

Minnesota Government Update - Week in Review - April 8, 2011

Posted by [John A. Knapp](#) on April 08, 2011

Final Omnibus Bills Passed

The final omnibus appropriations bill was passed off the floor this week ending a long two weeks of floor sessions. The House Health and Human Service Omnibus bill passed off the floor Thursday morning at 2:30 am. The other omnibus bills passed this week were Transportation, Taxes, State Government Finance, and Jobs. All omnibus bills will now be sent to conference committees to work through the differences between the bills. Conferees will be appointed by the leadership in the House and Senate.

Governor Signs Bills and Executive Order

Governor Mark Dayton signed two bills into law this week. SF 488/HF 571 allows airline employees flexibility in their schedule and work hours. This was a non-controversial bill authored by freshman Senator Ted Daley (R-Eagan) in the Senate and Rep. Leon Lillie (DFL-St. Paul) in the House. The second, a community paramedics bill, HF 262/SF 119, creates certification for emergency medical technicians-community paramedics (EMT-CP) and was slightly more controversial drawing criticism from the nursing community. Proponents of the bill touted this as a great way to reach underserved populations, especially in rural Minnesota.

Governor Dayton also signed an Executive Order declaring a state of emergency for 46 Minnesota counties impacted by spring flooding. Dayton also extended 20 Executive Orders issued by prior administrations, some dating all the way back to Governor Rudy Perpich.

Sviggum Forced to Choose

Former House Speaker Steve Sviggum was told by a Committee of the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents that he needed to choose between being an unpaid University Regent or his paid teaching position at the U. The committee of three Regents told Sviggum doing both might result in a conflict of interest. Sviggum chose the unpaid position with the Board of Regents but he will be allowed to finish the semester as an instructor.

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Moving Forward

Next week policy bills that have been patiently waiting their turn will start to be taken up in committee. With two weeks until the first policy deadline on April 29, committees will be busy and late hearings are predicted. The floor session activities will move bills through committees, take up non-controversial bills, and announce conferees for the omnibus bills. The Legislature's spring break will begin Monday, April 18 at 3:00 pm and continue until the morning of Tuesday, April 26.