

OPINION

OUR VIEW

Kudos to compromise

A new bill signed into law Friday is good news for the entire state.

It shows when all three bodies of this state's government agree to compromise, good things can happen.

We're pleased lawmakers realized their folly last session and corrected it by repealing the three B2B, or business-to-business, taxes enacted during the last session that threatened to slow the economic recovery.

It's that recovery that allows for the \$443 million in tax relief provided in the new law.

Rep. David Dill cites the state budget surplus, repayment of money borrowed in earlier years from schools, and a drop in the state unemployment rate as the economic positives that made possible this new tax law.

However, we would have liked to have seen this law enacted earlier in the session. Clearly, there was some wrangling going on in the Legislature delaying the celebration of this good news.

Now, many Minnesotans who follow the earlier is better rule of thumb, will have to file amended returns if they are affected by this good news or wait to find out from the Department of Revenue if it can be revised in St. Paul.

But we, like the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, are a bit disappointed the law delays enactment of the up-front exemption for sales tax on capital equipment. The effective date for that exemption is now for purchases after June 30, 2015. This exemption may have helped further push the state's economic recovery by allowing more businesses to invest in their own future by purchasing equipment they may now delay.

However, clearly, all Minnesotans benefit from this tax bill, which will go a long way to keeping this state on a forward moving path. Credit should be given to the compromises made that led to this accomplishment.



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Animal abandonment laws broken, ignored

To the editor,

I would like to start out by saying it is illegal to abandon animals/pets, be it in the country or elsewhere. There are laws regarding this issue. Law enforcement simply do not always have the time to go and investigate animals that have been abandoned in the country. Also, most often they will not go and pick them up unless it is a severe issue such as medical or aggression or risk to public safety.

Cats are abandoned much more often than dogs. Let me tell you what happens to these domesticated animals that rely on people for their food, water and warmth, no scenario is good: 1) they starve to death; 2) they are maimed, eaten/killed by other animals; 3) they freeze to death; 4) they die from dehydration or 5) they are shot by the property owners. Very

rarely are these abandoned pet “adopted.” They simply try to survive, but luck is not usually on their side.

Recently it has been brought to my attention that people have been “dumping” their animals in the country/on farms/other people’s property. Just ask anybody who has a farm or lives in the country; this is a familiar situation. With social media reporting events in real time and every person’s actions being brought to the world’s attention, it has become more evident how often the abandonment laws are being broken and ignored. A recent experience that I found terribly disturbing was when someone taped her beloved pets up in a box (three cats), rang my doorbell and ran away.

If you have abandoned an animal, shame on you. If you are thinking about

abandoning an animal and letting it fend for itself, shame on you – there are other options, use social media to your advantage – advertise, but be careful who you adopt your pet to. There are also organizations and individuals in International Falls and Fort Frances that will do everything in their power to help you rehome your pets. Resources are available if you just ask. Law enforcement, radio stations and the Borderland Humane Society can always point you in the right direction for help. Please do the right thing and encourage others to seek help for a solution instead of acting out irrationally. Facebook is loaded with individuals that know how to help as well.

Thank you.

Cindy Meyer
International Falls, MN

How to contact your lawmakers

FEDERAL OFFICES	
President Barack Obama Democrat The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W. Washington, D.C., 20500 202-456-1111 Website: www.whitehouse.gov E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov	South, Suite 250 Minneapolis, MN 55415 612-727-5220 Website: www.klobuchar.senate.gov
U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan 2447 Rayburn House Office Building Washington DC 20515 202-225-6211 Website: www.nolan.house.gov Facebook: US Rep Rick Nolan Twitter: @USRepRickNolan	U.S. Sen. Al Franken Democrat Senate Hart Building 320 Washington DC 20510 202-224-5641 Website: www.alfranken.com E-Mail: info@franken.senate.gov
U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar Democrat 302 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 202-224-3244	STATE OFFICES
Minnesota Office: 1200 Washington Avenue	Gov. Mark Dayton 130 State Capitol 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. St. Paul, MN, 55155 800-657-3717 E-mail: Mark.Dayton@state.mn.us
	Rep. David Dill 571 State Office Building St. Paul, MN 55155 651-296-2190 800-339-0466 rep.david.dill@house.mn Assistant: Joan Harrison
	Sen. Tom Bakk 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Capitol, Room 226 St. Paul, MN 55155-1606 Capitol Office phone: (651) 296-8881 Email: www.senate.mn/ senatorbakkemail

The Journal welcomes letters from readers

Letters should be limited to 500 words or less. Longer letters may be edited. Letters must be signed and include the telephone number and address of the letter writer. Only the author's city address will be published.

Mail letters to The Journal, 1602 Highway 71, International Falls 56649. Letters can also be sent by e-mail to laurel@ifallsjournal.com.

Share your point of view

Make a difference by writing a letter to the editor or contributing to our online discussions. The Journal's Opinion page is where meaningful community discussions take place.

IT'S YOUR COURT

Lawyer misconduct and the courts

David Moskal graduated at the top of his law school class. He became a successful personal injury attorney and a partner in a prominent twin cities law firm. It was reported that he regularly earned more than \$1 million a year.

In 1998, it was discovered that Moskal was embezzling from clients. His law firm fired him and filed an ethics complaint. The Minnesota Supreme Court disbarred Moskal for committing professional misconduct.

Every state has a system in place to regulate and discipline attorneys. The Minnesota Supreme Court is responsible for our system, and it appoints the 23 members of the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board (LPRB). The LPRB administers the Minnesota lawyer discipline system. Three-member panels of the LPRB preside over hearings concerning allegations of unprofessional conduct against lawyers.

The LPRB oversees the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility (OLPR), which investigates complaints of alleged lawyer misconduct and prosecutes disciplinary actions against lawyers. The OLPR is funded by license fees paid by Minnesota lawyers.

The ethics code for lawyers in Minnesota is contained in the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct, issued by an order of the Minnesota Supreme Court. These rules define proper conduct for purposes of professional



Paul RASMUSSEN
DISTRICT JUDGE

discipline.

In 2013 the Minnesota Supreme Court publicly disciplined 47 attorneys. Eleven attorneys were disbarred, 23 attorneys were suspended and 13 were publicly reprimanded. Public discipline is used for more serious ethical violations. An additional 144 complaints against lawyers resulted in private discipline. These situations involve less serious ethical violations.

The LPRB and the OLPR have a web site found at http://lprb.mncourts.gov. On this site you can file a complaint, read rules and articles regarding attorney discipline, access a list of currently disbarred and suspended attorneys and research whether any individual attorney has ever been publicly disciplined.

Minnesota has a similar system in place to deal with misconduct by judges. The Governor appoints 10 members of the Minnesota Board on Judicial Standards (MBJS), an agency that receives and

acts upon complaints about Minnesota judges. Judicial conduct is measured against our ethical rules for judges contained in the Minnesota Code of Judicial Conduct.

Serious violations by judges can result in removal from office, “involuntary” retirement or public censure. Less serious violations usually result in a private discipline.

Common complaints against judges involve allegations of improper courtroom demeanor, failing to complete judicial work in a timely manner, chemical abuse and conflict of interest.

The MBJS also has a good web site found at http://www.bjs.state.mn.us. The site contains a link to the Code of Judicial Conduct, instructions on how to file a complaint and information about discipline that has been imposed on Minnesota judges.

Minnesota has a national reputation of having quality judges and lawyers. I hope and think that reputation to be well deserved. Every profession has some bad apples, however, so we need to have a process to protect the public from those who commit misconduct.

As always, remember it is your court.

Rasmussen is a district court judge in the Ninth Judicial District. He is chambered in Clearwater County and works primarily in Clearwater and Hubbard counties. His e-mail address is: paul.rasmussen@courts.state.mn.us