

**Making History:
Governor Pawlenty's Transportation Veto and A Legislative Override**

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Key Findings:

- Only two governors in the past 70 years have vetoed as many bills as Governor Pawlenty.
- Overriding a governor's veto is very difficult. **Ninety-seven percent of all vetoes have stood.**
- A successful override of Governor Pawlenty's transportation veto would be only the 14th time that the legislature has successfully overridden one of the 447 vetoes by Minnesota governors since 1939.

Governor Tim Pawlenty's veto on February 22nd of a controversial transportation bill has set the stage for the DFL-controlled legislature to attempt an override. Governor Pawlenty has deployed the veto more often than all but 2 of his predecessors over the past 70 years, but a rare override by the legislature would also make the record books.

Pawlenty Makes Record Books

Governor Pawlenty is already in the record books. Only two other governors in the past 70 years have vetoed as many bills. With three sessions remaining in his second term, Governor Pawlenty is on pace to lodge the second most vetoes since 1939.

Gubernatorial Vetoes in Minnesota, 1939-2007

| Governor | Years in office | Number of vetoes | Percentage of gubernatorial vetoes since 1939 |
|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Arne Carlson | 8 | 179 | 40.0 % |
| Jesse Ventura | 4 | 54 | 12.1 % |
| Tim Pawlenty | 5 | 36 | 8.1 % |
| Al Quie | 4 | 31 | 6.9 % |
| Luther W. Youngdahl | 6 | 27 | 6.0 % |
| Harold E. Stassen | 6 | 25 | 5.6 % |
| Karl F. Rolvaag | 4 | 22 | 4.9 % |
| Rudy Perpich | 10 | 20 | 4.5 % |
| Wendell R. Anderson | 6 | 19 | 4.3 % |
| Orville L. Freeman | 6 | 11 | 2.5 % |
| Harold LeVander | 4 | 9 | 2.0 % |
| C. Elmer Anderson | 2 | 7 | 1.6 % |
| Elmer L. Andersen | 2 | 4 | 0.9 % |
| Edward J. Thye | 2 | 3 | 0.7 % |
| Total | 69 | 447 | 100.0 % |

Source: Minnesota Legislative Reference Library

Governors Arne Carlson and Jesse Ventura were Pawlenty's only predecessors to log more vetoes. Republican Governor Carlson was crowned the King of the Veto: 40 percent of all vetoes in Minnesota since 1939 (179 in total) came from his pen (an additional 16 veto attempts by Carlson were ruled unconstitutional).

The use of the veto has increased over time, reflecting the polarization of Minnesota politics and other changes. The last three governors account for 60 percent of all vetoes over the past seven decades.

A Successful Override of Governor Pawlenty's Veto Would Make the Record Books

Overriding a governor's veto is both rare and very difficult. **Ninety-seven percent of all vetoes have stood.**

The power of the governor's veto comes from a two-punch combo. First, legislative efforts to override a veto are rare. The legislature only attempted to defeat 10 percent of vetoes by Minnesota governors (43 override attempts of 447 gubernatorial vetoes).

Second, only 13 efforts by the legislature to override a governor's veto have succeeded since 1939. **A successful override of Governor Pawlenty's transportation veto would be**

historically notable – it would be only the 14th time that the legislature has successfully overridden one of the 447 vetoes by Minnesota governors since 1939.

The key barrier to successfully overriding the governor is party control of the legislature. The governor's fellow partisans rarely support a veto override and legislators in the opposing party rarely have the constitutionally required two-thirds majorities in both chambers to override (90 in House and 45 in Senate in the modern era).

Not surprisingly, *one-third of all attempts to override the governor's veto and 69 percent of all successful overrides* occurred during the tenure of Jesse Ventura. The state's only third-party Governor since 1939 found himself out-muscled by a coalition of Democrats and Republicans.