

LOBBY OBSERVER CORPS &



Contact:

Nick Harper, Esq.
Civic Engagement Director
651-424-4603
nharper@lwwmn.org
www.lwwmn.org

**These materials are intended for
internal LWV Minnesota use only.**

Table of Contents

OVERVIEW

Corps Time Commitment	3
Member Code of Conduct	4
Being an LWV Ambassador	5
“Speak With One Voice” Policy.....	6
Who, When and Where	7-8
Legislative Lingo	9
Finding an Agenda and Committee Documents.....	10-11

APPENDIX A: OBSERVER CORPS

Observer Corps Job Description.....	13
Observer Reports: What and How to Observe	14
Observer Report Form.....	15
Observer Checklist.....	16

APPENDIX B: LOBBY CORPS

Lobby Corps Job Description.....	18
Bill Tracking.....	19
Testimony Overview.....	20
Etiquette for Verbal Testimony	21-22
Guidelines for Drafting Testimony; Templates	23-26
Sign-On Policy	27
Action Alert Proposal Form	28
Lobbying Checklist	31

APPENDIX C: MAPS & TRANSIT

Transit Options.....	33
State Capitol Complex	34-36
Senate Building (Floor 1)	37
State Office Building (Side View).....	38

Corps Time Commitment

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

HOW MUCH OF A TIME COMMITMENT COULD A PERSON EXPECT TO GIVE IF THEY BECAME A CORPS MEMBER?

The most important thing to know about the time commitment to be a Corps member is that it's flexible. Corps members can choose what level of activity they want depending on their interests, availability and capability, as long as the minimum requirements are met.

A Corps member might follow a single bill or they might follow an entire committee. The latter would obviously take a greater time commitment. Corps members who watch legislative committees can have hearings that happen multiple times a week during session for 1-2 hours at a time. Administrative boards usually meet once a month for 2-3 hours. Corps members can attend only one meeting a month or all of them; it depends entirely on what they'd like to get out of the experience and what they'd like to contribute. Corps members should be aware that staff time will be dedicated almost exclusively to board approved legislative priorities, so if a member feels passionate about other Program for Action topics (e.g., natural resources, healthcare or education), those advocacy efforts will rely almost exclusively on volunteers.

SOME COMMITTEE HEARINGS CAN BE VIEWED ONLINE BY TELECAST. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF IN-PERSON V. TELECASTING IS EXPECTED OF A CORPS MEMBER?

It is preferred that Observers attend in person, but viewing a hearing by telecast is not unwelcome. Lobby Corps members who wish to give verbal testimony must be physically present at meetings, as the legislature does not allow telecasted testimony. Lobby Corps members may, however, submit written testimony if they cannot attend in person.

Member Code of Conduct

PURPOSE: As we join together to advance the work of LWV Minnesota, we believe it is important to establish a Member Code of Conduct so that we have a common understanding and shared expectation of how we, a collective of individual members, will operate in the best interest of the organization.

CODE: All members who join LWV Minnesota agree to the following:

1. Abide by the rules of the LWV Minnesota or the member's local league as set out in its Bylaws, Mission Statement and Shared Values;
2. Uphold the reputation and good standing of LWV Minnesota;
3. Act with integrity, show respect to others, and value alternative points of view;
4. Refrain from any behaviors or actions that are harassing, physically threatening, or physically or verbally abusive toward any LWV member, employee of LWV, or any attendee at any LWV sponsored function or event;
5. Do not commit LWV Minnesota to any action unless authorized to do so;
6. Refrain from making any statement on behalf of LWV Minnesota or purport to represent LWV Minnesota through any public medium, including digital social media, unless specifically authorized to do so by LWV Minnesota's President;
7. Act within the boundaries of relevant legislation;
8. Refrain from using the position of membership to unfairly benefit themselves;
9. Pay membership fees on a timely basis as part of continued membership.

POLICY: LWV Minnesota reserves the right to review any membership for validity and conformity to the Code of Conduct and other applicable policies. If a member fails to meet the expectations in this Code of Conduct or other applicable policies, LWV Minnesota, in its sole discretion, will decide on the appropriate action to take, up to and including disassociation of membership. Local LWVs should bring all membership concerns to LWV Minnesota for resolution.

LWV Minnesota reserves the right to update, replace or rescind this Member Code of Conduct policy as well as develop additional policies as may be warranted. By applying for membership with LWV Minnesota, members indicate acceptance and agreement with these terms of membership.

Approved by the LWV Minnesota Board of Directors January 24, 2017.

Being an LWV Ambassador

STRICT ADHERENCE TO THE MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT IS REQUIRED.

Observers should strive to be most courteous and respectful to not only committee and board members, but also to other meeting attendees. Some specific points for proper conduct at meetings:

- Arrive early, so that you do not interrupt or distract from the meeting by arriving late.
- Turn your cell phone and other mobile devices on silent or off. This is very important because a loud, ringing phone is the quickest way to draw unfavorable attention to yourself. Cell phones are technically not even allowed in most legislative hearing rooms.
- Gather copies of the agenda or handouts if possible.
- Do not talk during meetings; if you must say something, please whisper very quietly. But even whispering can sound very loud in the meeting rooms. For example, the Senate Building hearing rooms carry sound and even a whisper can sound loud to other attendees. A better option would be to bring extra notepaper so that you may write notes silently to others.
- Do not eat during meetings. If you bring a drink, please ensure it is bottled or has a lid. Accidentally spilling a drink can cause a major distraction to the meeting.
- Observers are generally not authorized to speak for LWV Minnesota on legislative issues; that responsibility is left to Lobby Corps members. However, an Observer may state facts that they know and that are generally known to the public, e.g., that LWV Minnesota is a nonpartisan nonprofit.
- Before or after meetings, members are encouraged to promote LWV Minnesota to other attendees.
- Members are strongly encouraged to wear LWV-branded clothing or accessories, such as a button, lapel pin, or patch.



Be very, very sure that all your electronic devices (cell phone, tablet, laptop, etc.) are on silent or turned off.

“Speak With One Voice” Policy

This policy is intended to clarify who may speak on behalf of LWV Minnesota and when they may do so. LWV Minnesota’s goal is to see members civically engaged in their individual capacity, while maintaining consistent and timely public messaging and visibility.

GENERALLY – Only the President speaks for LWV Minnesota unless otherwise authorized by the President, board of directors, or this policy.

LEAGUE MEMBERS SPEAKING IN THEIR INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY – Members are still welcome to participate in political processes in their individual capacity, including testifying at the legislature, but should state that they are speaking only in their individual capacity and not on behalf of any organization. Members should not identify themselves as a League member if testifying. Members may state that they are informed by or have learn about issues through LWV Minnesota.

PRESS RELEASES – Press releases shall be drafted by or at the direction of the Executive Director, then approved by the President. If the President is unable to approve due to timeliness issues, then Executive Director may approve.

PRESS INQUIRIES – The Executive Director or their designee may answer press inquiries.

LOBBYING – No member may lobby on behalf of LWV to state government without authorization from LWVMN or to federal government without authorization from LWVUS. Lobbying materials may be drafted by Lobby Corps members and staff, then approved by the Advocacy Chair. If the Advocacy Chair is unable to approve due to timeliness issues, then the Executive Director or their designee may approve.

ADVOCACY LETTERS – Signing onto advocacy letters must follow the Sign-On Policy (also included in this handbook).

COALITION DELEGATES – Delegates attending coalition meetings must follow the Coalition Policy.

PRESCHEDULED MEDIA OPPORTUNITIES – Prescheduled media opportunities include broadcasted media interviews and events. The Executive Director or their designee may appear as opportunities arise.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR TO LOCAL/REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS FROM LOCAL LWVS ON STATEWIDE ISSUES – Criteria for letters to the editor from Local LWVs about statewide issues shall be drafted by or at the direction of the Executive Director and approved by the board of directors. The President may draft templates for local LWV use.

Adopted by the LWV Minnesota Board of Directors November 25, 2019.

Who, When and Where

There are two types of boards and committees to observe: administrative and legislative.

ADMINISTRATIVE BOARDS

Administrative boards (sometimes called councils, panels, etc.) may have legislative members, but often include members who are not legislators. These boards may include attorneys, experts, community representatives, or other members of the public. One example of an administrative board: the Campaign Finance & Public Disclosure Board (CFPD Board), which regulates, administers, and enforces Minnesota's campaign finance laws, public campaign subsidy program, and public disclosure and disclaimer laws. There are 223 administrative boards in Minnesota. You can view a list of these boards here:

<https://commissionsandappointments.sos.state.mn.us/Agency>.

Administrative boards are generally subject to Minnesota's Open Meetings Law and Government Data Practices Act. Under the Open Meetings Law, these boards must notify the public ahead of time for when and where the board will be meeting and what is on the board's agenda.

Under the Government Data Practices Act, these boards must also make their records available for public inspection or upon request, unless the information within the record is protected as nonpublic or private under the law. On rare occasion, these boards may go into "closed" or "executive" session. This means that they may exclude the public from the meeting to discuss information that is highly confidential and not public, like legal advice or personnel issues.

To learn when and where to observe an administrative board, an Observer must sign up for notices or reach out to contact each specific board. There is no centralized location for all administrative board meetings. For example, for the CFPD Board, one would need to check their website (<https://cfb.mn.gov>). Some boards have an email listserv that you can sign up to receive email alerts when a new meeting is scheduled or new information is added to an agenda. Most boards have a set meeting schedule where they meet once a month, e.g., every second Monday. But you should confirm with that board when its regular meetings are and whether there is a listserv to join.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

Legislative committees comprise legislative members (i.e., Senators and Representatives) only, may not take formal action outside of legislative session, and generally meet only during the legislative session. Occasionally they may be called "legislative commissions" if both Senators and Representatives sit on the committee and the committee performs work outside of the annual session. When legislative commissions do meet outside of regular

session, they generally only have informational hearings to receive testimony. Most legislative committees are exempt from Minnesota’s Open Meetings Law and Government Data Practices Act.

While the legislature sometimes notifies the public of meeting times and locations, these notifications do not need to be specific or far ahead of the meeting time. For example, it is not unusual near the end of session for a legislative committee’s meeting time to be “at the Call of the Chair,” meaning whenever the committee chair chooses to begin the meeting. Lobbyists and members of the public generally have to wait around at the meeting location wondering when the meeting will begin. (Corps members are not expected to do this, as this will generally happen late at night, sometimes as late as 2:00 a.m.)

Legislative committees are also not required to keep their records public. Therefore, an internal email or memo from a committee chair to the chair’s caucus members is not publicly available. Committee minutes and reports are generally public, but under legislative rules, not statute.

Most legislative committees have a public listserv that announces meeting times, locations, and agendas. You can also sign up for a listserv that will notify you of all legislative meetings. You can find the state legislative calendar and sign up for various committee listservs on the Minnesota State Legislature website (<https://www.leg.state.mn.us>).



It is crucial that all Corps members sign up for any available listservs, as committee hearings will also happen outside the normal schedule, particularly later in the session.

Legislative Lingo

COMMITTEE ADMINISTRATOR (CA) – a partisan staff member assigned to coordinate for the committee, draft the minutes of the committee, and assist the Chair with running the committee hearing

COMPANION BILL – when a bill is introduced in either house, the chief author may find someone to carry a bill in the other body; this bill is usually identical when introduced, though that may change

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE – a committee appointed to reconcile the differences between two versions of a bill that has been passed by both the House and Senate

DELETE ALL AMENDMENT – also known as a Delete Everything Amendment, this amendment removes the entire language of a bill or amendment and substitutes new language, rather than making small changes

ENGROSSMENT – the current text of a bill or resolution which includes or incorporates all adopted amendments; each version will receive a numerical designation (e.g., first engrossment, second engrossment, etc.)

ENROLLMENT – a bill that has been passed by both houses and has been put in final form to be presented to the governor for his signature

LAID OVER – indicates a bill is not defeated or passed by a committee, but is “held” by a committee; usually indicates that the bill, or sections of it, may be included in an omnibus bill to be drafted at a later date

LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT (LA) – a partisan staff member assigned to provide administrative support to a legislator or legislators

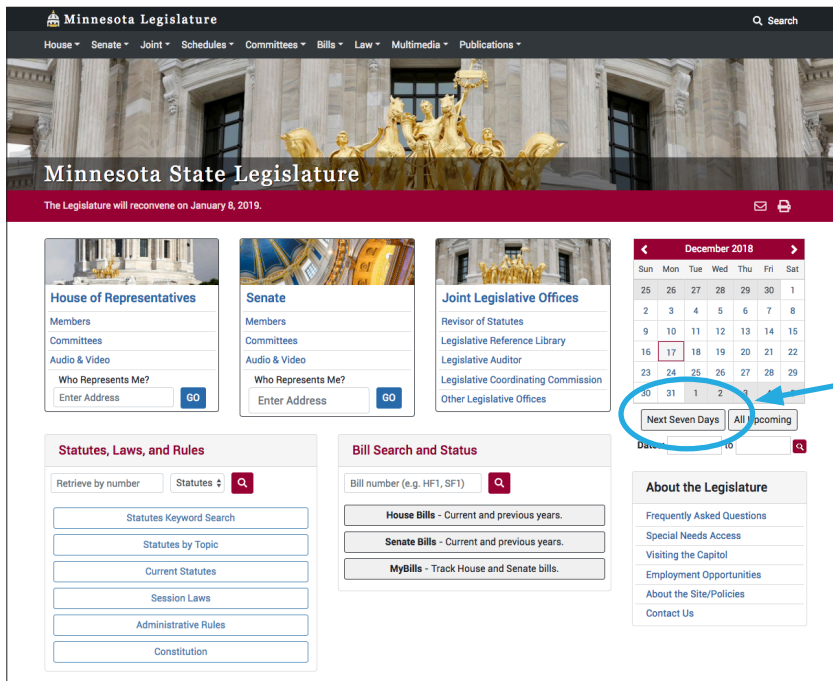
PAGE – the nonpartisan staff member assigned to provide assistance to Committee Administrators, manage testifiers, ensure that the committee hearing is being recorded, courier documents, and run errands for legislators and legislative staff

SELECT COMMITTEE – a temporary committee established for a specific purpose

SESSION – has multiple meanings: (1) BIENNIUM SESSION: the two-year legislative cycle; (2) ANNUAL SESSION or REGULAR SESSION: the weeks between the first day of assembly and the adjournment in each calendar; (3) DAILY SESSION or FLOOR SESSION: when either legislative body meets as a whole in its main chamber; (4) SPECIAL SESSION: an extra session outside the usual annual session that is called by the governor

TABLED – indicates a bill or motion has not received a vote and may be reconsidered at a later time or date by the same committee or board

Finding an Agenda and Committee Documents



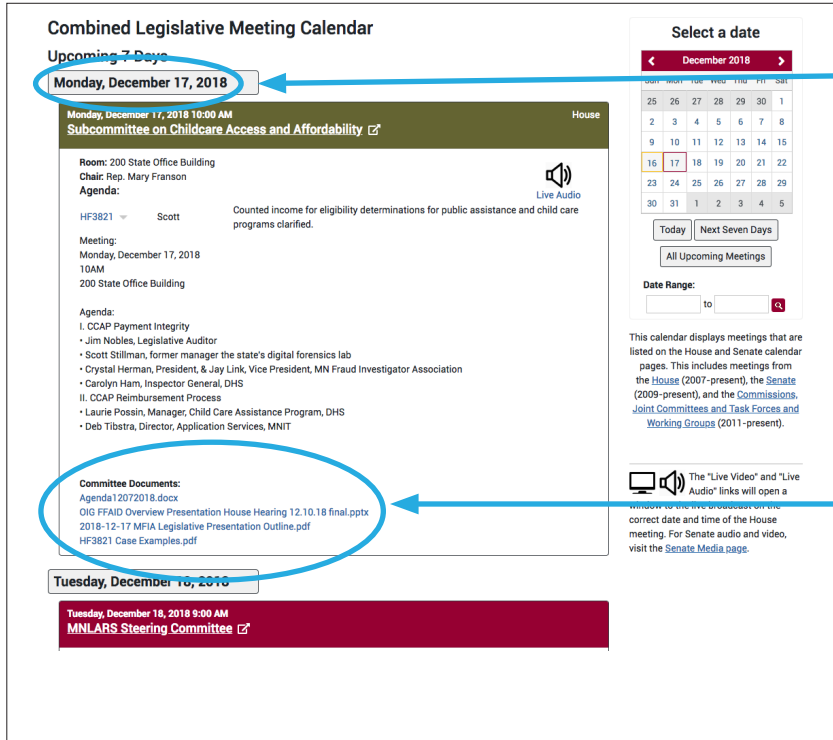
STEP 1

Open your browser to the Minnesota State Legislature website:

www.leg.state.mn.us

STEP 2

Check the schedule to be sure your meeting is still happening. Choose a date from the calendar or click "Next Seven Days."



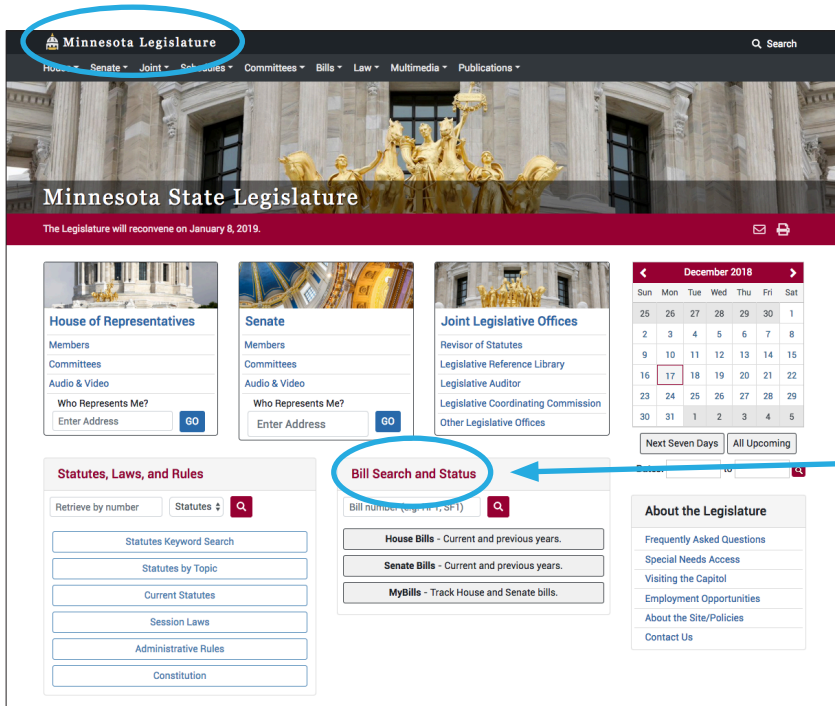
STEP 3

Locate your meeting date in the list.

Be sure to check for any cancellation notices or schedule updates BEFORE going to the meeting.

STEP 4

Download the agenda and/or committee documents associated with your meeting, if available (see example at left).

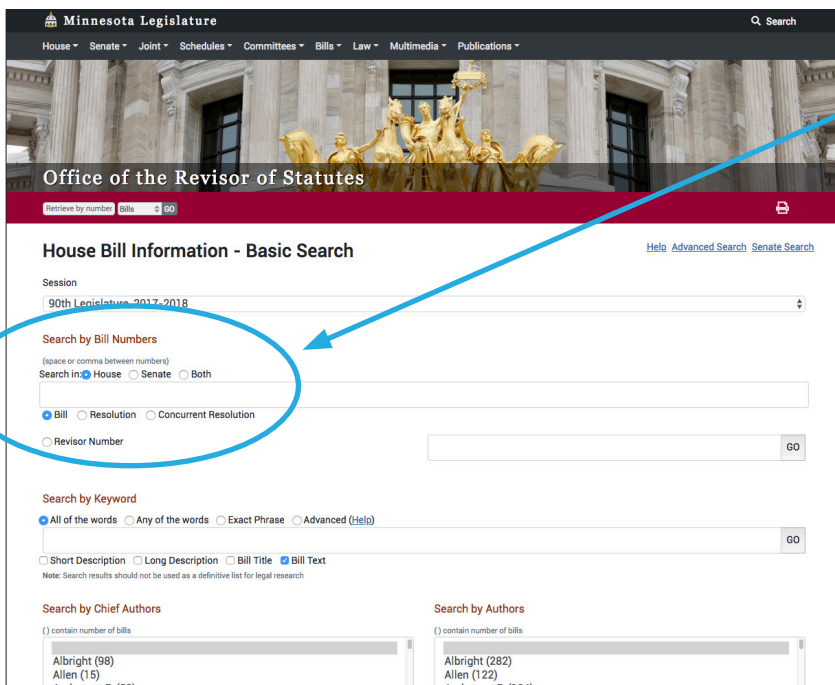


STEP 5

Return to the homepage by clicking the “MN Legislature” text/logo in upper left of the page.

STEP 6

Begin the lookup for your bill under the “Bill Search and Status” section. Click House Bills or Senate Bills.



STEP 7

Enter the bill number in the search field and press Enter on your keyboard or click the “Go” button on the right side of the screen.

(The bill number can be found on the meeting’s agenda, but typically only during Session, which runs February 20 through late May).

Appendix A: Observer Corps

Observer Corps Job Description

An Observer is a trained member of the Observer Corps who attends a governmental meeting, notes what happens at the meeting, and reports back to LWV Minnesota and their community members. Observers learn not only what the government bodies are doing, but also how the government bodies are addressing issues. Observers also keep government officials on notice, letting them know that someone is watching them.

Observers also serve as a method to identify when and how to mobilize our Lobby Corps. While local LWVs are encouraged to have Observers at the local level, Observers in the LWV Minnesota Observer Corps focus on state-level boards, commissions and committees, primarily legislative committees.

Any LWV member can be an Observer. Observers who live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area are encouraged to attend meetings in person. However, Observers from Greater Minnesota may occasionally watch meetings by telecast on the internet as available. These are the requirements for Observers:

- Must complete online training.
- Must adhere strictly to the Member Code of Conduct (also in this handbook) and be courteous to not only government officials but also other meeting attendees.
- Must have an interest in and willingness to learn about how government bodies conduct their business.
- Must have an interest in and willingness to learn about the substantive issues discussed by the governmental body they will be observing.
- Must not engage in personal or partisan agenda while serving as an Observer and should not provide commentary or testimony on issues on behalf of the League. Those who serve as Observers may still remain civically engaged and active in their individual capacity.
- Must observe a minimum of four (4) meetings and submit a report for each.
- Are encouraged to serve as an “ambassador” for LWV Minnesota by talking about the organization to other meeting attendees.
- Must not testify, lobby, or otherwise speak for LWV Minnesota; only Lobby Corps members may testify or lobby on behalf of LWV Minnesota. LWV members may be part of both the Observer Corps and the Lobby Corps.

For more information on observing, see “Observing Your Government in Action” by LWVUS (http://forum.lwv.org/sites/default/files/lwvef_observingyourgovernment.pdf)

Observer Reports: What and How to Observe

Refer to the Observer Checklist (in this handbook) for a step by step walkthrough of preparing for and observing a meeting. This section explains how to write the report itself.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What were the agenda items discussed (please refer to bill numbers when possible)?
- What questions or statements were made by members of the committee/board?
- Did committee/board members get into a debate or challenge each other?
- Did the committee/board discuss items that are off topic?
- Did lobbyists or other members of the public testify? If so, what did they say? Did committee/board members treat them with respect?
- If a bill was discussed, was it passed, defeated, laid over, or tabled?
- Were there any other events of interest?

EXAMPLE SUMMARY

HF 218 - Jones argued with Smith about Section 2. Association of Accounts testified against the bill. Laid over.

HF 14 - Chamber of Commerce testified in favor of the bill. Passed and referred to Public Safety Committee.

HF 201 - Dropped from agenda due to lack of time.

General - Testifier Bill Anderson was removed for disturbing the hearing.



Reports should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than one week from the date of the meeting.

Observer Report Form

Observer Report Form

Use this form to submit an Observer Report to LWV Minnesota. If you have questions, contact Nick Harper, Civic Engagement Director, nharper@lwmn.org or 651-424-4603. Please do not submit Observer Reports by email; those reports will not be recorded.

*** Required**

Email address *

Your email _____

Your name, if you'd like credited in the Capitol Letter for your report.

We will copy-and-past directly. If you do not type your name here, your name will not be put in the Capitol Letter with your report.

Your answer _____

What type of committee or board did you observe? *

Choose _____

Name of the committee or board *

Your answer _____

Date of Meeting *

Date

mm/dd/yyyy _____

Scheduled Time of Meeting

Time

____ : ____ AM ▾



You can type your notes on a laptop during the meeting, or hand-write and type them up/paste into the form later.

Please be as factual and impartial as possible in your summary.

LINK TO FORM:

<https://goo.gl/forms/jNwXQA1hvcTiFD2C2>

(This link is also available under Member Resources on the LWV website, lwmn.org.)

The Observer Checklist

- Find the website and contact information for an administrative board by using a web search engine (like Google), or for a legislative committee, by using the Minnesota State Legislature website (<https://www.leg.state.mn.us>).
- Sign up for the board or committee listserv, if available.
- Arrive **10-15 minutes early** to the meeting location; be sure to allocate **time in addition to this** to find parking or use public transit.
- Wear an LWV insignia, preferably an LWV Minnesota button.
- Turn off or silence your cellphone prior to entering the meeting location.
- Always be courteous and respectful to others; never distract others.
- Pick up committee or board meeting documents. Usually there are public copies available at the front of the meeting room on a table. Public copies are limited, so arrive early to ensure you get a copy.
- Don't be afraid to introduce yourself to board/committee members or other members of the public before or after the meeting if you can do so without interrupting them from other work. Feel free to talk up LWV to other members of the public before or after the meeting.
- Speak for LWV Minnesota only as authorized; as an Observer, you are typically only authorized to be a brand ambassador.
- Take comprehensive notes on important information. Notes should be as factual and impartial as possible. If you would like to add personal commentary, analysis or opinion, keep that separate from the rest of your notes. Compile your notes into a report.
- Use the Observer Report Form to send your report to LWV Minnesota. Brevity is key. Your notes will likely be included in the Capitol Letter as appropriate. Other notes will be kept internally by staff for future reference.
- If you believe an Action Alert should be sent to LWV Minnesota's mailing list, fill out the Action Alert Proposal Form.
- Helpful numbers to add to your phone: General information for House: 651-296-2146; general information for Senate: 651-296-0504; Capitol security escort: 651-296-6741.



If you have any trouble, contact Nick Harper, Civic Engagement Director, nharper@lwvmn.org or 651-424-4603.

Appendix B: Lobby Corps

Lobby Corps Job Description

The Lobby Corps is made up of LWV Minnesota members who act as volunteer lobbyists. While local LWVs may lobby on issues at the local level, volunteer lobbyists in the LWV Minnesota Lobby Corps focus on state-level boards, commissions and committees, primarily legislative committees.

Volunteer lobbyists usually lobby on democracy issues that form the core of LWV Minnesota's Program for Action. However, volunteer lobbyists may lobby on other issues within the Program for Action, including issues like natural resources, healthcare, and housing.

Any LWV member can be a Lobby Corps member. Volunteer lobbyists who live in the Twin Cities metropolitan area are encouraged to testify at meetings in person. However, volunteer lobbyists from Greater Minnesota may submit written testimony to a board or committee if they cannot attend in person.

These are the requirements for Lobby Corps members:

- Must complete online training.
- Must adhere strictly to the Member Code of Conduct and be courteous to not only government officials but also other meeting attendees.
- Must have an interest in and willingness to learn about how government bodies conduct their business.
- Must have an interest in and willingness to learn about the substantive issues they will be lobbying on.
- Must not engage in personal or partisan agenda while serving as a Lobby Corps member; individuals who serve as volunteer lobbyists may still remain civically engaged and active in their individual capacity.
- Must draft lobbying materials for one committee hearing or one meeting with a legislator. Must submit at least one Action Alert Proposal during session. Must research and summarize one bill of interest (or one widely covered by the news).
- Should be comfortable with public speaking, advocating on LWV Minnesota Program for Action, and interacting with the state legislators (training will be provided!).
- Are encouraged to serve as an "ambassador" for LWV Minnesota by talking about the organization to other meeting attendees.
- Must not testify, lobby, or otherwise speak for LWV Minnesota except as outlined in LWV Minnesota policies.

Bill Tracking

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF MINNESOTA

BECOME A MEMBER SUPPORT US SUBSCRIBE

Where We Stand What We Do For Voters Local Leagues Our Centennial News & Events About

Bill Tracking

This page allows Lobby Corps members to keep track of bills in the legislature that concern certain topics. Scroll down the page to find the topic you are interested in and click the link to see the bill list.

Bill searches were created to find bills that contain certain words or phrases. For example, the Voting Rights & Election Law bill tracking finds bill with words like "ballot" or "voter". The searches are not perfect, but are fairly accurate. Bills are listed in reverse chronological order, with bills that have most recently been acted upon (vote, committee referral, author change, etc.) at the top. Click on a row once to expand the row and read more information in each row. You can also click the Bill Number to learn details about each bill. You can also sort the bills by clicking on a column heading.

If you have questions about reading or understanding the information on these pages, please contact [Nick Harper](#), Civic Engagement Director.

- [Voting Rights & Election Law](#)
Including Provisional Ballots, Restore the Vote, and the Voting Process
- [Fair District Maps](#)
Including Redistricting, Apportionment, and Census
- [Money in Politics](#)
Including Campaign Finance, Lobbying, and Political Advertisements
- [Transparency & Citizens' Right to Know](#)
Including Data Practices, Freedom of Information, and Open Meetings

LINK TO PAGE:

<https://www.lwvmn.org/bill-tracking>

(This link is also available under Member Resources on the LWV website, lwvmn.org.)

Testimony Overview

TESTIMONY FORMATS

There are three testimony formats (instructions and examples of each follow):

- SCRIPT – the speech you read and present in person
- SUMMARY – a handout in bullet format summarizing your testimony
- LETTER – a form letter that includes a bulleted summary of your testimony

WHEN TO USE EACH FORMAT

IF YOU WILL BE...	SCRIPT	SUMMARY	LETTER
PRESENT (giving testimony in person), then prepare...	X	X	
NOT PRESENT (emailing written testimony), then prepare...			X



All forms of testimony **MUST** be approved before use.

Etiquette for Verbal Testimony

REHEARSE YOUR TESTIMONY. It's good to rehearse your testimony a few times before you actually give it. This gets you familiar with saying the words, rather than just reading it.

ARRIVE EARLY. This ensures that you are on time for the hearing and are aware of any changes to the agenda or meeting space.

DON'T BE INTIMIDATED. The legislators are your neighbors. They are everyday people like you and me. They are just regular humans, not gods or monsters, so there's no reason to be nervous or afraid.

SPEAK CLEARLY INTO THE MICROPHONE. Do not be afraid to pause testifying to adjust the microphone if needed. Feel free to ask the Page for assistance.

SIGN IN AND INTRODUCE YOURSELF. All witnesses must sign in on a sheet, which is usually on the testifier's podium or held by the Committee Page. Your first statement into the microphone should be, "My name is [First & Last Name], and I am here on behalf of the League of Women Voters Minnesota."

SPEAK TO AND THROUGH THE CHAIR. Legislative process requires that witnesses only speak directly to the Chair of the committee. Always address the Chair as "Madam Chair" or "Mister Chair". Do not directly address other legislators. If necessary, refer to legislators indirectly. "Madam Chair, to answer Representative Smith's question..."

THANK THE CHAIR AND THE LEGISLATORS. "Thank you [Madam/Mister] Chair for allowing me to testify on this important issue today."

CLEARLY STATE SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO THE BILL OR ITS PROVISIONS. LWV Minnesota may oppose only part of a bill. "LWV Minnesota supports S.F. 100." Or "LWV Minnesota opposes parts of H.F. 250 as currently written."

GIVE YOUR TESTIMONY, BUT DON'T REPEAT POINTS ALREADY MADE BY OTHERS. Provide the testimony that was approved. If another witness has already made one of your points or stated some of your facts, do not repeat that point at length. Instead state, "LWV Minnesota agrees with other witnesses that..." and quickly move to your next point.

IF YOU DON'T KNOW AN ANSWER, SAY "I DON'T KNOW." While Lobby Corps members tend to be knowledgeable about important issues, legislators understand that Lobby Corps members are volunteers, not paid policy experts. Very few legislators expect Lobby Corps members to have every answer (nor should they). If a legislator asks a question and you do not know the answer, simply reply, "Unfortunately, I don't know the answer to that question,

but I will find the answer and get back to committee members with an answer as soon as possible.” DO NOT GUESS. The worst response you can give is to make something up on the fly or potentially give incorrect information. Follow up with the Civic Engagement Director immediately after the hearing to ensure that the legislator’s question gets answered in writing. Follow up responses are also considered testimony and should go through the same approval process.

ALWAYS OFFER LWV MINNESOTA AS A RESOURCE. “If anyone has any questions or concerns, please reach out to LWV Minnesota. We are happy to assist on these issues.”

AVOID DRAMA. Do not argue with members of the committee or people giving opposing testimony.

KEEP LWV MINNESOTA STAFF IN THE LOOP. If you are contacted by a legislator or legislative staff after the hearing, please let the Civic Engagement Director know so LWV Minnesota can keep track of its relationships.



Honesty, integrity, and reputation are the most valuable currencies at the legislature.

Guidelines for Drafting Testimony

DRAFT TESTIMONY SEVERAL DAYS AHEAD OF THE HEARING WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

Submit to the Civic Engagement Director for approval; when approved, the Civic Engagement Director will contact the Committee Administrator for you to ensure that you are placed on the agenda as a witness. Failure to draft testimony ahead of time may result in the Committee Administrator denying a Lobby Corps member the opportunity to testify.

If you will be creating testimony for...

- **DEMOCRACY ISSUES OR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES** – the content will be developed collaboratively between the Civic Engagement Director and the Lobby Corps member
- **ANY OTHER ISSUES** – the Lobby Corps member will draft the testimony on their own and then submit to the Civic Engagement Director for approval

HONESTY, INTEGRITY, AND REPUTATION ARE THE MOST VALUABLE CURRENCIES AT THE LEGISLATURE. All interaction with legislators and legislative staff, including committee testimony, must reflect this basic tenet. Every statement made by a Lobby Corps member must be truthful.

TESTIMONY SHOULD BE TACTFUL AND DIPLOMATIC. While Lobby Corps members should always be truthful, that does not give license to Lobby Corps members to be aggressive or rude. Lobby Corps members must also be courteous to legislators, legislative staff, and even other members of the public at the Capitol. Lobby Corps members can and should assert LWV Minnesota's positions on issues while also remaining respectful and civil.

BREVITY IS KEY. Time is extremely limited and valuable at the legislature. Lobby Corps members might only have as few as 1-2 minutes to testify during a busy committee hearing. Keep this in mind when drafting your script. When submitting written testimony, know that legislators do not have time to read lengthy testimony in paragraph form. Instead, bullet points of the most important facts and arguments is best.

USE FACTS AND DATA AS EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT YOUR ARGUMENT. Provide citations in footnotes whenever possible and include charts/graphs as appropriate.

USE A SHORT PERSONAL ANECDOTE, IF RELEVANT. Testimony is most effective from your unique perspective. Your personal story provides a narrative for important facts to latch onto and give context and meaning to the data you have provided. Do not use personal stories that aren't immediately relevant to the issue, as that will not be useful to legislators.

Template – Testimony Script

Use the following template to create your testimony script (the speech you give in person at the hearing). Substitute your information for any items in **[brackets]**. The blue headings for each section are just a reference for you; do not include those in your speech.

OPENING

My name is **[First & Last Name]**, and I am here on behalf of the League of Women Voters Minnesota.

Thank you **[Madam/Mister]** Chair for allowing me to testify on this important issue today.

LWV Minnesota is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

TESTIMONY

[Position]

- Clearly state support or opposition. Examples: LWV Minnesota supports S.F. 100. -OR- LWV Minnesota opposes parts of H.F. 250 as currently written.

[Testimony]

- Brevity is key
- Use facts and data as evidence
- Add a SHORT personal anecdote, if relevant
- Refer to Guidelines for Drafting Testimony for tips

CLOSING

The League of Women Voters Minnesota urges members to vote **[in favor or against]** this **[bill/provision(s)]**.

Thank you for your time.



You can type and print your script on plain white paper. No special layout or letterhead is required.

When finished, submit to the Civic Engagement Director for approval.

Template – Testimony Summary



Summary

Issue: [Topic Name]
Related Bills: [#]
LWV Minnesota: [Supports, Opposes, Opposes in Part]

Testimony

- [Add testimony here]
- Brevity is key – use a bullet format for this section
- Use facts and data as evidence, along with charts/graphics as appropriate
- Refer to Guidelines for Drafting Testimony in the Lobby Corps Handbook for additional tips and information

The League of Women Voters Minnesota urges members to vote **[in favor or against]** this **[bill/provision(s)]**.

About LWV

The League of Women Voters is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

546 Rice Street, Suite 200 • St. Paul, MN 55103 • 651-224-5445 • www.lwvminn.org



The Summary uses a special Word template, which you can find in Member Resources at lwvminn.org. Substitute your information for any items in [brackets].

When finished, submit to the Civic Engagement Director for approval.

Template – Testimony Letter

Use the following template to create your testimony letter (the form letter that will be emailed in as testimony). Substitute your information for any items in **[brackets]**. Compose your letter in a plain Word document before submitting to the Civic Engagement Director.

[Date]

[Recipient/Committee Name and Address]

Re: **[Bill #]**

Dear Chair **[Chair’s Last Name]** and Committee Members,

My name is **[First & Last Name]**, and I am a volunteer with the League of Women Voters Minnesota. The League of Women Voters is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public. We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

Unfortunately, I am not able to attend the committee hearing. Please accept this written testimony in lieu of oral testimony.

[Position]

- Clearly state support or opposition. Examples: LWV Minnesota supports S.F. 100. -OR- LWV Minnesota opposes parts of H.F. 250 as currently written.

[Testimony]

- Brevity is key – use a bullet format for this section
- Use facts and data as evidence, along with charts/graphics as appropriate
- Refer to Guidelines for Drafting Testimony for additional tips

The League of Women Voters Minnesota urges members to vote **[in favor or against]** this **[bill/provision(s)]**.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[First & Last Name, Hometown]

**When finished,
submit to
the Civic
Engagement
Director for
approval.**

Sign-On Policy

There can be value in signing on to letters in collaboration with other organizations. However, LWV Minnesota has limited resources that must be used wisely so as to maximize value to members and the public. To that end, approval for a sign-on should take into account the following:

In a request for a sign-on, the requesting members should:

1. Cite the LWV Minnesota Program for Action position(s) that justifies the sign-on. High consideration will be given to letters that address the Board's approved legislative priorities of LWV Minnesota.
2. Confirm which organization's letterhead, if any, will be used.
3. Identify the consequences if LWV Minnesota does not sign onto a letter.
4. Identify whose signature, if anyone's, will be used (e.g., President, Executive Director, Advocacy Chair, etc.)

If the letter contains legal or technical arguments on many issues, it would be advisable for the LWV Minnesota to compose its own letter.

Fast Approval refers to approval of a request with fewer than three business days' notice. Fast Approval is not guaranteed; members should not expect Fast Approval. Members should request an extension of the deadline set by the other letter signatories. An exception to the required notice would be considered for impending floor votes or conference committee votes on bills relating to the priorities of LWV Minnesota.

Members should send request to the Civic Engagement Director who will forward it to both the Advocacy Chair and the Executive Director. Once approved by the Advocacy Chair, the Executive Director will sign the letter or direct the other signatories to add LWV Minnesota to the letter.

Adopted by the LWV Minnesota Board of Directors November 28, 2017.

Action Alert Proposal Form

LWVMN Action Alert Proposal Form

BEFORE YOU BEGIN: ACTION ALERT CHECKLIST

- Must be one single action. E.g., an Action Alert on legislation should be limited to one action. For example, Action Alerts about legislation should be about only on bill or pair of companion bills being heard in one legislative chamber.
- Must be an urgent action, i.e., a deadline is within the next few days. E.g., a committee or floor hearing or vote. Must submit the Action Alert at least two days ahead to ensure time to review and approve.
- Must send Action Alert subscribers to the decision-maker, not a third party organization. (E.g., may not send subscribers to sign another organization's petition that would be sent to the governor; members should be directed to share their comments directly with the governor.)
- Must cite the LWV Program for Action (either LWVUS or LWVMN). These can be found here: <https://www.lwvmn.org/our-positions>
- Must include fact-based bullet points for talking points or background information. Should include try to include a link to credit the source. Must use quotation marks for direct quotes. Charitable organizations, nonpartisan research organizations, and academic/educational institutions are the best sources. Must not cite partisan materials.
- Should thank a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization if they brought attention to the issue first. However, Action Alerts should not be a total copy-and-paste of another organization's emails.
- Should be 300 words or less. Test the number of words at <https://wordcounter.net>.

Not all proposed Action Alerts will necessarily be approved. Action Alerts focusing on the legislative priorities approved by LWVMN Board of Directors will receive priority treatment. Action Alerts will usually be limited to a maximum of two or three per week to prevent activist burnout.

Capitol Letter, All Member News, and social media can be used to share alerts that do not meet the urgency criteria or events like rallies or speakers.

If you have questions, please contact Nick Harper, Civic Engagement Director (nharper@lwvmn.org).

• Required

Email address *

Your email

What level of government are you seeking action for? *

Local - school board, town, city or county government



Tips and instructions for creating an Action Alert are included in the form itself.

LINK TO FORM:

<https://goo.gl/forms/0qBziNQI9MbENIJB2>

(This link is also available under Member Resources on the LWV website, lwvmn.org.)

Observer Reports (Optional But Helpful!)

Refer to the Observer Checklist (in this handbook) for a step by step walkthrough of preparing for and observing a meeting. This section explains how to write the report itself.

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS

- What were the agenda items discussed (please refer to bill numbers when possible)?
- What questions or statements were made by members of the committee/board?
- Did committee/board members get into a debate or challenge each other?
- Did the committee/board discuss items that are off topic?
- Did lobbyists or other members of the public testify? If so, what did they say? Did committee/board members treat them with respect?
- If a bill was discussed, was it passed, defeated, laid over, or tabled?
- Were there any other events of interest?

EXAMPLE SUMMARY

HF 218 - Jones argued with Smith about Section 2. Association of Accounts testified against the bill. Laid over.

HF 14 - Chamber of Commerce testified in favor of the bill. Passed and referred to Public Safety Committee.

HF 201 - Dropped from agenda due to lack of time.

General - Testifier Bill Anderson was removed for disturbing the hearing.



Reports should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than one week from the date of the meeting.

Observer Report Form

Use this form to submit an Observer Report to LWV Minnesota. If you have questions, contact Nick Harper, Civic Engagement Director, nharper@lwvmn.org or 651-424-4603. Please do not submit Observer Reports by email; those reports will not be recorded.

* Required

Email address *

Your email

Your name, if you'd like credited in the Capitol Letter for your report.

We will copy-and-past directly. If you do not type your name here, your name will not be put in the Capitol Letter with your report.

Your answer

What type of committee or board did you observe? *

Choose

Name of the committee or board *

Your answer

Date of Meeting *

Date

mm/dd/yyyy

Scheduled Time of Meeting

Time

: AM



You can type your notes on a laptop during the meeting, or hand-write and type them up/paste into the form later.

Please be as factual and impartial as possible in your summary.

LINK TO FORM:

<https://goo.gl/forms/jNwXQA1hvcTiFD2C2>

(This link is also available under Member Resources on the LWV website, lwvmn.org.)

The Lobbying Checklist

- Find the website and contact information for an administrative board by using a web search engine (like Google), or for a legislative committee, by using the Minnesota State Legislature website (<https://www.leg.state.mn.us>).
- Sign up for the board or committee listserv, if available.
- Draft your testimony and submit for approval as early as possible. Once your testimony is approved, be sure to print out your testimony script and summary and bring it with you.
- Rehearse your testimony so you get used to saying the words, not just reading them.
- Arrive **10-15 minutes early** to the meeting location; be sure to allocate **time in addition to this** to find parking or use public transit.
- Wear an LWV insignia, preferably an LWV Minnesota button.
- Turn off or silence your cellphone prior to entering the meeting location.
- Always be courteous and respectful to others; never distract others.
- You may pick up committee or board meeting documents, usually available at the front of the room on a table. Public copies are limited, so arrive early to ensure you get a copy.
- Don't be afraid to introduce yourself to board/committee members or other members of the public before or after the meeting if you can do so without interrupting them from other work. Feel free to talk up LWV to other members of the public as well.
- Speak for LWV Minnesota only as authorized; as a Lobby Corps member, all your testimony must be approved beforehand.
- You may use the Observer Report Google Form if you have notes or comments about the meeting. Brevity is key. Your notes will likely be included in the Capitol Letter as appropriate. Other notes will be kept internally by staff for future reference.
- If you believe an Action Alert should be sent to LWV Minnesota's mailing list, use the Action Alert Google Form.
- Helpful numbers to add to your phone: General information for House: 651-296-2146; general information for Senate: 651-296-0504; Capitol security escort: 651-296-6741.



If you have any trouble, contact Nick Harper, Civic Engagement Director, nharper@lwvmn.org or 651-424-4603.

Appendix C: Maps & Transit

Transit Options

BY TRAIN

Take the Green Line to the Capitol/Rice Street station.

BY BUS

You can reach the State Capitol on bus routes 3, 16, 62, and more. For info on routes and schedules, use Metro Transit's Trip Planner: <https://www.metrotransit.org/imap/map.aspx>

BY BIKE

There are three Nice Ride stations located adjacent to the State Capitol. Visit the Nice Ride website at <https://www.niceridemn.org/> for a full map of stations. There are also over a dozen bike racks located in the area surrounding the State Capitol.

BY CAR – RAMP PARKING

Free parking will be available in State-run parking lots and ramps after 4 PM on Friday. This includes Ramp F and Lot C on Rice Street, and Centennial Parking Ramp on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. A map showing ramps can be found on the next page.

BY CAR – STREET PARKING

On-street parking is available on Cedar Street, Sherburne Avenue, and other nearby streets. Be sure to pay meter fares where required.

BY CAR – LWV PARKING

The LWV office is located at the corner of Rice Street and Charles Street, just a few blocks' walk from the Capitol. You are welcome to park along Charles Street (free, with a 2-hour limit until 6 PM). There may be availability in the LWV office lot, but please call ahead to inquire about availability and to reserve a spot, or you will be towed.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

Use Google Maps or a cell phone/GPS to receive tailored driving directions to the Capitol. The destination address is **75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Saint Paul, MN 55155**. This address is the Capitol building itself, but should get you onto the grounds. From there, choose a parking option (ramp, street or surface lot).



20 disability spots are located in the Senate Building parking garage for no cost (entrance off Capitol Blvd.). Take elevator to tunnel system and follow signs to the Capitol.

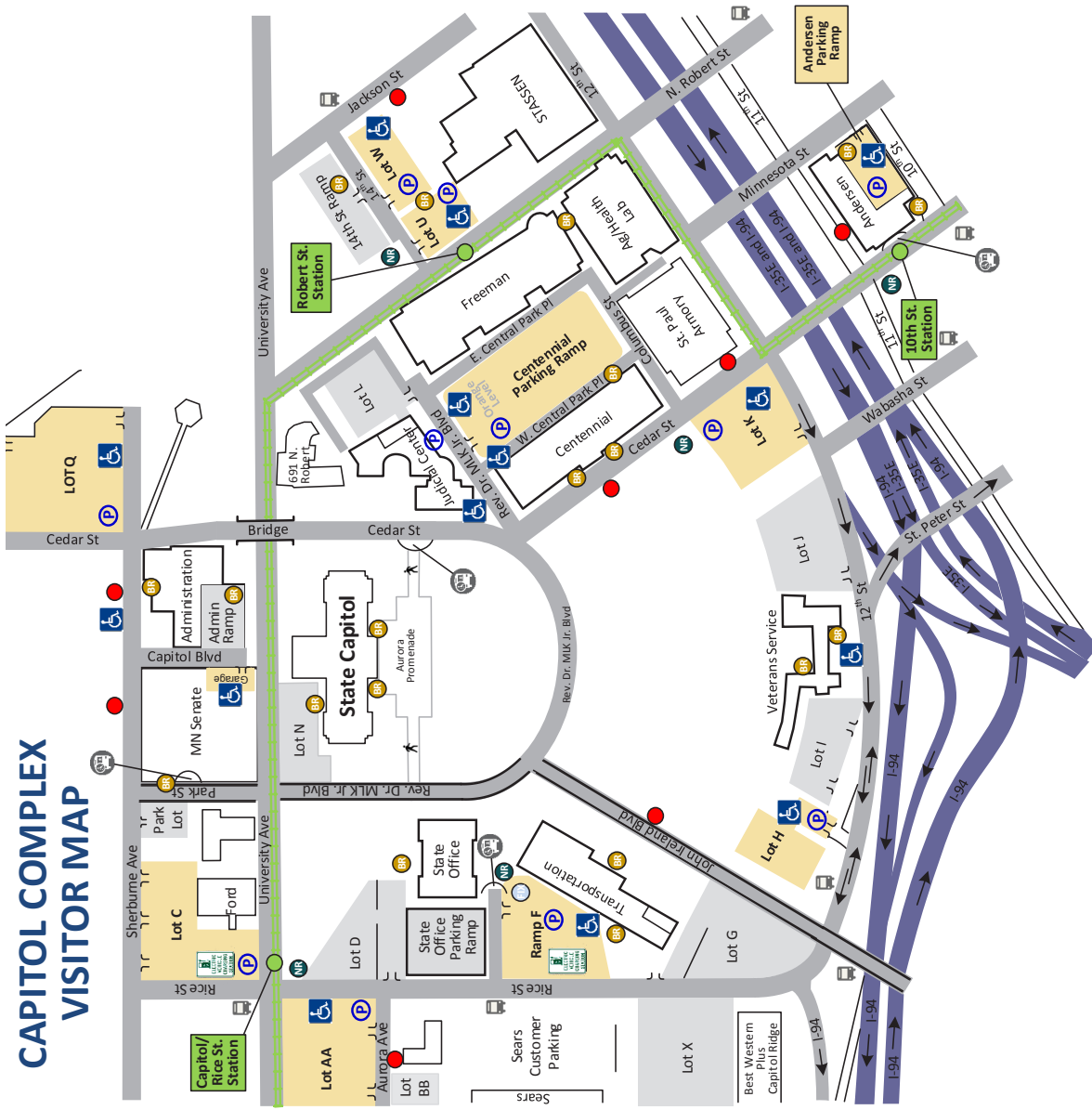
State Capitol Complex: Ground-Level Map



- Visitor Parking Locations**
- Andersen Parking Ramp** - enter from 10th St and Cedar St
 - Centennial Parking Ramp, Orange Level** - southeast corner of Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd. and W. Central Park Pl, enter from Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd.
 - Lot AAA** - south west corner of University Ave and Rice St, enter from Aurora Ave
 - Lot C** - northwest corner of Sherburne off of Rice St, enter from Sherburne Ave
 - Lot H** - northeast corner of 12th St. and John Ireland Blvd, enter from 12th St.
 - Lot K** - northwest corner of Cedar St and 12th St, enter from 12th St.
 - Lot Q** - northeast corner of Cedar St and Sherburne Ave, enter from Sherburne Ave.
 - Lot U** - southeast corner of N. Robert St and 14th St, enter from 14th St.
 - Lot W** - southwest corner of 14th St and Jackson St, enter from 14th St.
 - Minnesota Senate Garage** - enter from Capitol Blvd, off of Sherburne Ave - Public Disability Parking only
 - Ramp F** - enter off Rice St
 - Rev. Dr. MLK Jr. Blvd** - parking on either side of the street

- Bicycle Fix-it Station
- Bicycle Lane
- Bicycle Rack
- Bus Route
- Contract Parking Only
- Electric Vehicle Charging Station
- Facilities with Public Metered Parking
- Metro Green Line
- Metro Green Line Station
- Nice Ride Kiosk (seasonal)
- Paratransit Drop Off & Pick Up Zone
- Pedestrian Traffic Only
- Public City Meters
- Public Disability Parking
- Public Metered Parking

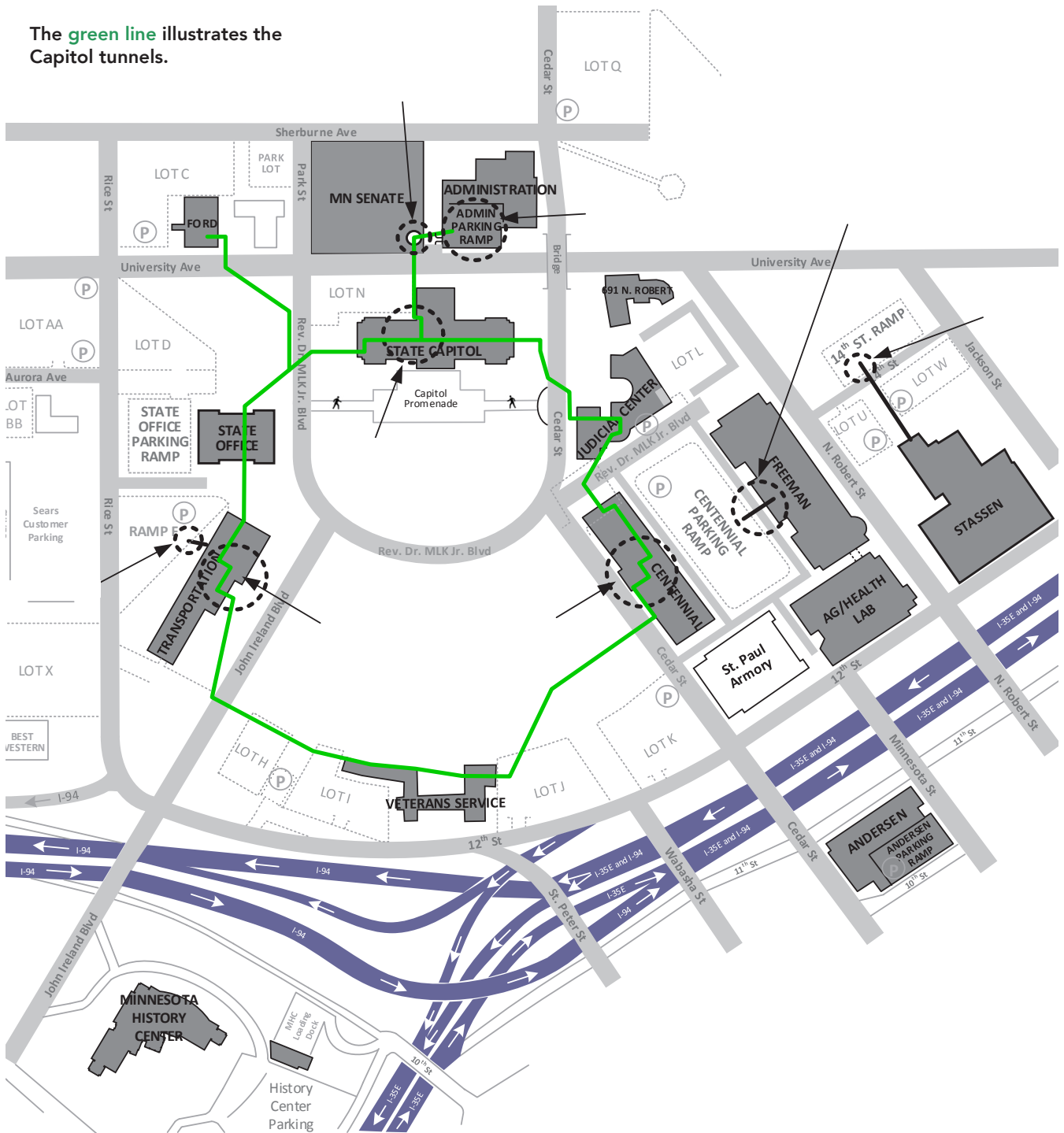
capitolvisitor.pdf
REV 12/17



CAPITOL COMPLEX VISITOR MAP

State Capitol Complex: Tunnel Map

The **green line** illustrates the Capitol tunnels.



State Capitol Building Restrooms & Amenities

PUBLIC RESTROOM LOCATIONS

Men's and women's restrooms are available on every floor.
Mother's room is located in Room 104A, on the First Floor, West Wing.

FOOD & DRINK

Rathskeller Café – Located in the basement. Hours:
Monday: Breakfast 7:30-10am | Lunch 11am-2pm | Snacks till 3:30pm
Tuesday-Thursday: Breakfast 7:30-10am | Lunch 11am-2:30pm | Grill 11am-5pm
Friday: Breakfast 7:30-10am | Lunch 11am-2pm

Lunch Counter – Located on the 2nd Floor, East Wing.

Vending machines are located in the tunnel leading to the Minnesota Senate Building.

Drinking fountains are available on every floor.

Other cafeterias near the Capitol are located in the Centennial building and the Transportation building.

ATM

Located in the Capitol basement tunnel that leads to the Minnesota Senate Building.

ELEVATORS

There are three passenger elevators and one service elevator.

SECURITY

Emergency panic buttons are located across the Capitol Complex under blue lights. They can also be found in the tunnel system; they look like gray metal boxes on the wall with a yellow label above them. These alert Capitol Security to report to the button's location.

Capitol Security provides 24-hour service to escort you to your car if you feel unsafe. You can request an escort by calling 651-296-6741.

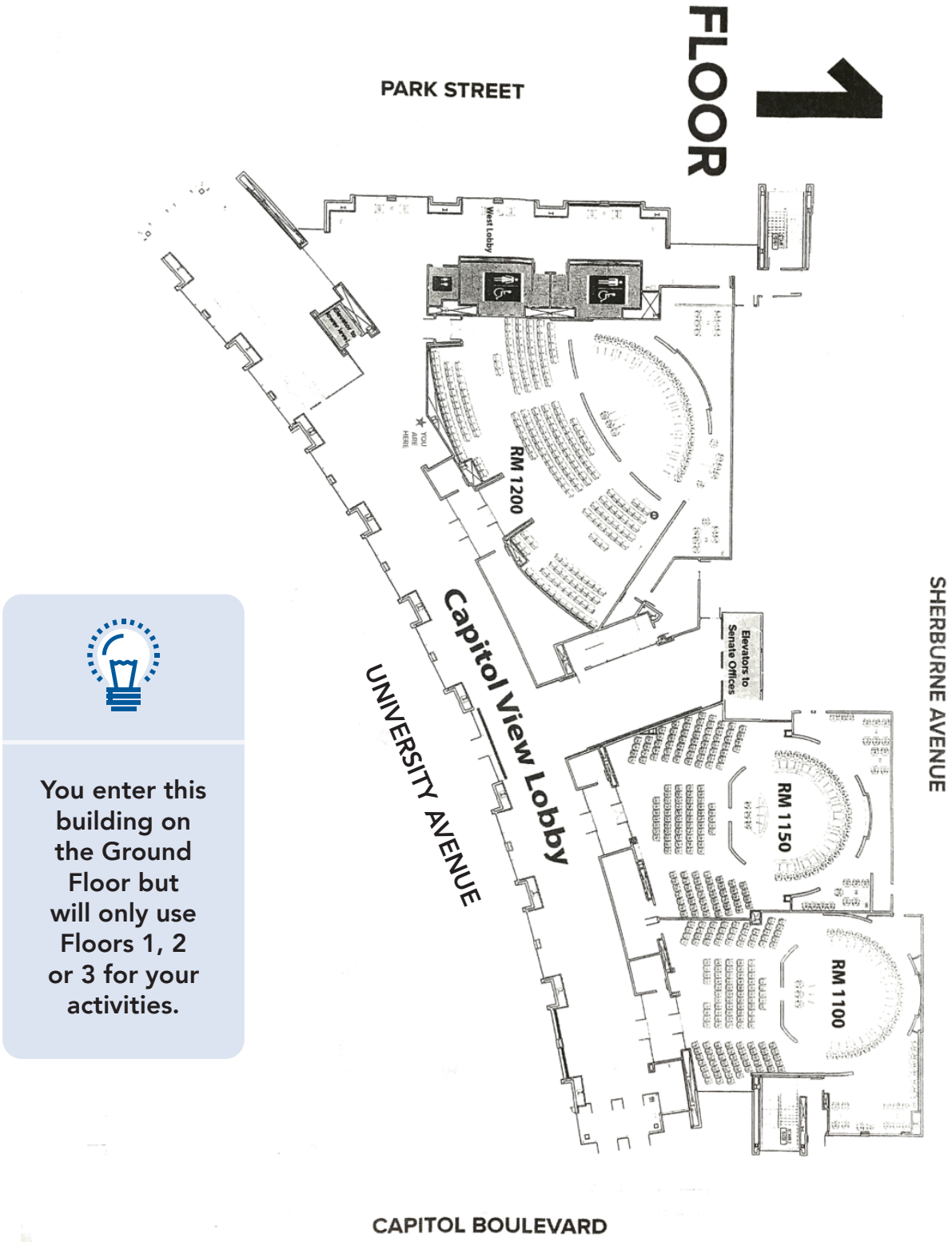
LOST AND FOUND


Call 651-201-2300. You will reach the Department of Administration's Facilities Management Division, which provides lost and found services to the entire Capitol Complex.



The Transportation Building's cafeteria is the largest in the Capitol Complex and has the most options for food and drink.

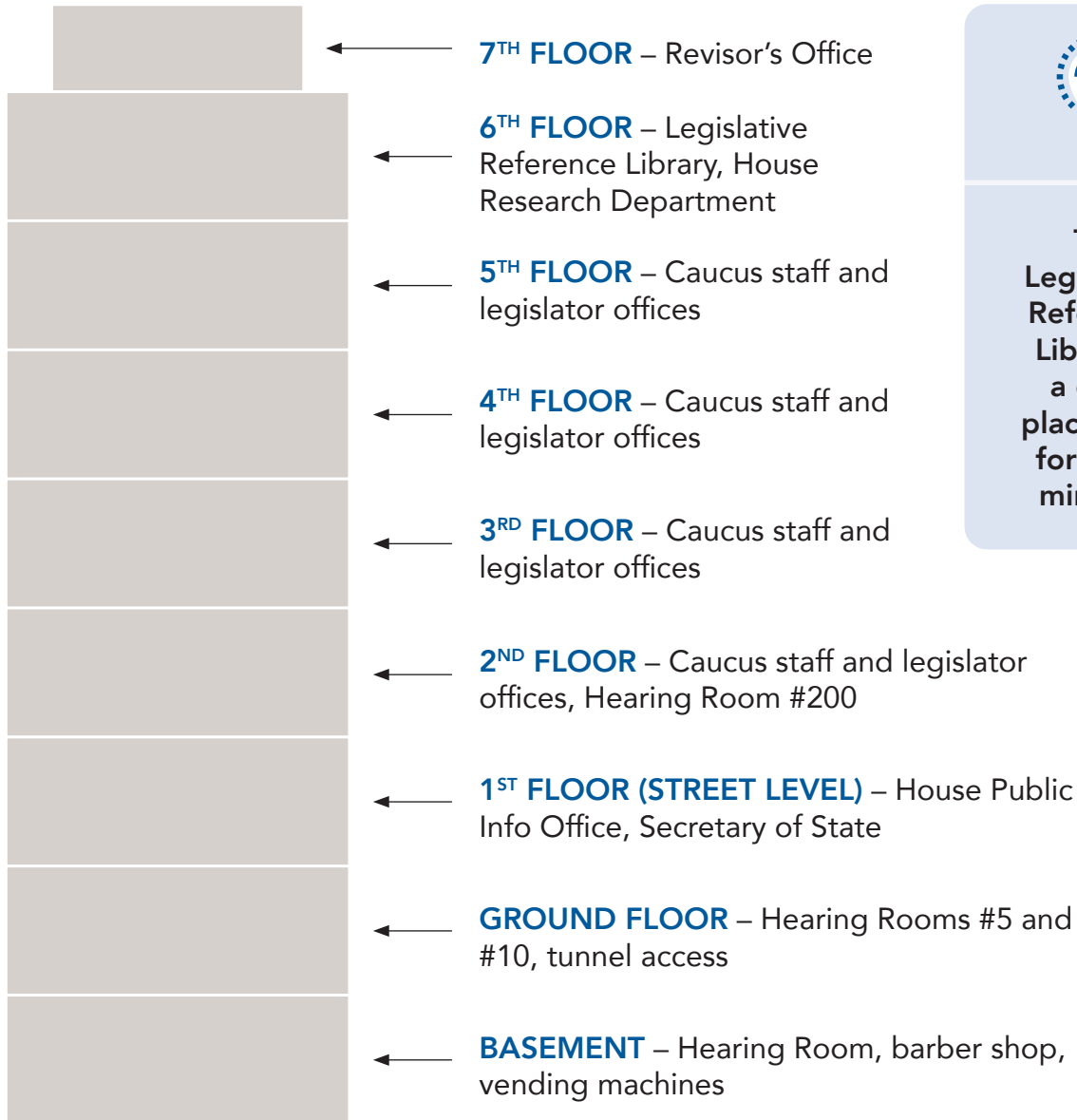
Senate Building Map – Floor 1




You enter this building on the Ground Floor but will only use Floors 1, 2 or 3 for your activities.

State Office Building Map (Side View)

For House of Representatives activities.



The Legislative Reference Library is a quiet place to sit for a few minutes.

HEARING ROOMS

Hearing Rooms are generally located directly across the hall from the elevators.

PUBLIC RESTROOMS

Maps/signs should mark the location of restrooms on each floor.