

A REAL EARFUL;
WHAT CONSTITUENTS ARE TELLING THEIR LEGISLATORS:

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Body

Sen. Sandy Pappas, DFL-St. Paul, is hearing from a lot of immigrants, mostly Hmong refugees, fearful of losing income and medical benefits under the overhaul of federal welfare laws.

"Some are going to lose Supplemental Security Income in August, others are going to be moving from Medical Assistance to Minnesota Care as they transition from welfare to work," Pappas says. The health benefits under Minnesota Care, a state insurance program for moderate and low-income residents that charges recipients a sliding fee, are not as comprehensive as they are under Medical Assistance.

Pappas, who is working with fellow **legislators** to assist immigrants losing federal benefits, says many Hmong don't speak English well enough to qualify for citizenship, which would make them eligible for a variety of federal benefits.

Sen. Len Price, DFL-Woodbury, couldn't be happier that the legislation lifting a cap on education spending is moving swiftly through both houses.

"I get a lot of calls about that," Price said.

No wonder. The bill will give his financially pressed South Washington County School District \$6 million. That's a lot of moolah and lot of political points, notes Price, a political science teacher.

Usually Rep. Matt Entenza, DFL-St. Paul, gets an **earful** from his **constituents** complaining about their rising property taxes. But guess what issue is so hot that even the perennial griping over property taxes is taking a back seat?

The stadium.

"It's all I hear. When the Twins sent out a letter asking their fans for support, it started all over again," Entenza says. "'Whatever you do, don't you dare vote for that stadium' is what they **tell** me. Oh well, I can thank the Pohlad family this year for simplifying the legislative agenda."

"My only letters and calls that I have received this session are against the stadium," adds Rep. Kevin Knight, R-Bloomington.

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