

## MINNESOTA LEGISLATIVE OVERVIEW

At the beginning of September 1989, most political forecasters in Minnesota were predicting that the incumbent Governor, Rudy Perpich, would lose the Democratic Primary. He didn't. The same forecasters were predicting that Arnie Carlson would win the Republican nomination and then defeat the Democratic nominee. Carlson lost the Primary. Now the forecast is that Perpich will beat the conservative pro-life Republican nominee. One has to wonder if being the favorite is the kiss of death this year in MN.

The legislative races have at one time also been considered vulnerable to a Republican landslide. Now it appears that the Democrat Farm Labor Party will lose some of it's 44-23 majority in the Senate, but will maintain control. A swing of a few seats to the Independent Republicans in the House is also predicted. Currently, the DFL controls 79 seats and the IRs have 54.

Last year's session focused on the \$160 billion short fall in the budget. The legislature constructed a package of cuts combined with money from the State's Reserve Fund to balance the books. This year, the state is facing a \$500 million shortfall. Every excise tax imaginable is vulnerable.

Besides the large budget problem, there continues to be efforts by individual legislators to dedicate cigarette and other excise taxes to health, drug and environmental programs. Therefore, even if we avoid being included in any package that attempts to address the budget problem, we will still have these programmatic items to worry about.

TI's Labor Consultant is working on getting hiring discrimination language modeled after the Oregon bill included on the Teamsters wish list for the coming legislative session. Proactive legislative efforts in the state of MN are both dangerous and difficult as last year's vending machine fight proved. However, if we are able to get Oregon style language included in the Teamster platform, our chances of success will be greatly improved. The diverse issues in the Oregon bill also aid our ability to hide tobacco's fingerprints on this effort.

The tobacco industry's retail allies are very much interested in passing legislation that would impose a penalty on a person under 18 that attempts to purchase cigarettes. This effort on the part of the retailers will go forward with or without tobacco industry participation. Our lobbyists will be working with the retailers in the background in order to ensure success of this initiative.