

STATUS OF BIG-TICKET ITEMS

Issue	Outcome
Bonding	<p>Governor Walz bonding proposal = \$2.03 billion Senate Republican bonding proposal = \$988 million House DFL bonding proposal = \$2.52 billion</p> <p>We understand that legislative leaders had a tentative agreement on a bonding bill of a little more than \$1 billion with details yet to be negotiated. Negotiations on this fell apart when Governor Walz called on Senate Democrats to oppose the Senate Republican proposal in the final day of session. But this is something that all legislative caucuses and Governor Walz want to aid in economic recovery. A bonding bill will happen during a special session, but its outcome will be tied to scaled-down executive powers and a tax relief bill.</p>
Supplemental spending	<p>The Governor’s supplemental budget recommendations came at the brink of the COVID-19 outbreak. Aware of uncertainty in the state’s finances, Walz moved to leave \$1.2 billion in the bottom line, by proposing scaled-back supplemental spending that would use \$491 million to replenish the state budget reserve and \$256 million for new spending. The Governor later revised his proposal, recommending an additional \$356 million for emergency response services. The proposal was one of the negotiating pieces left on the table at adjournment.</p>
Tax bill	<p>The Senate passed a tax relief package to support economic recovery in April that extended tax deadlines across sectors that would cost the state \$327 million. The measure was passed by the Senate over objections from Democrats that it would exacerbate state budget problems.</p> <p>A more limited-scope House tax bill was sent to the House floor but did not receive a floor vote.</p> <p>We know this is on the table for special session negotiations as it is a Republican priority but it’s unclear whether Democrats have appetite for this proposal.</p>
Insulin	<p>One of the positive bipartisan outcomes from the session included the Alec Smith Insulin Affordability Act. The long-debated bill was passed and signed by the Governor in April. The legislation aims to give diabetes patients affordable emergency access to insulin by requiring insulin manufacturers to participate in affordability programs and to replenish depleted insulin stockpiles.</p>
Marijuana	<p>The DFL spent last interim traveling the state to gather input on the legalization of recreational marijuana and pledged a vote on the House floor. Legislation wasn’t introduced until closer to the end of session and it didn’t move. During the final days of session, the House passed (on a bipartisan vote) an amendment to add dry leaf cannabis to the state’s medical cannabis program which was soundly rejected by the Senate.</p>

Education	Despite Governor Walz proposing significant education policy and funding initiatives this session and active COVID-19-related proposals to support school hourly workers, very little happened for education beyond debate. The last night of session, both bodies passed legislation that gives school districts flexibility in accessing various funding streams to support distance learning demands.
Election security	After debates around voter identification and a move to support a full vote-by-mail initiative, the Legislature agreed to appropriate federal CARES Act funds to election security and made temporary changes to encourage absentee voting, allow for additional polling places and increased funding for polling place sanitation.