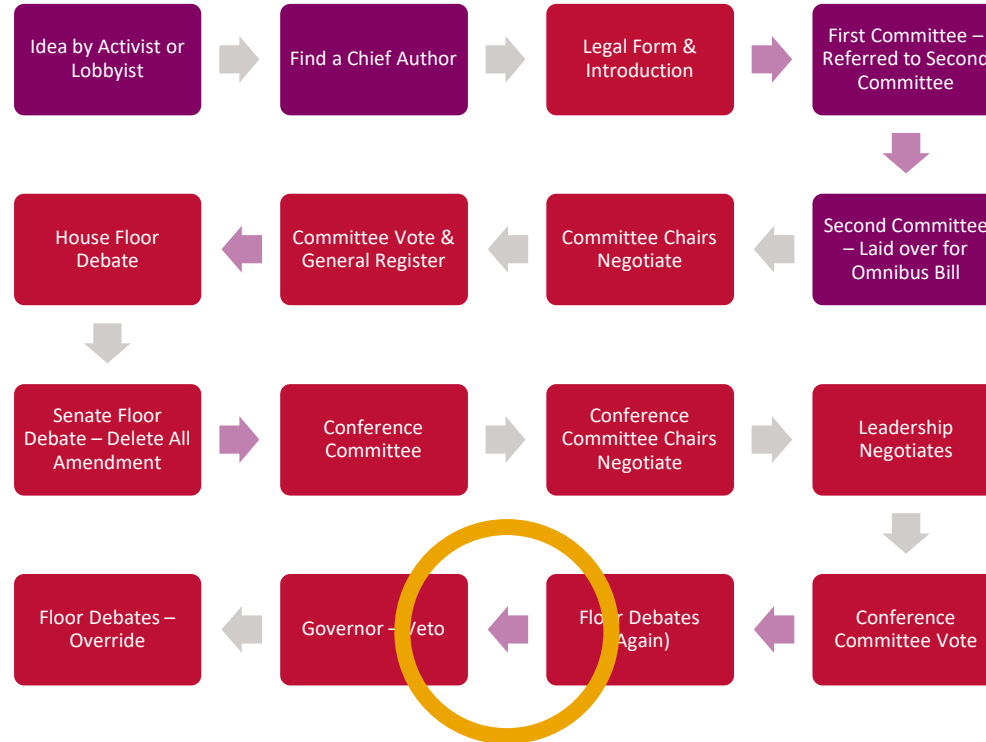
Call legislators before a floor vote



Call legislators before conference committee



Call the Governor before signature or veto





LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
MINNESOTA

The Challenges

Challenges of the Process



- New provisions inserted by conference that did not appear in either companion bill
- Great, truly bipartisan provisions fail (e.g., election cybersecurity funding)
- Perpetual call of the chair or nearly nonexistent notice for hearings (“HF XXXX”; “TBA”)
- Policy provisions with no fiscal impact inserted into finance bills
- Late floor sessions and committee hearings past midnight
- Finance and policy provisions for almost every state agency
- Lengthy closed-door negotiations between leadership
- Perceived and actual single subject clause violations
- Last minute changes with no public explanations
- Costly mistakes in language lost in bloated bills
- Legislators voting without knowing bill content
- Gamesmanship during floor debates

Everyone's Trying Their Hardest



- Everyone's just trying to do their job and do right by their constituents, their caucus, and their personal values.
- This especially goes for staff like legislative assistants, who do a lot of hard work and manage a lot of tasks with very little appreciation.
- But governance is difficult. And the amount of work expected from legislators is a lot, especially compared to the amount of time they have.
- Which means planning and giving sufficient notice of that work is difficult to do.

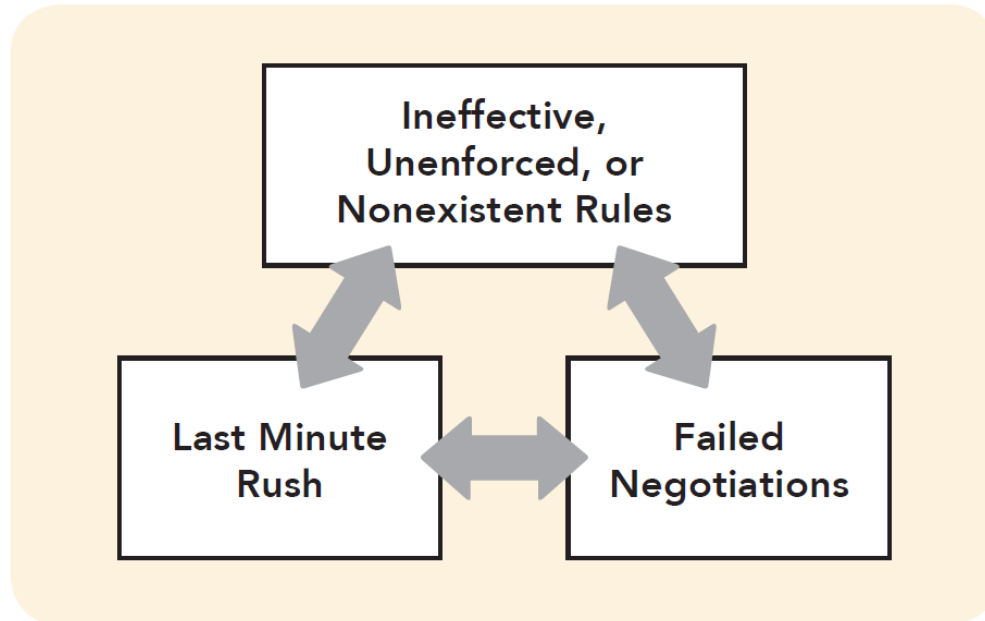
Public Participation in the Process



- Call legislators before committee *if you know when a bill will be heard in committee, what the bill text is, and what amendments there will be*
- Testify at committee *if you know when a bill will be heard in committee, what the bill text is, and what amendments there will be*
- Call legislators before a floor vote *if you know when a bill will be heard on the floor, have had a chance to read the bill, and know what amendments there will be*
- Call legislators before a conference committee *if you know when a bill will be voted on in conference committee and what changes are being negotiated*

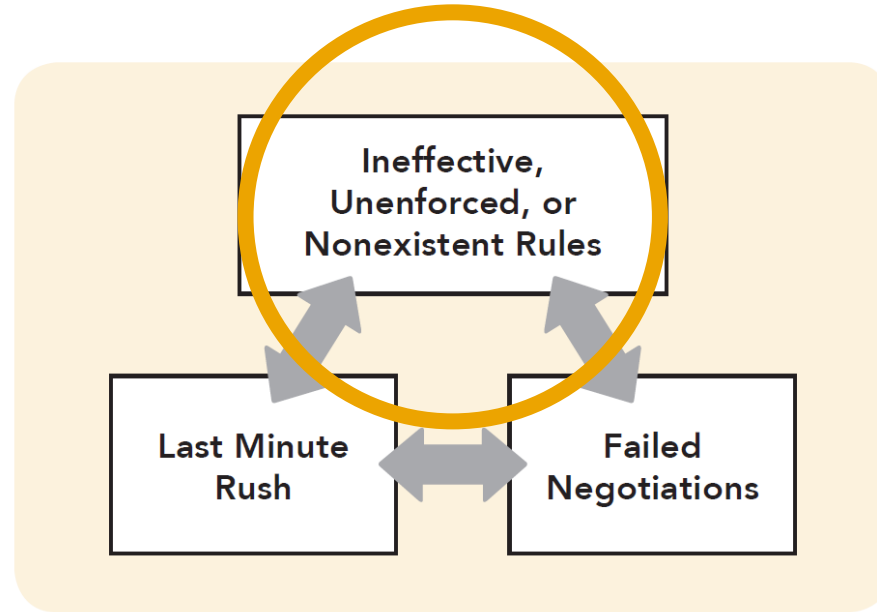
Challenges of the Process

Interrelated Causes



Challenges of the Process

Interrelated Causes



Against the Rules, But Rule is Waived or Not Enforced



- **New provisions inserted by conference that did not appear in either companion bill**
- Great, truly bipartisan provisions fail (e.g., election cybersecurity funding)
- Perpetual call of the chair or **nearly nonexistent notice** for hearings
- Policy provisions with no fiscal impact inserted into finance bills
- **Late floor sessions and committee hearings past midnight**
- Finance and policy provisions for almost every state agency
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Waiving the Rules

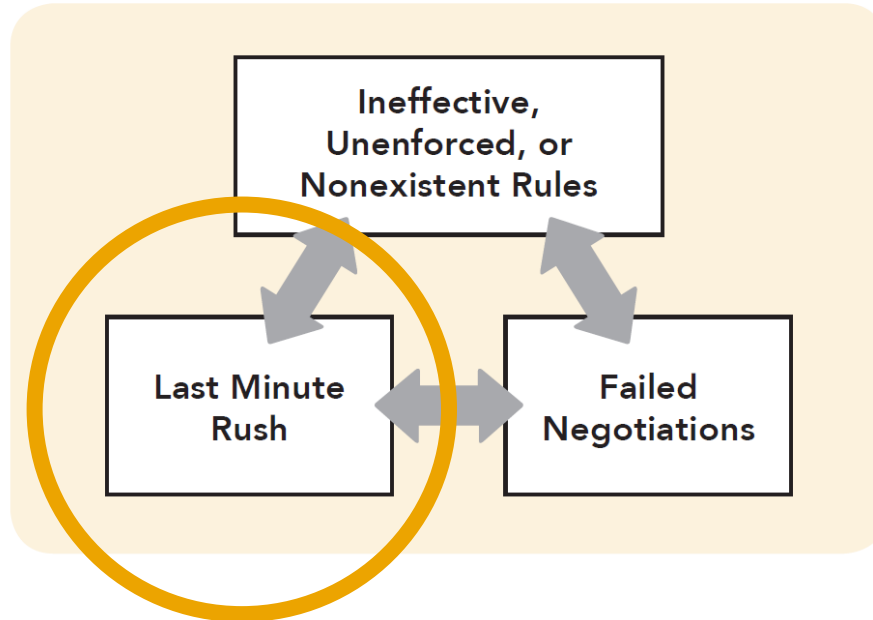


- Sometimes it's good to waive a rule, e.g., emergencies or the substance of the bill is too important
- Rules can be waived by a 2/3 vote of a chamber.
- House rules can also be modified by both a majority vote of the Rules Committee and a majority vote of the House.
- The Rules Committee can also move bills forward in the process if the bills miss deadlines.
- The pre-filing deadline for amendments to bills for House debates can be waived by the Rules Committee.
- Notice for committee hearings are recommended to be at least 3 days, but only must be "as far as practicable."

- If a legislator believes a rule is violated during a floor debate, the legislator who is presiding (Speaker of the House or the President of the Senate) decides whether the rule was actually violated.
- Even if a rule *was* violated, the presiding officer can choose not to enforce the rule.
- The presiding officer's decision can be appealed, but almost always the presiding officer's caucus supports the presiding officer.

Challenges of the Process

Interrelated Causes



Rushing - Committee Structure

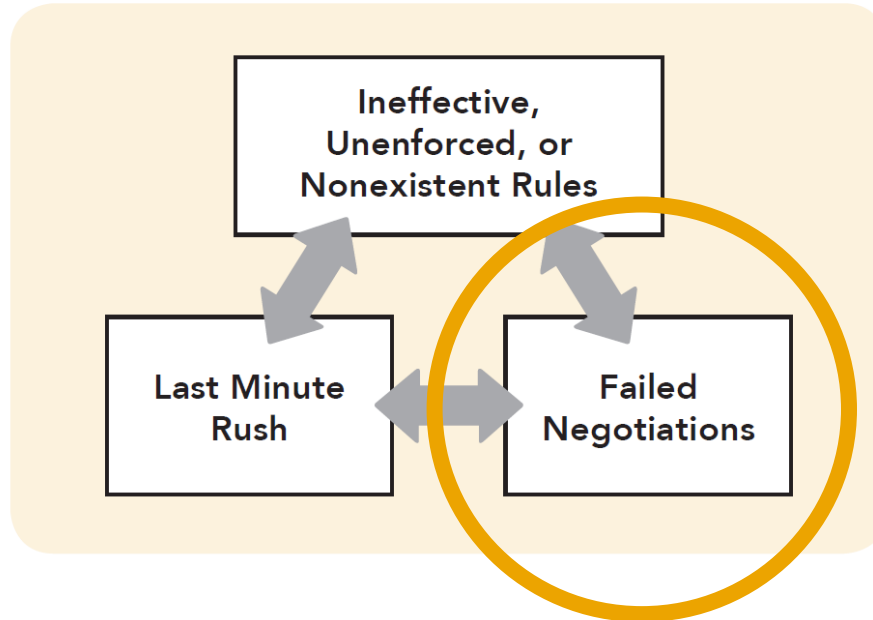


- More committees or fewer committees?
 - Subcommittees?
 - More committees could get more work done.
 - But more committees might mean more legislators needing to do more variety of responsibilities.
 - More committees to keep track of.
- Larger committees or smaller committees?
 - Larger committees could split work up more. If they could trust each other.
 - But some legislators believe smaller committees can work together better.

- Could deadlines be earlier or later?
 - Earlier means there's more time for negotiation
 - But earlier also leaves more time for "shenanigans"
 - Later increases pressure to make agreements
 - But later also risks hitting the end of session without making a successful agreement
 - Earlier deadlines for amendments or notice for hearings?
- Could there be additional deadlines?
 - A deadline for introducing bills
 - A deadline for all conference committees to act favorably on a bill – **has now been implemented**

Challenges of the Process

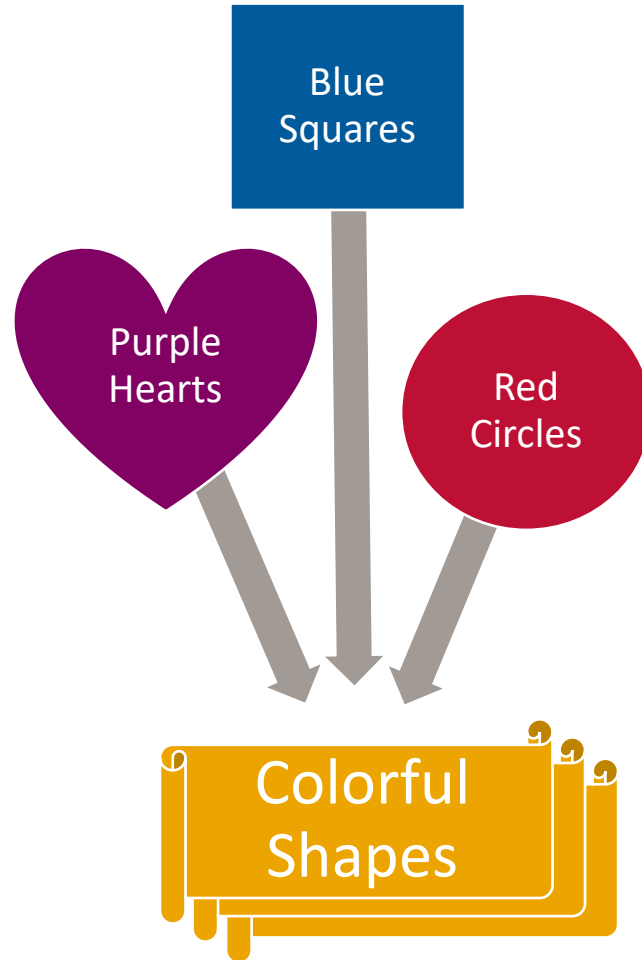
Interrelated Causes



*Minnesota Constitution,
Article IV, Section 17*

No law shall
embrace
more than
one
subject

But what is a “single” subject?



Omnibus Bills vs. the Single Subject Clause



Proposal:

Policy provisions without fiscal impact must not be in major finance bills.

Downside:

Harder to negotiate policies. What if that provision is part of a larger policy package?

Proposal:

Policy provisions in finance bills must expire when appropriations do.

Downside:

Policy provisions would expire every two years, unless passed separately. (See right.)

Proposal:

Policy proposals must always be separate from finance proposals.

Downside:

Might result in unfunded mandates if only the policies pass but not the appropriations.

Or a constitutional amendment to clarify and strengthen enforcement

But defining what makes a “single subject” is hard, if not impossible.

Other Reforms



- Limit the number of bills a legislator can be *chief* author on, but allow legislators to co-author an unlimited number of bills
- Prohibit amendments attempted in committee from being introduced during floor debates
- Require negotiations between committee chairs or leadership to be public like committee hearings
- Remove power from committee chairs or leadership
- Apply Open Meetings Law – fines for not giving sufficient meeting notice, or meeting not in public
- Apply Data Practices Law – emails, letters, and other information would be open to public inspection
- Putting more rules into statutes or the state constitution so they cannot be waived or broken as easily

Voter Registration Update

Voter Service *Co-coordinator: Lynn Lewis*



10 schools visited, including **2**

new schools:

- Burnsville
- Eagan
- Eastview
- Farmington (new)
- Henry Sibley
- Lakeville North
- Rosemount
- Simley
- School for Environmental Sciences
- St. Thomas Academy (new)



538

Registrations Completed

17

Volunteers

63

Volunteer Hours

Observer Corps Update

Lead: Anne Koutnik



- **Dakota County Board Meeting (5/21/19)**
 - Report on Library Fine Forgiveness Week
- **Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority Meeting (5/21/19)**
 - Metro Transit Orange Line Update
- **General Government and Policy Committee Meeting (5/21/19)**
 - Legislative Update



Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) Update

Delegate: Holly Jenkins

- **Recap of CMAL's Annual Convention**
 - Keynote speaker was Nora Slawik, Met Council Chair (and LWV member!)
 - 2019-2020 committee to determine which regional issues to consider for review
- **Met Council Chair at County Board Meetings on Tuesday, June 11, at the Western Service Center in Apple Valley**
 - Physical Development Committee (PDC) – Room L139 – Scheduled to start at 10 a.m. (or following the Community Development Committee meeting)
 - Informal lunch discussion with Chair Slawik and some Met Council members – Room 106 – Potential topics include housing/shelter, transportation/transit, parks/trails, and planning
 - Housing Workshop – Room L139 – Scheduled to start at 1:30 p.m.



LWVDC Book Club

Lead: Donna Powell



- Meets every other month, 6:00-7:30 pm at Burnhaven Library in the small conference room
 - **6/27/2019** - How Democracies Die by Steven Levitsky (320 p)
 - **8/22/2019** - Overload: Finding the Truth in Today's Deluge of News by Bob Schiefer (216 p)
 - **10/24/2019** - When Republicans were Progressive by Dave Durenburger (296 p)
 - **1/23/2020** - The Soul of America: The Battle for Our Better Angels by John Mechan (416 p)
 - **4/2/2020** - One Person No Vote by Carol Anderson (288 p) ***Note: 1st Thursday of April*

Action Items



- Join LWV and tell a friend! **Everyone is on the membership committee!**
- Volunteer and get involved! Sign up at the opportunities table.
- Sign up for LWVMN's Capitol Letter
- Sign up for LWVUS and LWVMN Action Alerts
- Follow us on our website, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube!



Wrap Up

- Next LWV of Dakota County meeting will be **Tuesday, July 2nd**, at Burnhaven Library, with Mix & Mingle beginning at **5:30 p.m.** and the regular meeting beginning at **6:00 p.m.** Our featured speaker will be LWV of Dakota County member Frank Sachs, who will be presenting regarding the U.S. Constitution in honor of Independence Day.
- ****Members** please drop your name badge at the check-in table
- Adjourn



See you next time!