

This past week was the first full week of the 2019 legislative session, and the pace is starting to pick up a bit. So far, since the official start of session on January 8, 206 bills have been introduced in the House and 278 in the Senate.

The overall focus this week in committees has been more overviews and introductions of the issues the legislators will have before them. Of note, the House Ways and Means Committee heard from Minnesota Management and Budget Commissioner Myron Frans regarding the impact of the federal shutdown on the state. Minnesota agencies have been having a difficult time connecting with federal agencies in order to figure out what the implications of the shutdown are for various programs and services at the state level. However, the state receives about \$1 billion in federal funds per month for federally funded programs and services. This has left the state in a situation where it is footing the bill, with no federal reimbursement, in order to continue the delivery of these services. There is uncertainty as to whether the state will get reimbursed for what it has had to spend to keep programs running. And, of the 17,000 Minnesotans who are federal employees, 6,100 are not receiving paychecks or have been furloughed.

Prenatal to Three Policy Forum

The Prenatal to Three Policy Forum was this past Monday, January 14. Rep. Dave Pinto, Sen. Jerry Relph and Sen. Melissa Wiklund re-iterated their caucuses priorities related to early development and care. The remainder of the time was spent hearing from other groups about their legislative priorities.

Legislative Committees

The [Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division](#) is a new committee in the House this year, chaired by Rep. Dave Pinto. Over the past week and a half, this committee has met to hear various overviews on child development as well as overviews from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS). Next week, the committee will hear additional items on child development.

Bill Introductions of Interest

[S. F. 75](#) (Osmek): Increasing penalties for driving while texting, requiring driver education programs to include instruction on distracted driving.

[S. F. 292](#) (Latz): A bill for an act relating to education finance; increasing funding for the community education revenue program.

[H. F. 1](#) (Kotyza-Witthuhn) A bill for an act relating to early childhood; creating additional funding and opportunities for children ages birth to three; governing certain programs and funding for prenatal care services, home visiting, early childhood education, and child care assistance; appropriating money.

[H. F. 2](#) (Edelson), A bill for an act relating to education finance; increasing funding for school-linked mental health services grants; providing funding for full-service community schools; extending funding for support our students grants; funding the homework starts with home program; increasing funding for the collaborative urban educator program; appropriating money.

[H. F. 116](#) (Freiberg): A bill for an act relating to education; authorizing school districts to renew expiring referendums by action of school board.

[H. F. 196](#) (Freiberg): A bill for an act relating to pupil transportation; requiring seat belts on newly purchased school buses.