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Term limits held essential for 'citizen' Legislature

Limiting the terms of elected officials is an idea for which I would like to be able to take credit. Unfortunately, it's hardly a new concept.

In fact, in 1777, the Articles of Confederation were amended to limit service in the Continental Congress to not more than three years in a six-year period. Regret-

by Ben Boo

tably, when enforcement of this provision was attempted, there was a "disturbance" on the floor, and the persons in violation of the rule were allowed to continue serving.

In 1789, representatives attending the Constitutional Convention

supported limiting congressional service, but because they had no ability to enforce the rule under the Articles of Confederation, no provision was offered.

In the 19th Century, local traditions of limited congressional service kept tenure in office brief

and made it unnecessary to suggest a constitutional amendment. The concept resurfaced in the post-Watergate reform era and has continued to gain popularity.

Now I, and many others, believe the time has come for limiting terms. Our government was designed to be managed by "citizen legislators"—people who serve out of a sense of civic duty and a desire to contribute to society in much the same spirit as a community volunteer. That sense of civic duty seems to have been replaced by legislators who see office-holding as a lifetime profession. This "careerism" forces the perpetuation of office to influence every legislative decision.

Senior legislators gradually develop a new constituency—themselves. Their perspective becomes distant from that of their districts, identifying more with the Capitol

Term limits 'basically undemocratic,' strengthen bureaucrats, lobbyists

As reporters, columnists and philosophers prepare best/worst-of-the-year/decade lists, I would like to suggest *term limitations on political office* for the category of a "bad idea whose time will have come wherever political rhetoric and opportunities overwhelm reasoned, thoughtful discourse."

by Phyllis Kahn

that the problems of democracy are best solved by more democracy. The populist idea that the churning of elective office through institutionally forced removal of incumbents gives us a citizen legislature more in touch with the real world is a basically anti-democratic limitation on the

choice of the electorate.

The arguments behind limiting terms are that incumbents are usually entrenched and difficult to unelect, with many acting as if their principal course was to insure their reelection and that the populist tide, as evidenced by the

I ascribe to the unoriginal concept

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School-choice programs aid low-income students

Are Minnesota's school-choice programs having much impact on students from low-income families? A new study, produced by the Minnesota Department of Education and Humphrey Institute, shows the answer is "Yes."

The study examines experiences of a stratified random sample of the more than 13,000 students

by Joe Nathan

participating during the 1989-90 school year in several Minnesota programs that expand public school choice.

Programs include the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), High School Graduation Incentives (HSGI), Area Learning Cen-

ters (ALC) and private nonsectarian alternative programs (ALT) contracting with public school districts. The first of these programs is intended for a cross-section of public school juniors and seniors; the last three are intended for students aged 12 and older who have not succeeded in traditional

schools. This study found:

- **Dramatic increases** in aspiration levels among students in several of the programs. Those expecting to graduate from high school and enter college or vocational training increased from 19.4 percent to 39.5 percent in

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Waseca most visible higher-education problem

Of what iceberg is Waseca the tip? The University of Minnesota two-year campus there is merely the most visible piece of the persistent problem this state has with its postsecondary educational institutions.

Press coverage, so far, makes the issue appear one of tough choices in a down year, enriched by the always appealing story of a small-town struggle to save the local college. The real question is whether the thousands of University of Minnesota students—including the 6,500 from rural areas all around the state—can get the quality of educational opportunity their peers get in Michigan, or Illinois, or Iowa.

Let's put it as plainly as possible: We have more colleges than we can afford; too many of them aren't as good as they once were; and we have not yet shed enough denial over either condition to accept the obvious remedies.

We have often said in this space that the University is too big and losing ground on quality because of it. The same is true of the whole postsecondary "system." Altars to access are everywhere. If California, for example, were committed to Minnesota-style access, it would have to create at least 150 more two-year colleges. We are fourth in the nation in public appropriations per capita for postsecondary education, but only 21st in what we can actually spend on each student.

Appearing on a panel recently,

The Minnesota Journal

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Free Estimate

by Curtis W. Johnson

the former legislator whose bill created the campus at Waseca, Rod Searle, heard the case for closing it. He offered no real resistance, though he did allow as how the state also has too many technical colleges and community colleges. Could be.

But Waseca's perfect for starters. Its statistics spell out the story about quality: For \$6.4 million a year we get 185 graduates out of some 800 students. Only a quarter of the enrolled students finish a program at all. With costs per student already double the U's regular undergraduate average and nearly double the technical college cost-level, each graduate consumes more than \$40,000.

Seventy-five percent of Waseca's programs are available at another nearby institution. Only a few programs are unique, e.g., light-horse management (you can guess what that is) and vet-tech (which prepares students for \$6-an-hour jobs).

The U's central administration has come to believe that the proportions of freshmen who come back for another year, and of students who ultimately graduate, are, while not perfect measures, pretty reasonable indicators of whether the customer is getting a quality deal.

The Morris campus results are as good as Waseca's are bad. But at the Twin Cities campus, these numbers show a graduation rate of 28 percent for students who stay five years; the odds grow to 50 percent after six years. The U owns the Big Ten basement when it comes to retaining students or graduating them. When magazines publish recommendations of universities to attend, you know by now not to look for the University of Minnesota.

What's left of the U's prestige rests almost entirely on its continued success in private fundraising and faculty ability to at-

tract research grants in the top 10 of all institutions. And, as one senior official put it, "What is really scary is that the U is likely the best horse in the glue factory."

Things got this way because of the Minnesota culture. When faced with a choice between access and quality, we almost always choose access. If it's equity or accountability forcing a trade-off, we always pick equity. We're best at munching marshmallows; bullets we do not bite.

Our postsecondary philosophy has been, essentially: Let everybody go anywhere, try anything, regardless of cost or consequence. The result is an unaffordable array of institutions of declining quality. We don't close them, we just deny them the organizational oxygen of adequate resources.

University President Nils Hasselmo has simply laid down the gauntlet: If not this, what; and if not now, when? If the regents and the Legislature do not concur, we will have harvested yet another crop of University leaders, and sent this critical issue into limbo for a very long time.

Of noble ends and sinful means

From the report, Gambling in Minnesota, by Gaming Commissioner Anthony V. Bouza.

How...to resolve the dilemma of a people wanting to gamble and a state that needs to exercise its leadership role as moral guide and teacher?

The answer must come in the form of a carefully crafted, comprehensive government policy that takes a full view of the gambling issue and places it within the context of the community's life. This can only happen through a long and tortured debate that finally produces a rough consensus on the role gambling should play in our lives...

There is currently no single body guiding, monitoring, evaluating and making recommendations as to future direction or the wisdom of any given approach. The creation of an unpaid Governor's Gambling Commission, made up of seven or nine citizens, political

figures, experts, interested parties—all of whom must be widely respected figures—holds the promise of the needed oversight...Lacking such a monitoring vehicle, the state is most likely to continue to succumb to the vagaries of transient moods, fears, temptations and ambitions.

The state is not going to, nor can it, eliminate gambling—any more than it can eradicate prostitution or other dark predilections and appetites. But that is not to say it cannot channel those energies as a result of a developed view of its role. It is also not to say it cannot and should not be anything but a facilitating, profiting vehicle for the satisfaction of human appetites.

What gambling ought to be allowed and what ought to be discouraged? Should the state bombard its citizens with temptations to dangerous acts because it cannot eliminate the appetite for them? If we allow some acts that

might be considered harmful or sinful—such as drinking, smoking and gambling—is that an argument for unfettered exercise of those rights?

Gambling in Minnesota produces much good. Great sums are being raised for noble purposes. Many of the dysfunctional areas are being corrected. Revenues are being raised voluntarily and painlessly. Religious, patriotic, medical, fraternal and social-service organizations have been able to raise great sums for their good works. The government has been aided by the funds generated...

A lot of harm has been produced—individually, in the form of personal tragedies, and collectively in gambling's influence on our values and way of life. In the final analysis, it all gets reduced to an ancient philosophical question of whether noble ends can be achieved through sinful means.

Local aids, colleges, roads are budget targets

Gov. Carlson proposed cuts in spending to meet the \$197 million budget shortfall for the current biennium, including \$52 million for roads, \$50 million in aids to cities and counties and \$14 million in reductions for higher education.

The governor postponed his State of the State speech because of the outbreak of war in the Middle East. Numerous protests against the U.S. action erupted throughout the state.

A coalition of 10 Minnesota associations of cities, called the Summit Group, organized to fight cuts in aids to local governments.

University President Nils Hasselmo proposed closing the Waseca two-year agricultural program to save \$6.4 million a year as part of a program to reallocate \$60 million in spending over five years to improve University quality. Waseca protested.

The Dakota County Board told the Metropolitan Council it opposed construction of a new major airport in Dakota County, where two of the potential sites are located, or in Isanti County, where the third potential site is.

A merger of Metropolitan State University with one or more community or technical colleges in the Twin Cities area was suggested in a report by the staff of the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

The Minneapolis School Board voted to create an experimental school for black students. The academy will serve 30 to 50 students in grades 6 through 8 and will emphasize black history and culture.

John H. Riley, former head of the Federal Railroad Administration and aide to Sen. David Durenberger, was appointed transportation commissioner by Gov. Carlson. **Linda Barton**, Burnsville city manager, was appointed by Gov. Carlson to be employee relations commissioner. **Wayne Dalke**, Columbia, retired steel company executive, was appointed by Gov. Carlson as commissioner of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board, which finances economic-development efforts with taconite tax proceeds. **Capt. Tony Kozojed**, Detroit Lakes dis-

Keeping Up

What happened in Minnesota while your attention was focused elsewhere.

strict commander of the State Patrol, was appointed chief of the Patrol by Public Safety Commissioner Ralph Church. **Charles Weaver**, former legislator and Metropolitan Council chairman, was appointed acting chairman of the Metropolitan Waste Control Commission.

Gov. Carlson signed an order setting ethics standards for his administration. It prohibits his appointees from accepting gifts, speaking fees or promises of future employment, bans them from political fund-raising and limits outside business activities.

Farmstead Food's slaughterhouse employing 700 in Albert Lea reopened after a 10-month closure. **Land O'Lakes Inc.** announced a \$5 million expansion of its Pine Island cheese plant. **Northwestern National Life Insurance Co.** opened a claims-processing center in Jackson, where it will employ approximately 100 by July.

Cold Spring Granite Co. announced 100 employee layoffs, 29 from the Cold Spring plant and quarry. **International Bildrite**, an International Falls fiberboard manufacturer, stopped production and laid off most of its 63 employees.

Incorporation of new businesses

set a record of 9,776 in 1990, up 4 percent from the previous year, according to Secretary of State Growe.

Brainerd's only two pediatricians are leaving.

Rothsay School Superintendent Joe Merseth will become the Frazer superintendent.

Mankato Mayor Stan Christ called for a city referendum on a local sales tax proposed to finance downtown development.

Endeco Inc. withdrew its request for a conditional-use permit to build a \$4 million medical waste incinerator in Watkins.

A Lyon County judge ruled that Blue Earth County was justified in denying a license for Northern States Power Co.'s ash landfill.

Tracy City Council voted to continue its free land policy whereby lots acquired from tax forfeiture are available free to would-be homesteaders.

Despite protestations from building preservationists, Hibbing City Council voted to raze the Androy Hotel.

Kandiyohi County libraries will shut down for a day because of a

funding shortfall.

The Mayo Foundation, IBM Co. and Rochester Public Schools announced a partnership designed to enhance math and science programs.

The Southwest Regional Development Commission undertook a study of housing needs in Worthington.

Well water in Le Sauk Township was found to have nitrate levels higher than federal standards.

Centel Corp., serving 85,000 Minnesota telephone customers, sold its business to the Rochester (N.Y.) Telephone Co.

Former Red Wing Mayor Demetrius Jelatis will serve as interim mayor until spring elections, replacing Joanell Dyrstad, who resigned as mayor to become lieutenant governor.

Wordy

Low Hudson in the Brainerd Dispatch Jan. 8.

The Declaration of Independence has 300 words, the Ten Commandments 297, the Gettysburg Address 266, the Lord's Prayer 69 and the Golden Rule 11. So why, asks Merten Johnson of Brainerd, should it take the government of the United States 26,911 words to change price-support regulations on cabbage?

A new role for Metro State U?

From a memorandum, labeled "working draft," to the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) from David R. Powers, executive director, concerning a report from the Higher Education Advisory Council (HEAC) on higher education in the "metropolitan corridor." The working draft was not adopted by HECB. HEAC is composed of the leaders of the state's various higher-education systems.

Essentially, the Joint HEAC Report confirms the current structure and distribution of institutions in the metropolitan region. The report also confirms the current areas of activities and responsibilities

of each system and institution and the intent to meet new and emerging needs cooperatively...

While cooperation and consensus-seeking have worked well during periods of enrollment growth and program and physical expansion, it is more difficult to cooperate during periods of retrenchment and restructuring due to changing needs and financial conditions... Cooperation...does not appear to work as well when there is a need to agree to give up something that systems and institutions have been doing.

The Coordinating Board believes that the primary focus of future

planning should be to promote an environment that meets first and foremost the needs of students. The Coordinating Board has serious concerns about the long-term appropriateness of current and proposed solutions...

An appropriate solution would be the evolution of Metropolitan State University into a comprehensive state university with lower and upper division and limited graduate programs. This could be accomplished through mergers of Metropolitan State University with community and technical colleges in a few sites.

Kahn

Continued from Page 1

initiative votes this year in favor of limits in Oklahoma, California and Colorado, is going that way.

On a higher level, Editor Stephen Alnes writes (*Minnesota Journal*, Oct. 9, 1990) that "limiting the number of terms a legislator can hold office will assure us of a continuing flow of fresh thinkers who are more in touch with their people than they are with government, who can act boldly if necessary and who know what they are doing is a public trust and not an insiders' game."

This is another example of the truism that to every complex question there is a simple answer and that answer is usually wrong.

Although this concept is gaining increased support now and some are predicting it will be passed in every state with an initiative process (about 20), term limitation is not a new idea. It is more common in executive positions, with Republican pique at the four elections of Franklin D. Roosevelt giving us a constitutional amendment for a two-term presidential limit. Limits on gubernatorial

terms are quite common in the South, from states that are not necessarily noted for fresh thinking and bold policies.

The solution is particularly inappropriate when applied to a body like the Legislature in a state like Minnesota. First, the problem of entrenched incumbency hardly exists; examining this year's House, we find the average member to be in the fourth term. With our rela-

tively open political process, public financing of campaigns and legislative districts of a size amenable to a highly personalized campaign of grass-roots activity, no incumbent should feel safe (as a few learn in every election).

Next is the character of the legislature and legislative work. Legislative bodies by their nature are not hierarchical but collegial. Much of the productive work de-

pends on small-group relationships, which tend to mature over an extended period of time. There are anecdotal tales of legislators gaining respect with years, combined with instances of freshmen leaders (for example, those elected to the steering committee) losing after one term, moving on to other activities or even being indicted!

Although a leader such as the speaker has incredible powers, he can't hire and fire members, and even the lowliest freshman vote makes the same red or green mark on the voting board.

New and good ideas and hard work can come from any member at any time in his or her career, but familiarity with the process is hardly a negative factor. Martin Sabo, undisputedly the most highly regarded recent speaker, would not have become speaker if a 12-year limit existed, having served his first 12 years in the minority. (He would also be out of Congress this year!) Arne Carlson, a supporter of term limits, has spent 25 years on the public payroll, but bounced from Minneapolis City Council to legislator to auditor to governor.

Neither has had to return to a world of private enterprise, but



"Let's be honest. Which of us do you think is more humble?"

Boo

Continued from Page 1

and lobbying interests than with their constituents. Holding office for a long time fosters an arrogant, elitist attitude among legislators—they lose sight of public-policy values.

There are winners and losers in our current system. The winners are the political-action committees (PACs) and special-interest groups. Legislators often find themselves in unsavory alliances with groups that don't necessarily reflect the wishes of the citizens of their districts. These conflicting interests are often influenced by who has the deepest pocket to help get the incumbent legislator reelected. The winners are inevitably the PACs and special-interest groups.

The losers are the voters, any challenger (particularly women and minorities) interested in running for an office held by an incumbent, and districts that don't have powerful, long-time incumbent legislators. The goal of a fair redistricting process is also compromised. Limiting terms could change the way the game is played.

Term limitations are needed to overcome the advantages of incumbency. Defeating an incumbent has become more and more difficult as the costs of running for office increase. Term limitations would help to level the playing field of an election, while creating "lame ducks" in a positive sense. Legislators who know they are leaving office need not fear the wrath of voters or seek the contributions of special-interest groups. The "lame ducks" could be a relatively independent statesmen-like group, fearlessly sup-

porting legislation that is best for the state without concern for reelection.

Term limitations guarantee a fresh perspective. New enthusiasm, new experience and new viewpoints would be brought to the process of governing. Legislators who are not yet cynical, discouraged or willing to "go along to get along" would regularly be added. And term limitation would lessen legislators' motives to gerrymander safe districts for themselves during the redistricting process.

Public-opinion polls overwhelmingly support the concept of term limits. In 1990, given the opportunity to vote on the issue, the people in California, Oklahoma and Colorado clearly spoke and amended their constitutions. Voters across the country are frustrated by the feeling that their representatives just aren't listening.

Some reason that long-time incumbents provide the experience and leadership the Legislature needs. I agree. But eight to 10 years in office should be a long enough learning curve for any legislator to be effective.

Legislation to establish term limits will again be introduced this session. The bill will be discussed in committee and, again, buried with the excuse that the "people just don't understand the issue."

There are plenty of opportunities to serve our local, state and federal government through elective offices. It's time we return the "citizen" to our own "citizen legislature."

Rep. Ben Boo, IR-Duluth, in his fifth term, represents District 8B in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

ere does not seem to be any true public purpose in discouraging only one of these two kinds of participation.

s one of few (even on the national level) scientists who serve in elective office, I spent most of my prelegislative adult life solving chronological problems. And one of the themes I ran on was that a rational problem-solving approach could be effective in the political system.

One of my first disappointments was to learn how tough it is to focus public attention on issues of long-term significance rather than on immediate headline grabbers that may help in the next election. Term limits would only exacerbate this negative. As society becomes more complex and we start to see the effects of refusing to look at the long range in such areas as energy, environmental protection, land management and waste disposal, we should not move to a situation that would further encourage short-term frenetic action.

It's easy to say that incumbents concentrate on maintaining safe voting records, but it's simply false. Legislators come with all degrees of political courage, but most admit that a term or two of understanding that every vote cast is not a potential election disaster is helpful.

As an example of a refusal to bow to popular opinion, we can look at the five votes last session against a House rule for recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. Four of the five exceeded the 12-year limit, and the comment of our most senior member, Willard Munger, DFL-Duluth, who said he voted "no" because he saw a vision of U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy smiling in the balcony, shows the wisdom of the institutional memory of a long-term incumbent.

With term limitation, institutional memory would be lodged in bureaucrats and lobbyists, barely responsive to citizen input. Ralph Nader's comment that the best Capitol work is done by legislators in the first few years probably means that is the period they're most dependent on him. And his further comment that most people "recognize that 10-12 years on the job is enough, but

they don't recognize that in Congress" is obviously not meant to apply to his 30-plus years of public input.

On a personal note, I started working on several items in my first term that are examples of nonpublic-attention, long-term issues. They included establishing peer review processes for technological decisions, reworking the state's information-processing structures and reducing the reliance on off-budget expenditures and dedicated funds. This last issue was brought to my attention by Roland Hatfield, state auditor, who picked it up from Stafford King, who had been state auditor from 1931-1969. I may not be the only person working on these unglamorous issues, but it is fair to say that they are not the stuff that new legislators would spend much of a limited career with. It is also true that progress (although positive for all three issues) has been incremental and unheralded.

Even though the entrenched-incumbent syndrome is not a problem in Minnesota (ask Rudy Boschwitz, Rudy Perpich, Arlan Stangeland and Don Moe), there are less dramatic solutions than term limitation. Anything that encourages voter participation and more small campaign donations enhances the democratic process. Although our voting laws are among the best in the country, one useful change would be the acceptance of balloting by mail, particularly in special elections. Less-lazy press coverage with more in-depth scrutiny and analysis of the records of the more ineffective or unesteemed legislators could enhance legislative turnover in a less-random fashion.

Finally, polls consistently show that, while the public may have contempt for a legislative body, they usually like their own representatives (as determined by both polling and elections). This is truly the essence of participatory representative democracy, and it is a model to be tinkered with most carefully, hopefully with the scalpel of election reform rather than the chainsaw of term limitation.

Rep. Phyllis Kahn, DFL-Minneapolis, in her 10th term, represents District 58B in the Minnesota House of Representatives.

77% of state taxes goes to local units

Of the \$5.3 billion collected over roughly a year by the state of Minnesota from its six major taxes—individual and corporate income, sales, motor-vehicle excise, motor-vehicle license, and gasoline—77 percent is distributed back to local taxing districts and taxpayers as property-tax relief, according to House Research Department data. The state paid out in aids to local governments and in property-tax credits and refunds \$955 per capita—\$250 per capita more than local governments collected from property taxes statewide.—Jody A. Hauer.

Former State Sen. John Brandl, addressing legislators in the Minnesota Horizons program this year, explained the driving force of demographics on state spending for the 1990s. In education alone, he said, we will see enrollment increases equivalent to the total number of students now enrolled in the 350 smallest districts. (This year's high school graduating class is the smallest since the Depression.)—Curt Johnson.

Minnesota's Adopt-a-Highway program is so successful that there are no more chunks of state highway in the metropolitan area up for adoption. Under the program, volunteers agree to pick up the litter on both sides of at least two miles of road at least three times a year for two years.

Jan Ekern, highway beautification program director for the Department of Transportation, said you can still find some unadopted state highways if you get away from the Twin Cities, north of Pine City, say, or south of Hastings. And, she added, counties are now embarking on similar programs.—Stephen Alnes.

Ramsey County Board Chairman John Finley is among the least intense politicians we know. Take this exchange at a recent gathering of the county board, meeting as the County Regional Rail Authority.

Commissioner Duane McCarty, referring to a position of several individual county commissioners in other metro counties on paying for light-rail transit (LRT), asked: "What assurance do we have that

Take Note

Scraping the bottom of Minnesota's miscellany barrel.

these individual positions are shared by their full county boards?"

Finley, who had just finished detailing his considerable efforts to promote LRT funding, responded: "None. What assurance do we have that any of this makes any difference?"—Pete Vanderpoel.

For those hearing or joining in the complaining about no bus shelters on the new, improved Nicollet Mall, here's the answer. The mall renovation was divided into two construction seasons; there was neither adequate bidding time nor a wide enough weather window to do it all at once. Still to come, we're told by the principal planner: a series of information kiosks, 60 more shade trees, granite around the planters, a signage system, more than a million dollars of public art, and, yes, greatly improved shelters for transit riders.—C.J.

Pulltabs, wrote Gaming Commissioner Tony Bouza in his report on *Gambling in Minnesota*, "flow in a circular nature. The tab starts out as a tree in the forest which is cut down by a lumberjack in a flannel shirt." The tree is made into paper and the paper into a pulltab, which is sold first to distributors and then to gambling organizations.

Then, said Bouza, completing the circle, "The organization sells the pulltab in a bar to the lumberjack or someone else wearing a flannel shirt."—S.A.

Too subtle for *The New Republic's* collection and not zingy enough for Jay Leno's outrageous headline readings, but notice the difference in the headlines on the business pages of the *Denver Post* and the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, on Jan. 5. The *Post* says, "Shareholders Approve United Banks Merger with Norwest." Back in Minnesota: "United Banks of Colorado approves its acquisition by Norwest Corp."—C.J.

School

Continued from Page 1

ALC, from 21.6 percent to 42.9 percent in HSGI and 6.2 percent to 41.2 percent in ALT.

- **Significant percentages** of students use option programs to reenter school after having dropped out—34 percent in ALC, 33 percent in HSGI and 16 percent in ALT.

- **Significant increases** in student satisfaction with school, from 62 percent to 89 percent in the Post-secondary Options program and about 25 percent to 75 percent in the other three programs.

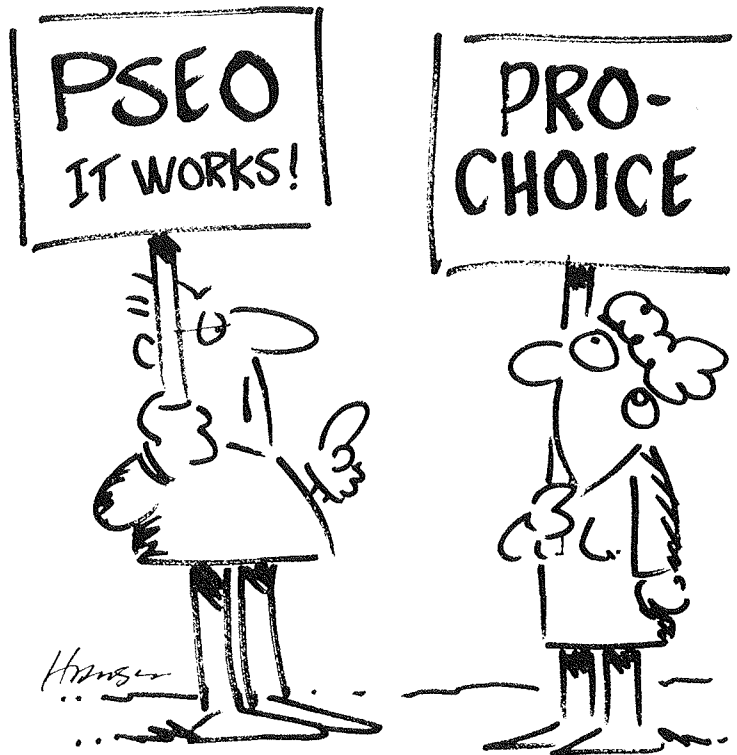
- **The majority of students** offered academic reasons for their participation. Most frequently cited reasons included "to help me stay in school," "to get more individualized or personalized learning," "to leave a school I didn't like," "to get teachers who are really interested in me and how I'm doing," and for the PSEO students, "to take courses not available in my school."

- **Students in three** of the choice programs reported the most important information source about the options was "friends." This was true in ALC, ALT and HSGI. PSEO students said counselors were the most important source of information, followed closely by friends.

- **Significant participation** by students of color and students from low-income and limited-English speaking families in several of the programs; 38 percent of the ALT, 37 percent of the ALC, 30 percent of the HSGI and 11 percent of the PSEO students reported they or their families had received some form of public assistance or welfare sometime during the last five years. Exact comparisons with the entire K-12 student body are not possible.

During the 1989-90 school year, approximately 21 percent of Minnesota's students had family income low enough to qualify for free or reduced lunch tickets.

Students of color—African-American, Hispanic, American-Indian or Asian—comprised 9.5 percent of the ALC group, 49.8 percent of ALT, 9 percent of HSGI and 6.2 percent of PSEO students. Approximately 9.24 percent of Min-



"...I understand it, and YOU understand it, ...but will anyone else understand it?..."

nesota's students in 1989-90 came from these groups.

Twenty-two percent of ALT, 9.4 percent of HSGI, 9.3 percent of ALC and 7 percent of PSEO students say their families do not speak English at home. In 1989-90, approximately 2.7 percent of Minnesota's students were judged "limited" in English proficiency or "English as a second language."

Discussions about improving schools ought to begin with students. Fundamental reform of schools is not really about power, or curriculum, or testing, or accountability. It is about young people. Here are a few stories of real Minnesota youngsters whose experiences are described in this report. It's important to think about people, not just numbers.

Stacy, 16, was about to drop out of high school and become a drummer in a rock band. She was bright but ranked in the bottom third of her high school class. Then her mother heard about a law permitting high school students to enroll in college courses. Stacy agreed to try it. A year later she was graduated from high school, having also earned 45 credits at the University of Minnesota, with a strong B average. Her mother says, "Stacy had the ability to succeed, but without an

alternative, I am convinced she would not have graduated."

Chris, 18, had never done especially well in school. "My high school was too big. I just didn't like it." Then a friend told Chris about another, smaller school outside his district, about 10 miles away. Chris recently wrote that without this law allowing him to transfer, "I probably would not graduate. Choice not only gave me a chance to personalize my education, but it also gave me the confidence that I can make something of myself and control my destiny."

Renae, 16, was doing well in her rural Minnesota high school. However, her grades and attitude suffered as her parents faced economic difficulties on their farm. As she put it, "I went looking for love and instead got pregnant." Some of the teachers and students called her a slut. She dropped out. Then a friend told her about a school in a nearby town where she could get a second chance. She enrolled, used the state's post-secondary options law to enroll at a community college and recently graduated. She says, "I'm back, on my way in the right direction."

Tashira, 17, would like to be a child psychologist. She likes her large inner-city high school, but wanted to take advanced classes in psychology. She enrolled in

several University of Minnesota courses. "It's tough, but I learned that I could fit in there," she reported. She plans to enroll full-time after graduation.

Jack, 17, drank a lot. Several older brothers and sisters drank. Jack recalls that the first day he walked into the high school, several teachers looked at him and "didn't look happy to see me." Jack said one of the teachers told him, "Oh, yes, we know your family." Jack performed to their expectations. He continued to drink. After several major problems, he was kicked out of high school. Some time later, he heard about an alternative school. He enrolled, felt accepted immediately, and reports, "Now I'm doing really well...learning a lot and getting good grades."

The report describes the experiences of young people—such as those above—among the more than 13,000 Minnesota students who used several laws to take courses outside of the public secondary school in their district in the 1989-90 school year. About 5,900 of them used the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Law to take college courses. Another 7,000 to 8,000 students who had not been successful in traditional schools enrolled in public secondary schools outside their district, attended public alternative schools or private nonsectarian schools that operate under contract with a public school district.

The report includes recommendations to increase the number of options available and change the way information is provided to families. For example, Minnesota should consider establishing parent-information centers similar to those in Massachusetts to help parents become more involved and make more informed decisions among schools. The state and school districts should ask participating students to help inform others about these programs.

The report was produced with support from the Joyce Foundation and assistance from the U.S. Department of Education.

Joe Nathan is director of the Center for School Change in the Humphrey Institute and author, with Wayne Jennings, of the report described above. Copies of the report are available for \$7.50 from Betty Radcliffe, Center for School Change, Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota, 626-1834.

A strategy for quality health care, cost control

Walter McClure, president, Center for Policy Studies, at Citizens meeting Jan. 8.

We have (developed) a strategy which is radically different than any other...for insuring everybody in a health-care system that will have increasingly superior quality and will cost at least 20 to 30 percent less than today in about 10 years...Anybody who says it can be done faster is either simply unknowledgeable or is trying to hustle you...

The system right now is rewarded for being very inefficient. The quality, efficient provider goes broke...The system is not rewarded for results. It's rewarded for costliness. And the provider who isn't costly goes broke.

We have a...proposal for the Twin Cities...the only strategy that I know is liable to work, to actually contain costs...For each employer that means...your health-care costs will go up no faster and less fast probably than general inflation. If you haven't done that, you haven't solved your problem...

We want three things...have everybody covered...quality care...that works...and...at a cost society can afford or is willing to put up ...That's the hard part...I can control costs for you. I can gut the system...That's not acceptable here...

We want more health and more patient-satisfaction for less...Now suppose I'm really a high-class provider. I (provide) great health. My patients love me, and I do it for 30 percent less than anybody else. But...I don't get any additional patients for this. Nobody even knows it. I don't even know it...We don't measure the cost and quality, the productivity of providers. And we can do that...

Doctors (who) will say, "Oh, you can't measure quality," have just sentenced themselves to government control. Because the *sine qua non* of a sound market is the consumer must have information on the performance of producers. He must know the product, its reliability and its cost...If he doesn't know that, (we) can't make a market work...

I'm very much interested in a Buy-Right project in the Twin Cities...Cleveland is on this...And as soon as the town changes its system sufficiently, you can start a pool for the uninsured in that town, because it won't eat you out of house and home...

But to change the reward system, you've got to identify, "Are they producing health?" And I contend that can be measured, not great at first, but good enough to get the structure built. And it will get better and better with time...I can tell you right now that you are 50 percent more likely to die in the worst hospital in Cleveland than the best. And this is adjusted for comparability of patients...Nobody's advocating, let's measure outcomes independent of the risk of the patient. Even if you just take the broad, average hospital, you are 20 percent more likely to die in the poorer average hospital than the better average hospital...I suspect that some of those spreads occur in other towns. The only thing about Cleveland is the business leaders had the courage to do it...

The providers...tried to torpedo...the Cleveland program) until the purchasers leveraged it properly...We want the providers in. But we have to realize providers are terribly frightened of any big change like this...However, the purchasers have to get some kind of control...The purchasers first have to get together. And they have to get together at the CEO level. This is high policy business for any company, because we're going to put at risk employee relations and provider relations and leadership relations in the community, old-boy network relations, bluntly...

The CEOs, en masse, invite the providers to a meeting, and I'm really simplifying, and they say this: "Gentlemen and ladies, we care about quality." They don't lead with cost; they lead with quality. Because if you lead with cost, nobody's with you. If you lead with quality, everybody's with you...If they lead with quality, they don't close institutions. Institutions get closed because patients desert them because they are no good, or there's somebody better...

Health-care consumer must be empowered

George Morrow, health care consultant, Business Health Care Action Group, at Citizens League meeting Jan. 15.

I believe we must empower the consumer and put the consumer at the center of the health-care transaction. Otherwise, we're never going to get price-quality competition. And I'm not talking about large payers now...I'm talking about the consumer, the person who actually...uses or receives the health care...

Impressive

From Politics in Minnesota Jan. 18.

We've seen some pretty impressive grassroots lobbying efforts over the years, but nothing to match what is being done to protect the monies going to local governments from the budget-balancing. Proponents for preserving these state dollars have conveyed a simple, single message to the thousands of Main Street businesses around the state: If we lose this state money, your local property taxes will rise.

Two things need to be done to reform the current system. The first is to make sure that all health care is delivered pursuant to practice parameters or guidelines. Those guidelines should be devised by providers themselves, not by somebody else. The reason is, if providers don't devise those guidelines, they'll never take ownership of them, we will never have their commitment to changing health care...

The second point is that steps should be taken immediately to implement an outcomes-based management system...The usual contrary argument to this is we're not ready. I believe we are ready. The technology exists. There is an amazing amount of agreement within this and other communities about what needs to be done—a consensus even that we have to reform health care by measuring what works and what doesn't work, that we can't get there any other way...

We would ask providers to collect functional status and history data from patients prior to their treat-

ment. By functional status, I mean their current...symptoms. Second, we would expect providers to pre-certify their patients for care based upon practice parameters and guidelines. What this means is that somewhere within their offices, providers would operate probably a PC-based system, which had...practice parameters which could be queried for necessity based upon the data. The patient would come into the office and indicate what their symptoms were, give a history and upon that data and based upon examination data as well, the determination would be made whether or not treatment was necessary in the first place. And that determination would be based upon practice parameters. That can be done today.

Following treatment, providers would collect more functional-status data and also satisfaction data from the patients for the purpose of determining the outcomes of treatment. The point of collecting functional-status data after treatment obviously is to compare the two. And the point of collecting patient-satisfaction data is obviously to find out whether or not

the patients were satisfied with their care...

Of course, there would also be a collection of clinical-outcomes data...That happens now. It would just...be computerized. All of this outcomes data...would be pooled. So, for example, for the first time we'd be able to say whether Zantac works as well or better than Tagamet. We don't know that today...

The system that I describe is feasible today and it's being experimented with in this very community...The great problem with health care today is not cost. That's an effect, not a cause. The great problem is we don't know what works. And most doctors would, I think, candidly admit that. There are a number of things that we do know work. But if the estimates are correct, 75 percent of all procedures have never been validated for effectiveness. And we have every reason to believe that 34 percent of the procedures that are performed are unnecessary. Why? Not because people are dishonest, but because all the incentives tend in that direction...

Waseca campus closing gets editorial support

Brainerd Dispatch said (Jan. 15) the plan of University President Nils Hasselmo to close the University's campus at Waseca "makes sense" and added that "a good case could be made" for pursuing a merger of the Brainerd and Staples Technical Colleges. It also mentioned the possibility of merging Brainerd Community College with the Brainerd, Staples and Wadena Technical Colleges.

Rochester Post-Bulletin called (Jan. 15) Hasselmo's plan to close the Waseca campus "a courageous proposal" and also said his recommended reallocation of funds within the University "makes sense and...should be supported in the Legislature, in spite of the complaints from those who may be adversely affected."

Hibbing Tribune said (Jan. 13), "We support Hasselmo's spirit of change" but added that the proposals need a "long, hard look" from the Legislature.

Star Tribune said (Jan. 16) the Waseca campus should be closed "for the good of the University

On Balance

Minnesota editors contemplate a few problems that might still be solved.

and the state." **St. Cloud Times** said (Jan. 11) the "reality" is that Minnesota's higher-education system is "stretched too thin" and such drastic measures as closing campuses "may be in order."

Hibbing Tribune said (Jan. 4) a proposal of the State Transportation Board to cut back on highway funding for rural Minnesota and shift more of the funding to the metropolitan area is "short-sighted" and "should be fought strongly." Highways, it said, "are the absolute lifeblood of rural Minnesota."

Pioneer Press said (Jan. 11) a proposal of Canterbury Downs to open several off-track betting clubhouses around the state ought to be put to the voters under the form of a constitutional amendment. **Star Tribune** said (Jan. 12) betting on horse races should be kept at the track. "The off-track

proposal involves a further expansion of something Minnesota has too much of—legalized gambling."

Duluth News-Tribune said (Jan. 8) former Gov. Rudy Perpich should never have called a meeting of the Pardon Board to consider pardons in the cases of 61 men convicted of crimes in the Boise Cascade Co. labor dispute. The "only justification" was that "they are members of a politically powerful group." **International Falls Journal** said (Jan. 7) calling the Pardon Board session was "an insult not only to local law-enforcement agencies but also to law-abiding union members who recognize that violence is not excusable."

Marshall Independence said (Jan. 4) it hopes Sen. Paul Wellstone "continues to speak his mind, loud and clear." **Mankato Free Press** said (Jan. 5) it hopes criticism of Wellstone's "honest, outspoken approach...won't change him."

Red Wing Republican Eagle said (Jan. 7) Sen. Wellstone "has become an accomplished embarrassment to Minnesota" and added his "gimmicks" will "be of little benefit if he intends to wield any influence on Capitol Hill." **St. Cloud Times** said (Jan. 5) Wellstone owes it to Minnesotans to "earn the respect he must have if he is to become an effective sena-

tor—not just background noise."

International Falls Journal (Jan. 4) Rod Sando "is the wise choice for Department of Natural Resources commissioner." It said he "lacks the credibility necessary for the job—especially in northern Minnesota."

Pioneer Press, noting (Jan. 13) the early efforts of various groups to avoid sharing in the state's budget cuts, it's "time for a reality check" in state government. And it is "not the time for business as usual—on the part of state lawmakers or interest groups."

St. Cloud Times chided (Jan. 4) House Speaker Robert Vanasek for wanting to use the budget reserve to help deal with the \$197 million deficit in the current fiscal year. "The good ol' days of spend, spend, spend have come to a screeching halt."

Mankato Free Press called (Jan. 4) for Blue Earth County to establish a mandatory recycling program.

Duluth News Tribune rejected (Jan. 5) a proposal by Rep. Mike Jaros, DFL-Duluth, to impose a \$100 fine on any able and eligible person who failed to vote. "The electoral process needs informed voters, not just participation for profit or to avoid punishment."

WJON/WWJO's Andy Hilger said (Jan. 4) the Legislature should be able to handle the problem of a 5 percent cut in spending in the next biennium without new or increased taxes.

Access to what?

From a statement by the heads of the University of Minnesota, State University System, Community College System, Technical Colleges and Minnesota Private College Council, January 1991.

Minnesota's colleges and universities are attempting to cope with unprecedented demand, both quantitative and qualitative: an exploding student population together with a host of pressures on maintaining and improving quality...

Rising demand alone neither fully nor accurately describes the challenge. A further—and vital—question persists: Access to what?... Clearly, the pressure of enrollment growth has stressed the state's higher-education infrastructure.

More students, coupled with less state funding (in constant dollars) per student, means that many of the basic tools necessary for a quality education are lacking...In its attempt to serve more people in more ways, Minnesota higher education is jeopardizing its ability to deliver the high-quality education required for the challenges of the future...

Improving the quality of higher education while maintaining broad access clearly may require an increased investment. Without strong growth in overall state revenues, it will require a larger share of the state tax dollar. In the absence of such increases, many institutions may be forced to limit enrollment to ensure quality...

The pattern that is emerging has these elements:

- The four-year institutions limit enrollments, focus on upper division, graduate and research programs, shift enrollment from lower to upper division, tighten admission policies or preparation standards and improve the quality of the undergraduate experience for their students.

- The broad network of two-year colleges remain open-admissions institutions but strengthen their abilities to help students succeed...This maintains access but also ensures that students transferring to four-year universities will be prepared for upper-division demands.

**Minnesota Journal
Citizens League
Suite 500
708 S. Third St.
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Citizens League Matters

January 29, 1991

News for Citizens League Members

Welcome new members

- Debbie Baumgarten
- Dale Beihoffer
- Mamie Beihoffer
- Doris Brooks
- Leigh Countryman
- Wendell Cox
- Christopher Dietzen
- Pat Gottschalk
- Carol Greenwood
- Steve Johnson
- Claudia Kelly
- Thomas Kelly
- Marilyn Krueger
- Tom Mahoney
- Jane Nakken
- Dave Nassif
- Monica Nassif
- Dale Rehkamp
- Claudia Ryan-Mosley
- Bob Snyder
- Linda Taylor
- Charles Thomson
- Jill Weese

Thank you recruiters

- Patricia Conley
- Jean King

Citizens League
18 South 3rd St.
Suite 500
Minneapolis, MN
55415

Mind-Opener breakfasts add items to health care menu

Cleveland seeks out superior quality health care providers

The Mind-Openers will add two meetings to its series on health care issues. One will feature **Andrew Czajkowski**, president and CEO of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. On February 5 Czajkowski will describe his company's proposal to provide affordable coverage for employees of Minnesota's small busi-

nesses. Blue Cross put this coverage together in the belief that the private sector should provide expanded access to health insurance while maintaining a competitive market. **Walter McClure's** comments at the first meeting of this series. McClure described a health care system in which health care decisions are based not on lowest cost, but on highest quality. To make these kinds of decisions, health care purchasers need measures of both quality and efficiency in the system. Woods

Health care purchasers need measures of efficiency and quality in the system.

The second addition to the health care series features **Powell Woods**, vice-president for human resources for the Nestle Corporation in Cleveland, Ohio. Woods will be joining the Mind-Opener on February 12 as a result of

will describe the effort in Cleveland to contain health care costs by helping employers identify and reward high quality providers.

The Mind-Opener Breakfasts are held from 7:30-8:30 a.m. at the Central Lutheran Church located at 333 14th Street South in downtown Minneapolis. The Church is served by bus and has parking available. To make a reservation for a Mind-Opener please call 338-0791.

Citizens League members *Speak Up* about caucuses

About 120 members of the Citizens League met in their respective neighborhoods on January 10 to talk about the effectiveness of Minnesota's party caucus system. Billed as "*Speak Ups*," these small group discussions were intended to give League members a chance to voice their thoughts on the caucus topic without spending the amount of time required to participate on a League study committee.

The League had enough members with interest in the idea to schedule eleven *Speak Ups* in the homes of members around the metropolitan region. We even had a request from a Citizens League member in Dent (north of Fergus Falls) to participate in a *Speak Up*!

Most of the *Speak Up* participants attended a caucus in 1990; about 15 percent did not. Those who did not attend had a variety of reasons: some said they could not find the building where the caucus was taking place, others said they were out of town, still others said they

(Continued on reverse)

Henry Cisneros to speak on January 31

Henry Cisneros, former San Antonio mayor, will speak on "Rebuilding Citizen Democracy" at a special breakfast meeting sponsored by the Citizens League.

The breakfast will take place from 7:30 to 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, January 31 at the Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. The Church is located at 333 East 14th Street, near the convention center. It is served by several buslines and offers free parking in a lot south of the building.

Continental breakfast will be available. Admission to this special meeting is \$10; reservations are required. To make a reservation please call 338-0791 before noon, Wednesday, January 30.

League members are divided over usefulness of caucus

Citizens League members who attend party caucuses do so because of their desire to debate issues, according to preliminary results of a League questionnaire.

The League mailed to all its members the *Caucus Matters*, a special edition of the League's newsletter, focusing exclusively on the work of the caucus study committee. It

talk with candidates." Twenty-two percent said "the amount of time spent electing local party officials."

Of the 43 percent of tabulated respondents who did not attend a caucus, most (42 percent) said they did not attend because their participation would not have made an impact. About 36 percent said they either had no affiliation

Most said they did not attend because their participation would not have made an impact.

included a questionnaire on caucuses.

Although the tabulation of the returned questionnaires is not yet complete, the results so far reveal: About 57 percent of the respondents attended caucuses and were satisfied with that experience. When asked to cite what was least desirable about the caucus, 34 percent of this group said "the lack of opportunity to meet and

with a political party or they disagreed with the philosophical stands of the parties. Over 35 percent said they did not attend because caucuses are really for "insiders."

To get them to attend a caucus in 1992, the largest plurality said they would need a better understanding of what would happen and what would be expected of them.

were not aligned with either of the major political parties.

The *Speak Up* groups discussed the objectives of a caucus system. Although most of the *Speak Up* participants said the caucus system should be retained, they all agreed caucuses need to be modified.

The problem most commonly mentioned in the *Speak Ups* was the dominance of single-interests at caucuses. Many of the groups said the chairs at the caucuses were ill-prepared to manage the meetings. Often mentioned was inadequate notice or publicity of the caucuses prior to and at the actual event.

Many said the discussion of issues was very important but receiving less attention than it should. The groups said that most citizens do not understand caucuses and believe they work for insiders only. Certain procedures of the caucuses were also mentioned as problems.

Speak Ups

(From front page)

The *Speak Up* participants also spent time debating changes to the caucus system. Changes were recommended to:

- ☐ improve the public's knowledge and awareness of caucuses;
- ☐ streamline and improve what goes on at the caucus;
- ☐ modify the logistics of the caucus meeting.

The results of the *Speak Up* meetings were reported to the League study committee on caucuses. The Board of Directors will also learn of the *Speak Up* results when it meets to discuss the study committee's report later in February.

According to the evaluation forms from those who attended, the *Speak Ups* were a success. The overwhelming majority of the evaluations indicated people would enjoy participating in future *Speak Ups* on other topics.

CL Calendar at a Glance: January 28, 1991 - February 8, 1991

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|--------|---|---|---|--|
| 28 | 29 Mind-Opener, 7:30-8:30 a.m., Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis | 30 Executive Committee, 7:30-9:00 a.m., location to be determined. Party Caucuses Study Committee, 4:30-6:30 p.m., Hennepin County Government Center, Minneapolis (if needed) | 31 Special meeting with Henry Cisneros, 7:30-9:00 a.m., Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis | 1 Community Information Committee, 7:30-9:00 a.m., Tay Do Restaurant, St. Paul |
| 4 | 5 Mind-Opener, 7:30-9:00 a.m., Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis | 6 Marketing & Communications, 7:30-9:00 a.m., Thresher Square Building, Minneapolis | 7 | 8 Show someone you care. A Citizens League membership makes a sweet Valentine's Day gift. |