



Minnesota State Senator Linda Higgins 2011 Legislative Update



Dear Friends,

It's been a long few weeks here at the Senate. With just two days left in the 2011 legislative session, Minnesota legislative Republicans have sent a clear message they are unwilling to compromise on their position to protect the wealthiest people and corporations in the state.

On Monday, Governor Mark Dayton offered a major compromise: To cut his proposal to raise revenue in half and meet Republicans half way on the deeper spending cuts they've been pushing. It's a reasonable solution that is the very definition of compromise: Half way between the two positions. Unfortunately, it was rejected within hours.

Instead, Republicans forged ahead with budget bills containing billions of dollars in devastating cuts to services every Minnesotan relies upon, as well as actions that will probably result in more than \$1 billion in new property tax increases. Conference committees on the eight remaining budget hurriedly finalized their work, and the full Senate and House were asked to vote on those proposals just hours afterward with little time to review the bills or hear from the public.

In the absence of adequate public input, Senate Democrats held a hearing on the impact of GOP budget cuts on Thursday. The hearing occurred before the budget bills were delivered to the Governor so he and the public can have a full understanding of what's at stake in an all-cuts approach to the \$5 billion deficit.

Senate Democrats heard from disabled citizens that will lose their independence and in-home care because of the Republican budget, which drastically cuts funding for personal care attendants and other home support. The Minnesota Hospital Association told Senators to prepare for 13,000 to 18,000 lost jobs resulting from the GOP hospital budget cuts alone.



Senators also heard from college students from campuses around the state, who stressed that higher education isn't Minnesota's budget problem; it should be the solution. It's the key to creating jobs and educating tomorrow's workforce – goals that will suffer if Republicans are allowed to slash funding to the same levels as 10 years ago. Schools in the MnSCU system would need to raise tuition \$40 million a year just to make up for the budget losses.

The diverse group of residents that testified on Thursday all had a unifying message to deliver to Senators: The budget cuts passed by Republicans will undoubtedly eliminate jobs in Minnesota. Cuts to childcare assistance will harm the 13,000 childcare facilities throughout the state and the thousands of Minnesotans who work for them. The transit cuts will affect everyone who relies

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upon the services to get to work. The cuts to K-12 and higher education will force teacher layoffs and will affect the education that our future workforce relies upon.

Thursday's budget hearing made it perfectly clear that Republicans have the wrong priorities for Minnesota. By drawing a line in the sand and refusing to compromise with Gov. Dayton, Republicans are choosing to protect the richest 2 percent of Minnesotans at the expense of middle-class families, seniors, and the most vulnerable in the state. What's more, they're doing so at the expense of thousands of good-paying Minnesota jobs – breaking their promise to come to the Capitol and create more.

Governor Dayton and legislative leaders will continue working through the weekend to try to reach compromise before the Monday deadline to adjourn. Keep up to date with legislative activity at www.senate.mn.



The Lindas. Senator Berglin and I spend a lot of time talking about healthcare and human services.

Update on the Marriage Amendment

The constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriage was heard and passed in the Senate on last Thursday. The bill proposes to amend the Minnesota Constitution to recognize marriage as only between one man and one woman.

It's deeply disturbing that Senate Republicans want to use the last few weeks of the legislative session to discriminate against the GLBTQ community and divide our state. We are facing a \$5 billion budget shortfall, yet some legislators would have Minnesotans believe that the biggest threat to our state's welfare is who is allowed to be married to whom.

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Marriage is about love, commitment and responsibility. It's about allowing families to take responsibility for each other and support their loved ones, creating strong households throughout our state. These are values we all share – so why would we bar same-sex couples from these benefits and responsibilities?

Minnesotans who are married legally have access to at least 515 laws that provide security, legal protections, and basic rights such as the ability to care for each other. As lawmakers, we should be focused on breaking these barriers that still exist for thousands of Minnesotans, rather than further isolating one group of people and wasting taxpayers' time with unfounded fears. The constitutional amendment proposal passed in the Senate now awaits further action by the House. For five days now, people from around the state have gathered in the Capitol to raise their voices peacefully against the amendment. Protesters sing, children play, and the message is clear – hate has no place in our state.

The bill has just been scheduled to start being debated at 6 PM by the House. They're reserving 12 hours of debate, with the final vote possibly occurring at 6 AM Sunday. If both bodies of the legislature approve the proposal, the amendment question will go on the 2012 general election ballot.

As I write this, the Capitol is filling with Minnesotans who will let their thoughts about the amendment clear. "Just Vote No" and "All You Need is Love" ring out through all three floors.

I will never, ever support legislation based on discrimination and fear. Please stand with me and the many other leaders that will work hard to defeat this bill.

“Shoot First” Bill Heads for Likely Vote in Senate

The Minneapolis and Saint Paul chiefs of police and several legislators gathered last week to express their opposition to the extreme firearms bill moving through the legislative process. Opponents of the measure said the legislation does not contribute positively to the public safety of Minnesota.

SF1357, authored by Sen. Gretchen Hoffman of Vergas, would expand what is known as the “Castle Doctrine.” This would allow residents to use *deadly force* to defend themselves in more than just their homes, including, among other sites, a garage, motor vehicle, tent or boat. The state already provides the right for an individual to protect themselves with deadly force in public or in their home if they are facing imminent unlawful death or serious bodily harm, and there have been no cases of a person being charged when they were defending themselves under current law in Minnesota.

The bill reverses the common law “rule of retreat” that sets the standard that killing another person should be done only as a last resort. The bill allows shooting whenever there is a perceived threat, even if the shooter could safely walk away.

Late last week the bill passed Senate Finance. It has also cleared the public safety and judiciary committees, as well as the House. With two days left in regular session, this will likely be heard on the Senate floor today or tomorrow.

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I will NOT support this bill – legislating from fear is wrong, and this bill does not protect Minnesota's families.

**2011 Victory Neighborhood Garage Sale
Saturday, June 4 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

Join friends and neighbors at the Victory Neighborhood's 17th annual garage sale, drawing thrifty shoppers from all around the metro area. Sale locations include homes in Victory and several other Camden neighborhoods

For more information, visit the [Victory Neighborhood Association's](http://victoryneighborhood.org/) webpage at <http://victoryneighborhood.org/>



Minneapolis Animal Care and Control "Pets of the Week" Anchor!

212 17 Ave. N, Minneapolis, 55411

Anchor is a 4 to 5 month old black lab mix who is a soft-hearted guy! As a puppy, he has a lot of energy and will need an owner who will have plenty of time for playing and exercising and puppy training. Anchor is not yet house broken, but he already knows how to sit on command. Consider adopting Anchor today!

The shelter is open **Monday through Friday from 2 to 7 p.m., and on Saturdays from 11:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.** For more information on adopting other kittens, puppies, dogs or cats from MACC, please go to: <http://www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/animalcontrol/PetAdoptions.asp>

**Save the Date -- Victory Memorial Drive Rededication Event
Saturday, June 11, at 11 a.m.
Flagpole plaza at 4489 Victory Memorial Drive**

Join community members at the rededication of Victory Memorial Drive on **Saturday, June 11, 11 a.m.**, exactly ninety years after its original dedication to the 568 Hennepin County soldiers who gave their lives in the Great War–World War I.

Activities will take place along the Drive and at the newly refurbished flagpole plaza at 4489 Victory Memorial Dr. There will be concerts, speakers, ceremony and a parade. For more information, visit www.victorymemorialdrive.org, or call 612-348-7488.

2011 Preserve Minneapolis Walking and Biking Tours

Enjoy the summer weather and discover diverse and historic neighborhoods by participating in the 2011 Minneapolis Walking and Biking Tours sponsored by Preserve Minneapolis. Each tour has a minimal fee, most are only \$5. Tours run from May 14 to September 17. Stops include destinations like the Grain Belt Brewery, Red Cedar Lane, Historic Old Highland and the Northside Synagogues.

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On each tour, guides with experience in fields like architecture, and preservation will tell the “stories behind the story” and give participants a greater understanding of the area’s social and built history. Tours will be held regardless of inclement weather. Participants are strongly urged to pre-register online; however, when space allows PM will accept last minute additions and cash payments at the tour starting points.

For more information, and a schedule of tours, visit www.preserveminneapolis.org.

Did you know?

Our very own Folwell Park is named after the first President of the University of Minnesota, William Folwell. At 36 he became President of the University. He is noted for opening University classes to women.

Did you also know? I am still posting many job opening announcements and links to websites providing job opening information on my Facebook page. I posted quite a few lately, so if you’re looking for a job, follow me on Facebook and take advantage of the opportunities listed there. Of course, you’ll also see me comment on a variety of other issues too.

As always, if you have any questions or comments, feel free to email me at sen.linda.higgins@senate.mn or call my office at (651) 296-9246. Additionally, if you would like to be removed from the email list, please send me a response email with the request we will take care of that.

Have a wonderful rest of your weekend!

Cordially,



Sen. Linda Higgins



You can now follow me on Twitter [@SenatorHiggins](https://twitter.com/SenatorHiggins) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/SenatorHiggins), where I have a personal and a Senate page.

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