



### VIEW FROM THE CAPITOL

## Republicans drag their feet at the Capitol; progress for Minnesotans jeopardized

by Rep. John Lesch



As the legislative session heads into its final weeks, several high-profile issues remain outstanding. Whether to conform to federal tax changes (and at which level), increasing safety of our seniors in care facilities, and working to end the opioid crisis, among others, remain on the to-do list.

It's unfortunate that in some significant areas, the prospect of progress might be in limbo. One of these is a bonding bill to invest in public infrastructure. A sizable version of such a bill is traditionally considered during the even year of a biennium. Across the state, our higher-education institutions, correctional facilities, bridges, dams, clean-water infrastructure and other assets are all in need of repair, improvement, and modernization. We can get this work done by taking advantage of relatively low-interest rates while creating good-paying jobs as well.

Prior to session, Gov. Dayton proposed a bold, \$1.5 billion proposal to address these needs. Astonishingly, as of this writing, neither the House nor Senate Republican majorities have yet to put forth a proposal. A bonding bill presents us with not just a terrific opportunity to improve our communities, but gives a real shot at a bipartisan accomplishment which everyone can be proud of. Unfortunately, it appears the Republicans may again drag their feet and set the stage for an end of session meltdown over it, similar to what occurred in 2016, with no bonding bill getting passed. To allow this would represent a failure of leadership that Minnesota can't afford.

On another topic, since the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, Minnesotans have made their voices heard about the urgent need to eliminate gun violence. Two commonsense measures emerged. One would expand background checks to more gun sales making it more difficult for criminals to obtain them. This proposal is broadly supported, including by upwards of 72 percent of self-identifying NRA members. Another would enable family members or law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily remove guns from someone who poses an imminent danger to themselves or others. Many of those who commit mass shootings show warning signs, and laws like this can potentially prevent terrible tragedies.

It was extremely inspiring to see 20,000 students and allies recently at

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### Upcoming events

- May 18 – Seventh Annual Minnesota DFL Humphrey–Mondale Dinner**  
**Special guest: U.S. Senator Cory Booker**
- May 22 – Roseville DFL Central Committee**
- May 24 – SD66 DFL Happy Hour**
- June 1-3 – Minnesota DFL State Convention**
- June 4 – SD66 Central Committee**
- June 25 – Rose Parade**
- June 28 – SD66 DFL Picnic**
- June 29 – Early and absentee voting opens for August primary**
- July 2 – SD66 Central Committee**
- July 24 – Last day to pre-register for August primary**
- August 6 – SD66 Central Committee**
- August 14 – Primary Election**  
Also, **Special City Council Election in St. Paul Ward 4**
- August 23-September 3**  
**Minnesota State Fair**

*See page 8 for full calendar.*

the March for Our Lives rally on the Capitol steps. Despite such overwhelming calls for change, Republicans who control key committees have stopped each of these proposals from even getting an official vote.

It's apparent our students are far ahead of most politicians on this issue. With voices like those of the people who marched on the Capitol steps being amplified, the momentum will continue. Young people will soon be America's largest voting bloc, and they are paying attention.

None of this is to say bipartisan accomplishments are completely out of reach. Earlier this session we passed a bill to ratify the labor contracts for 30,000 state workers. It took too long though, and for quite a while, Republicans had treated these folks as political footballs. Nevertheless, it was good to give these hardworking Minnesotans and their families the economic security they deserve. But they should expect more.

Frankly, I don't think the expectations people have of the Minnesota Legislature are all that complicated. By and large, folks want good schools for their kids, affordable, quality health care, safe communities, good transportation options, and jobs with fair pay and benefits. While the solutions can be complex, the end goals are not.

Minnesotans have an expectation that no matter our divisions, elected officials can come together to improve people's lives. While being sure to never stray from our community's core values, my House DFL colleagues and I are committed to working toward solutions that do just that.

## Reflections from Earth Day 2018 for the year ahead

by Sen. John Marty

Earth Day is a good time for *reflection* and *inspiration*. Action to protect the planet can be inspired by Earth Day, but must be undertaken every day. Here are seven reflections I wrote on Earth Day for the year ahead:

1. The Earth is our only home. There is no Plan(et) B that we can move to.
2. Baking our planet—our only home—through fossil fuel emissions, will cause changes that we cannot fully imagine:
  - More severe blizzards and heat waves, droughts and floods, tornadoes, forest fires, and mudslides.
  - Rising oceans will create millions of climate refugees, people forced to move from low-lying coastal areas. The number of refugees, displaced persons, and asylum-seekers we have seen in the last couple decades is small compared to those who might be forced to flee their homes because of climate. The refugees we have in 2018 are causing great political turmoil, extremism, and hatred—in Europe, the United States, and throughout the world. Imagine the chaos that will result if we multiply that problem with several times as many climate refugees.
  - Species will become extinct. Not just rare plants and animals that we have hardly heard of. And not just polar bears. *It has the potential to wipe out the human species as we know it.*
3. We don't know how fast climate change will hit us, but once humanity wakes to the reality of it, the environmental impacts of our past actions will not stop immediately. The problem will get worse even when we are addressing it. Here is an analysis, from [a report published by the National Academy of Sciences](#) last fall, of the probability of various climate scenarios over the remaining eight decades of the Twenty-first Century:

Under a "business as usual" scenario, there is a 50 percent chance of 4° Celsius temperature rise. There is a 5 percent chance that human-caused climate change will result in a 5° rise by the end of the century. That's far worse than the 2° rise that the Paris Climate Accords committed to preventing. Worse even than the *catastrophic* impacts that the report said a 3° rise would trigger.

The report described a 5° increase as "*beyond catastrophic*" because it threatens the very existence of humanity. Dr. Veerabhadran Ramanathan, one of the scientists who authored the report, addressed this 5 percent risk of that "*beyond catastrophic*" 5° global temperature rise, "To put [it] in perspective, how many of us would choose



to buckle our grandchildren to an airplane seat if we knew there was as much as a 1-in-20 chance of the plane crashing?”

4. It might not be easy or popular to change the climate trajectory we are on, but we need to act now. The situation is hopeless if we don't act.

5. Political and economic decisions must be decided with an eye on that risk, decisions like whether to permit construction of the proposed Enbridge Line 3 replacement pipeline.

The fundamental question there is whether a pipeline to transport the dirtiest tar-sands oil—with a greenhouse gas impact as much as 37 percent higher than conventional oil—should be built. A pipeline that, after thorough analysis, the Minnesota Department of Commerce concluded is not needed for our energy needs. They stated that the existing pipeline should be shut down and the new one should *not* be built.

6. The decision on building the Enbridge Line 3 replacement pipeline is truly *a litmus test of whether Minnesota is serious about addressing the climate change* that threatens our very existence.

The Public Utilities Commission must understand *that* reality when they rule on whether to grant approval for the pipeline. The legislature, which is currently considering legislation to bypass the commission and give Enbridge “sole discretion” to build and operate the pipeline, should understand the consequences of this action, whether legislators care about the climate impact or not.

7. Enbridge and its political allies might win on the pipeline this year. But they, and the rest of the human race, will ultimately pay the price.

As Wendell Berry observed, “Whether we and our politicians know it or not, Nature is party to all our deals and decisions, and she has more votes, a longer memory, and a sterner sense of justice than we do.”

Earth Day 2018 is now past, but our chance to act on these reflections remains. For the sake of our grandchildren and their grandchildren, we must pass this litmus test and move forward.

For a more in-depth column I wrote on the Enbridge pipeline project, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/EnbridgeLine3>

## Spring is full of events, meetings, and issues

by Commissioner Janice Rettman



I hope this newsletter finds you and yours well and eager to enjoy more sunshine and rainbows of hope. For with spring's arrival, so come myriads of local events, meetings, and issues to discuss. It heralds the Minnesota Legislature's final push to meet deadlines, funding requests and substantive policy discussions. Much of what happens at the Minnesota Legislature and federally impacts Ramsey County's budget and priorities. The vast majority of services Ramsey County provides have mandates. Let alone businesses and residents paying taxes be them local, state or federal—all indeed become precursors and part of the prerequisites to setting up the budget priorities and funding sources Ramsey County uses to provide services. Equally it is incumbent on me to make sure the return on your investments is achieved. Here's a tiny snippet of my work.

As the commissioner serving on the Metro Healthy Families Alliance, I am pleased to report the results of the work of the Ramsey County Public Health Nurses working with moms and families, prenatal up to 5 years of age. They are achieving outcomes in the 90 percent success range in immunizations, cognitive skills, development, etc. Having worked side by side with boots on the ground with the nurses and emergency responders for years, their work is exemplary.

Up at the legislature, as chair of the Minnesota High Speed Rail Commission, I am working on securing funding for the second train (passenger rail Twin Cities-Milwaukee-Chicago) from Union Depot to Milwaukee and on to Chicago. The addition of the second train would give a tremendous boost to round trips—thus boosting the economy for Ramsey County, bringing more jobs and commerce, colleges, tourists, entertainment, and sports. The work with the railroads is tantamount to the bipartisan authorship at the legislature, including our own Rep. Alice Hausman who is stellar in her insight and diplomacy.

The joys I have include wonderful times like at the Ramsey County Library and being part of Story Time. Learning is totally happening and is fun-filled with wiggles and giggles, sign language and counting, and reading and games. Also on the MELSA Board, we make sure programs like this continues to bring education and information to all ages birth-100.

Enjoy spring. I will be out and about everywhere—so see you soon.



*Story Time at the Roseville Library:  
giggles and wiggles and a lot of learning going on!*

## Minnesota's lakes are treasures

by Supervisor Gwen Willems



Throughout April, Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) surveyed readers about their favorite Minnesota lakes. With hundreds of nominations and tens of thousands of votes, our favorite lakes were narrowed down to twenty, then eight, and finally one—Lake Superior. Minnesota has 189 miles of Lake Superior's shores, although we share the lake and its 3 quadrillion gallons of water, which is 10 percent of the planet's surface

freshwater. Other finalist lakes were Crane, Kabetogama, Minnewaska, Pepin, Rainy, Vermilion, and Waconia.

With help from the Water Main, MPR's new initiative aimed at helping Minnesotans understand the value of water in our everyday lives, the station will host a performance on the shore of Lake Superior.

What started out for me as a chance to nominate Lake Itasca and write about what makes that lake so special to me, turned into ruminations on the many excellent experiences I've had on our lakes. Lake Itasca is a favorite that my husband and I have returned to over and over. His sweet grandmother lived outside Park Rapids, so we'd stop by and visit with her and her husband on our way to the park. We honeymooned at Itasca State Park and hosted a group of family members and friends to celebrate our tenth wedding anniversary there. For just ourselves, the WPA-built housekeeping cabins with their big porches overlooking Lake Itasca are a cozy retreat. For the big group, we loved the rustic beauty and two-story, ten-room spaciousness of the Clubhouse, not to mention the floor-to-ceiling, wood-burning fireplace made of large rocks.

There are so many fun activities to do at Itasca Park—sit on the Douglas Lodge deck and photograph hummingbirds, enjoy sunset views from Peace Pipe Vista, walk and bike the trails along the lake, hear forest rangers' fireside talks, walk across the Mississippi River headwaters, take in phenomenal fall-color views on Wilderness Drive, and swim, canoe, or take a tour boat on the lake. Our latest discovery is an annual fall weekend with biological sciences grads who share fun and information at the University of Minnesota's Research Station at Itasca. Nothing like learning to identify a few aquatic invertebrates and taking a guided pontoon ride in such a beautiful setting!

Water quality of Minnesota lakes has been of great concern to us in the last few years, perhaps because we love our lakes so much. We Minnesotans won't let it deter us from enjoying our remarkable lakes, even if we have to limit how often we eat fish caught in certain waters and are advised not to swim in some. If you're like me and start a list of Minnesota lakes we've visited, it's amazing how long it turns out to be. I have so many fond memories associated with Minnesota lakes, such as ice fishing with my father in his ice house on Lake Waconia, fishing for sunnies out of a small boat with my siblings and father on little Piersons Lake near my hometown, houseboating with a crowd on Leech Lake, paddleboating on the St. Croix and Mississippi rivers, visiting my aunt and uncle and their family and swimming and fishing at their summer home on Lake Bavaria, sailing on Lake Superior, cruising Lake Minnetonka on the restored 1906 steamboat Minnehaha, walking around Como Lake and Lake of the Isles, and swimming at Wirth Lake.

I invite you to think about your favorite Minnesota lake and share your memories with us through this newsletter. What would you like to do next on which lake? Happy summer!



*Fog on the North Shore of Lake Superior  
Photograph by the author.*

## Chair's report

by SD66 DFL Chair Ryan Lee

In February, we had an amazing turnout for the precinct caucuses—especially for a midterm election. We had 874 local DFLers cast their preference ballots, when our estimated attendance was only 500! Given that not everyone cast preference ballots, it's possible that twice as many people as were expected turned out to participate. You made it clear that you're passionate about the upcoming election and want to have your voice heard. Now, we need your help to continue the momentum as we head into primary season. We especially appreciate all the hard work put in so far by our volunteers, conveners, and student helpers from the Roseville National Honor Society. We couldn't have done this without you.

Only a month later, at our organizing convention on March 10, we had almost five hundred delegates, alternates, and campaign supporters come out to the Roseville Area High School despite the snow and cold. The delegates you elected from your precinct caucuses were able to show their support for different gubernatorial candidates and causes, and we are sending twenty-two delegates and twenty-two alternates to the state convention in June. Once again, we couldn't have put on the convention without the many hours spent planning and running the convention from our arrangements, credentials, endorsements, nominations, resolutions, and rules subcommittees. Thank you for all your hard work!

The work is just beginning, and you'll likely hear from your precinct chairs and associate chairs in the coming weeks with more ways to get involved and ensure a DFL victory in November. We hope to see you at our annual potluck picnic on the evening of June 28 at the South Picnic Pavilion in Como Park to celebrate everyone's contributions so far and gear up for the home stretch.

Thanks again, and I look forward to continuing to work with all of you to elect DFLers from our district and across the state.



## Vice chair's report

by SD66 Vice Chair Katrina Lee



Hello, SD66! My name is Katrina Lee, and I was recently elected as the new vice chair of the Senate District 66 DFL at the organizing convention on March 10. Having previously volunteered in the district as secretary, I'm glad for your support and the chance to continue contributing to the party's efforts. I feel it's essential that we elect DFL candidates to office this year up and down the ticket, and I'm also passionate about elevating the voices of average citizens by making the caucuses and conventions accessible to all.

As a New York transplant to Minnesota, I've called the Twin Cities home for the last five years. I got my first taste of the Midwest when I pursued my political science degree at Wittenberg University in Ohio, where I volunteered with Obama's Organizing for America campaigns in 2008 and 2012. Having been active in my local party and state senate campaigns in New York, I felt called to get involved in Minnesota during the 2016 presidential campaign, where I supported Bernie Sanders in the caucuses and Hillary Clinton in the general election. Now, I feel that it's more important than ever to be involved in politics and push for progressive reforms to campaign finance, healthcare, immigration, and taxes.

During the next two years, I have several goals I'd like to pursue for the district:

First, I am spearheading the effort to engage with our precinct chairs and vice chairs, who were elected to represent their neighborhoods at this year's caucuses. This grassroots level is essential to winning elections, especially with this year's crucial races for governor and senator. Precinct chairs are key to mobilizing their neighborhoods to support candidates and get out the vote, and I want to make sure we give them the tools and training they need to do just that.

Second, I want our website to become a better-utilized resource for volunteers and constituents. I plan to work with Hal Keen and other volunteers to give it an updated look and make it easier for the party leadership to keep it updated with all the important information for our district. I'll also continue to work with the communications subcommittee to use our social-media channels to connect with DFL voters.

Finally, I am committed to developing relationships with our neighboring senate districts, city-level party units, as well as out-state party units. By fostering a more connected party, we'll be able to share resources and strengthen our base. This will help us in planning successful caucuses and conventions, as well as enable us to affect greater change at the Capitol by electing DFLers from across the state.

Anyway, I look forward to getting to know you better over the next two years, and I'm always open to hearing your concerns about the district or the party. If you'd like to volunteer on any of these projects with me, or if you'd like to get in touch, don't hesitate to reach out at [katrinajadelee@gmail.com](mailto:katrinajadelee@gmail.com). Thanks, and I look forward to working with you over the next two years!

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## CALENDAR

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**May 18 – Seventh Annual Minnesota DFL Humphrey–Mondale Dinner**  
**Special guest: U.S. Senator Cory Booker**  
St. Paul RiverCentre

**May 22 – Roseville DFL Central Committee**

**May 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m. – SD66 DFL Happy Hour**  
Spring Cafe, Como Lakeside Pavilion,  
1360 North Lexington Parkway, St. Paul 55103

**June 1-3 – Minnesota DFL State Convention**  
Rochester

**June 4, 6:30 p.m. – SD66 Central Committee**  
New Life Presbyterian Church  
965 Larpenteur Avenue West, Roseville 55113

**June 25, 6-10 p.m. – Rose Parade**  
Line up at Roseville Area High School,  
1261 West County Road B2, Roseville 55113  
See more information on the SD66 website.

**June 28 – SD66 DFL Picnic**  
Como Park South (Midway) Picnic Pavilion,  
1199 Midway Parkway, St. Paul 55103

**June 29 – Early and absentee voting opens for August primary**

**July 2, 6:30 p.m. – SD66 Central Committee**  
New Life Presbyterian Church  
965 Larpenteur Avenue West, Roseville 55113

**July 24 – Last day to pre-register for August primary**  
Registration when voting (either early or at the polls) is still allowed.

**August 6, 6:30 p.m. – SD66 Central Committee**  
New Life Presbyterian Church  
965 Larpenteur Avenue West, Roseville 55113

**August 14 – Primary Election**  
Also, **Special City Council Election in St. Paul Ward 4**  
Polling places open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.; voters in line by 8 p.m. have the right to vote. Unregistered voters may register and vote at their polling place, with required documentation

**August 23-September 3 – Minnesota State Fair**  
Opportunities for DFL volunteers

Visit our website at <http://www.dfl-sd66.org/> for calendar updates.

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The *Senate District 66 DFL Newsletter* is published four times a year to inform and educate all interested parties in the activities and issues of SD66 DFLers including elected officials and endorsed candidates. Please contact the editor if you are interested in joining the newsletter committee or submitting an article for publication.

### Newsletter committee

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