

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Unsession time to make change

It makes sense during what Gov. Mark Dayton has called an “unsession” to clean up the books by eliminating an archaic protection that may keep legislators from being arrested for drunk driving and other crimes.

Dayton has dubbed 2014 the “unsession” because he wants lawmakers to spend much of their time cleaning house by eliminating old, outdated state laws as well as coming up with ideas for making government better, faster and simpler.

The Minnesota House last week voted to repeal their immunity from arrest on certain violations. The bill approved alters existing law so that any lawmaker who commits felon, gross misdemeanor or misdemeanor crimes violates a breach of peace under the Minnesota Constitution and can therefore be arrested.

Some representatives argued the old law wouldn’t hold up in court because of established case law, but the House approved the change on a 115-13. Others have said that Minnesota lawmakers have in some places and in some situations used the

clause to avoid the legal system.

The immunity clause put in place more than 150 years ago for members of Congress and many state lawmakers may have been well intended, but has outlived its usefulness. Referred to as the “privilege from arrest,” the law was an effort to help lawmakers avoid being detained for important votes or intimidated to vote a certain way. That the “get out of jail free” card existed for Minnesota lawmakers was revealed in a project at Concordia University and sparked much debate around the state.

We certainly don’t want to waste a lot of legislator’s time on this issue. However, even if no Minnesota legislator has used the immunity clause, the public perception that the clause provides unnecessary and extraordinary privilege for elected officials needs to be changed.

And there’s no better time to eliminate this old and perhaps unusable clause than the 2014 unsession by clearing it from the books and the public’s concern.

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GUEST COLUMN

Patronizing the paychecks of millions

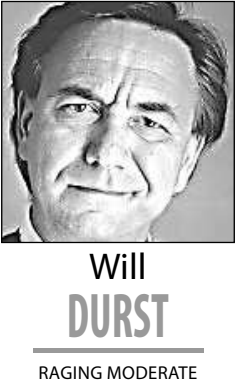
In a move as surprising as limos at a state funeral the GOP has misplaced their ticket for the clue train. Yes, again. Just when you think they get it, party leaders move heaven and earth and that place due south to prove that not only do they not get it, they have never gotten it and aren’t really comfortable around people who do get it. One suspects, secretly, they don’t want it.

What culturally tone-deaf antic guaranteed to awaken Beethoven did they pull this time? Glad you asked. Republicans shut down Senate debate on the Paycheck Fairness Act, which would have required employers to show why they’re paying male and female employees different salaries for doing the same job. Because the ultimate goal of the Free market is... free labor.

A U.S. Census study found that women earn 77 cents for every dollar a man takes home. Why businesses continue to hire men in the first place when they could save 23 percent by putting women

into those positions remains a total mystery. Undocumented women must make personnel departments shiver. Underage undocumented women with hyperactive thyroids: roll out the drool gutters.

The GOPers said they scuttled the bill because it wasn’t needed and would hurt women. And when it comes to hurting women, they do wield a certain amount of expertise. Corporations may be people, but women... well, we don’t need to go there, do we? Logic dictates what women need to do is incorporate. “I am woman. Hear me file a domestic patent infringement suit.” Every single Republican



Will DURST
RAGING MODERATE

voted against the bill and every single Democrat for it. Explaining her vote, Representative Lynn Jenkins of Kansas said that many ladies she knows find the Democrats’ attitude condescending. Not to mention vulgar and boorish and much too colorful for polite company.

Yeah. Easy to see how paying ladies the same wages as gentlemen could be considered condescending. Just like the 19th Amendment giving women the vote was obviously patronizing. And granting women control of their own bodies would be exceedingly supercilious.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell claims that Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid is only orchestrating this contretemps as a transparent stunt to restart his phony War on Women, in a doomed attempt to reenergize key elements of Democratic victories in 2012. Aahh, 2012. When was that? 14, 16 years ago, right?

Harry Reid may be many things: Mormon, lawyer, boxer, capitalist tool, casino lackey- but dumb is not one of them. Energizing women is never a bad idea. After all, in the US they outnumber men by more than 4 million. Live longer. Make up 53 percent of the electorate. And remain the only one of the two genders able to make more members of the electorate.

Besides, as far as stunts are concerned, the Democrats are rank amateurs. This is only their 3rd failed stab at passing the Paycheck Fairness Act. That’s 4 dozen shy of matching the GOP’s cracks to repeal ObamaCare. Registration for obsession school forms on the right.

The bad news is- still plenty of time. Midterm elections aren’t until November. At least 7 more months of these shenanigans. By the time both sides are done, we can expect the floor of the Capitol Rotunda to look like it hosted 3 or 4 Game of Thrones wedding receptions.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

What about a vote?

To the editor,
What ever happened to the suggestion of voting on the issue of the Donahue property?
Don’t the citizens of International Falls have a

right to speak up?
Perhaps it’s past time to remove some of the council members.
Marian O’Brien
International Falls,
MN