

Week Nineteen- May 10, 2021

The end of the 2021 regular legislative session will happen at midnight tonight.

Legislative leaders have been actively negotiating throughout the weekend. Just this morning, we learned the agreed to budget targets of \$1.2 billion for the 2021-23 and \$1.1 billion for 2024-25 bienniums.

- E-12 Education \$525m/\$675m
- Higher Ed \$100m/\$100m
- Health and Human Services \$100/\$100
- Environment \$30m/\$10m
- Ag/Broadband \$10m/\$10m
- Housing \$10m/\$12m
- Transportation \$200m/\$15m
- Public Safety \$105m/\$110m
- Labor/Workforce \$125m/\$17m
- Energy/Commerce \$16m/\$8m
- State Government \$67m/\$63m
- Capital TBD
- COVID Flexible Fund 0
- Other Bills \$9.6m/\$6.9m

The agreement also includes specific proposals for \$75 million dedicated to summer learning and \$70 million for broadband funding source and a bill yet to be determined. To ensure a timely conclusion to the upcoming special session where details will be worked out, the Governor, Speaker Hortman and Majority Leader Gazelka agreed that working group members and commissioners must complete their finance spreadsheets by 5:00 PM on Friday, May 28 and language agreed to by June 4th.

Special Session

Because of the complexity of this year's legislative agenda, it was widely anticipated there would be a special session to complete the budget and policy work. Governor Walz has stated he will call the legislature back on or around June 14 to extend the emergency peacetime orders. At that time the legislature will take back up bills. But before that, it's important to know how the special sessions work.

Each special session is a separate, free-standing meeting of the legislature, independent of the regular legislative session and any other special session. Because of this, all bills that were previously considered or debated must be introduced as new bills. The legislature may not act on bills from the regular session or another special session.

The legislators are the ones who decide what issues and legislation to consider in a special session and how long to meet. Governor Walz must call legislators back, but he will have no authority to limit their scope or duration. Nor does the constitution regulate the length of special sessions, as it does regular sessions.

Leadership will try and set the special session agenda so legislators can come in and quickly and efficiently get their work done. It is quite probably that legislators will "work" in the interim by meeting in informal work groups to finalize omnibus bill language and content. Remember however, no formal action will be taken until the special session is in session.