Vote on August 14!

Polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Thursday, August 14, for primary elections. If you need to find your voting location, go to <pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us>. The site includes maps and directions to your voting location, districts for your precinct, and candidates on ballots, when available.

Minnesota has a long tradition of civic engagement and high voter turnout. With many statewide and local races on the primary ballot this year, experts expect the highest primary voting numbers in years. Secretary of State Steve Simon told the Star Tribune that he was thrilled with the growth in voter participation through early absentee voting. He said, “Minnesota voters in 2018 are well on their way to maintaining our best-in-the-nation status for voter participation.”

A letter to voters

The family separations and all of the cruel treatment of refugees and immigrants is counter to the values of our nation—a country where 99 percent of us are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants.

The Republican tax bill giving huge tax cuts to the wealthiest Americans aggravates the income disparities in our country—a country where the three wealthiest people already have more money than half the entire population of the country.

These are just a sampling of the reasons that this is the most important election in our lifetime. We need to work together to elect candidates who will stand up to the hatred and injustice and work to build a better future. Please join me in helping elect candidates who share our progressive values.

Sen. John Marty

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Upcoming events

- August 6, 6:30 p.m. - SD66 Central Committee
- Ongoing Through August 13 - Early/absentee voting is open for the August 14 primary and special elections.
- August 14 - Primary Election and Special City Council Election in St. Paul Ward 4
- August 23 - September 3 - Minnesota State Fair
- September 21 - Early and absentee voting opens for November General Election
- October 16 - Last day to pre-register for November general election
- November 6 - General Election

See page 13 for full calendar.
With potential results for Minnesotans on a silver platter, GOP legislature fails to deliver
by Rep. John Lesch

When the State of Minnesota faces problems, regardless of their magnitude, Minnesotans should be able to count on their elected officials to work together to enact legitimate solutions. While Minnesota continues to perform well under several metrics and has achieved many accolades—namely, the best state for women, to start a business, to own a home, to retire, to raise a family, and so on—we face a multitude of roadblocks preventing all Minnesotans from truly succeeding.

Families all over the state continue to lose loved ones to the opioid crisis, with Big Pharma taking no responsibility. School districts, including St. Paul Public Schools, are facing massive budget shortfalls. Abuse, neglect, and assaults had been reported in Minnesota’s senior-care facilities, with little accountability available for our parents and grandparents. Justice had been elusive for victims of workplace sexual harassment, faced with inadequate, outdated laws with giant loopholes. Perhaps higher profile than any issue this year was the urgent need to reduce gun violence, highlighted by shooting events in Parkland, Florida, and Santa Fe, Texas, which bookended the session.

Prior to the session starting in February, there was optimism that these issues could bring us together to deliver meaningful solutions, and we heard from Minnesotans how critical it was that we do so. Sure, we may not all agree on every nuance of every topic, but it seemed we were poised to do some good work for our state. With groups like the AARP providing elder-abuse recommendations, a bipartisan package of treatment, prevention, and recovery strategies composing an Opioid Stewardship Program (supported by the Republican Senate President), a simple fix to Minnesota’s sexual harassment law (authored by the Republican House Majority Leader) and bipartisan calls for the most basic common-sense reforms to gun laws, the pieces for a successful legislative session were right there on a silver platter.

Instead, with an eye toward November’s election, the Republican leadership in the Legislature not only dropped said silver platter on the floor; they kicked the whole entire dining room table over. With the Opioid Stewardship Program containing a reasonable “penny a pill” fee on prescription painkillers, Big Pharma increased their high-priced lobbying presence seemingly on a daily basis to defeat the measure. Rather quickly, GOP leadership fell in line to these demands and the proposal was dropped. Similarly, when the package of elder care reforms—with updated licensing, clarity regarding seniors’ rights, and improved accountability measures—started to gain momentum, the senior-care industry was able to successfully substitute their own watered-down set of proposals. And through pressure from the NRA and affiliate organizations, any discussion of gun-violence prevention measures was halted.

Particularly disappointing for me was the lack of action to end sexual harassment. The #metoo movement finally put a bright light on awful behavior occurring in workplaces, including high-profile instances in Hollywood and state capitols. Unfortunately, a Supreme Court interpretation that such activity must be “severe or pervasive” has long provided an obstacle much too high for many victims to see justice. It became apparent this standard needed updating, and with backing of the Republican House Majority Leader, many of us thought there would be a path forward for such a simple fix. In fact, a floor amendment I offered to provide this passed the Minnesota House unanimously. Instead, pressure from corporate special interests like the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce led to Republicans ultimately scuttling the proposal.

The Maya Angelou quote: “When someone shows you who they are, believe them the first time,” comes to mind. After four years of control for House Republicans and two for those in the Senate, it’s clear any ability on their part to create opportunities for Minnesota families to get ahead is overshadowed by the corporate special interests that fund their campaigns. Minnesotans deserve better.

Despite these letdowns, we have to remain optimistic and fully resolved to make changes improving our communities. Having heard from and seen people so passionate about these issues all session—either through
email, meetings in my office, or at State Capitol rallies—I know this spirit exists to overcome special interest influence and the partisan forces which only seek to divide us.

I firmly believe we Minnesotans care about our neighbors and want everyone to succeed. The path to get there may be complex, but fundamentally, is from a shared set of values. Next session, I hope those from both parties can truly approach lawmaking from this point of view to affect change and ultimately, deliver a brighter outlook to all Minnesotans.

Public pressure can halt this meltdown of the legislative process: “Garbage bills” lack transparency, prevent accountability, and are unconstitutional
by Sen. John Marty

The 989-page legislative bill recently vetoed by Governor Dayton was a “garbage bill.” It contained thousands of budget and policy provisions covering the full range of legislative issues. It lacked transparency and prevented accountability. It also violated the Minnesota constitution.

By putting thousands of unrelated provisions in one bill, they all sink or swim together. Funding to continue operation of Crisis Connection, Minnesota’s suicide prevention hotline died with the rest of the bill, and the hotline is shutting down.

Funding to prevent a 7 percent cut in the already low reimbursement rates for supportive services for people with disabilities was also in the bill. There was strong, bipartisan support for preventing this cut, but it also died as part of the legislation.

This bill, Senate File 3656, was probably the longest single piece of legislation ever passed by the Minnesota Legislature. It contained a wide range of provisions that provided funding and set policies on subjects including:

- prohibiting grants from the arts and cultural heritage fund to be used to promote domestic terrorism (not that anyone was planning to use grants to do so)
- allowing sugar beet transporters to leak beet juice liquids on the road
- directing the Amateur Sports Commission to submit a bid to host the Nordic World Cup Ski Championship
- regulating low-dose X-ray security scanners
- exempting hair braiders from cosmetology registration requirements
- increasing medical assistance reimbursement rates for doula services
- allowing schools to display “In God We Trust”

This method of lawmaking lacks accountability—by putting all of the provisions in one bill, legislators can only vote for or against all of them. It lacks transparency—many provisions receive no public attention and become law just by being tied to other unrelated provisions.

SF 3656 also violates Article 4, Section 17 of the Minnesota constitution, which requires that legislation deal with no more than a single subject. This one bill likely contains as much as two-thirds of all of the subjects passed by the legislature this year! It does not have a “single subject.”

It sounds ripe for a legal challenge. However, in April, the Minnesota Supreme Court indicated that it is unwilling to rule that legislation violates the single subject requirement, unless challenges meet an "extraordinary burden of persuasion… to overcome the general presumption of constitutional validity." As a result, the chance of success in court appears slim at this time.

In the ruling, the court said that it has repeatedly warned the legislature not to violate the single subject requirement, and stated that, “We trust that the Legislature has heard, and will heed, these warnings.” Unfortunately, the legislature has refused to police itself, effectively thumbing its nose at the court’s warnings. In
2017, one Republican legislator dismissed the single subject requirement, saying, “It’s a rule that they have never enforced before, so I don’t know why they are still pointing to that.”

This is not a mere “rule.” It is a constitutional requirement. Back in 1986, the distinguished Supreme Court Justice Lawrence Yetka wrote “…to add matters totally unrelated to either taxes or appropriations seems to me a clear violation of the constitution which this court should not tolerate…The worm that was merely vexatious in the 19th century has become a monster eating the constitution in the 20th.”

And the problem has been getting worse since then. Here is a graph showing the number of bills passed each year:

The sharp decline in the number of laws enacted in recent years is not a sign that the legislature is simply doing less legislating. The total number of pages of new laws has remained relatively stable in recent years, but the average number of pages per law has gone up almost four-fold since the 1970s. In effect, the legislature is cramming more laws and more provisions into fewer bills.

If the courts don’t intervene now, when will they? Yetka’s worm became a monster, which has now grown into Godzilla.

Is this an accountable way to pass laws? No. I voted against Senate File 3656 because there were many provisions that were unacceptable, and the entire process was flawed. But there were also many good provisions in the bill that I supported, such as the ones mentioned above, as well as a provision I authored.

This is not a thoughtful way to pass laws. At well over 350,000 words, it would take the average reader about 30 hours to read through SF 3656. Yet the legislation was available to us just three hours before the Senate began debating it. We were aware of many parts of the bill, but neither the public nor legislators could have known everything the bill contained.

Why don’t legislators object? Some of us have. I have repeatedly raised objections to violations of the single subject requirement. I have offered amendments to remove policy provisions from budget bills. I have voted against legislation I wanted to support because of unacceptable policy additions. Finally, I and a number of other Senators raised a “protest and dissent”—a seldom-used protest that is given to legislators under article 4 of the Constitution. I have been consistent in fighting for government reform against improper actions of both Republicans and DFLers. I have exhausted all the internal remedies available.
However, beyond voicing one’s objections and pressing for change, there is a limit to how far one can push for reform on this issue internally.

This combining of multiple subjects in one bill is not new and it is not partisan. Although it has long been a problem, the process during the last couple sessions has been the worst ever.

Legislative leaders have more control over what passes when they use huge omnibus bills. Provisions that leadership opposes can be quietly removed in conference committee, even if they passed by overwhelming margins. When nobody enforces the constitution, nothing stops legislative leaders from gaining more power at the expense of a fair process.

Because the legislature has been unable to police itself and the courts are unwilling to intervene, the process will continue to deteriorate. If the meltdown of the process continues, perhaps we will reach the point where we have a single bill each year, containing everything, and legislators will have the opportunity to vote for or against the “2025 Omnibus Budget and Policy Bill.”

However, there is hope. The public is disgusted by this unaccountable process. They object to legislating through “garbage bills.”

This is campaign season. I am encouraging DFL candidates to make an issue of this dysfunctional political process. By standing up to the unconstitutional behavior, they will win support from voters. It is time for our party to take a stand on this
Activities of the Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board
by Commissioner Mary Jo McGuire

In my role as a Ramsey County Commissioner, I serve on a number of boards and committees where the county works alongside other local government partners to collaborate on issues important to our communities. One of the boards I am appointed to is the Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Board. This board oversees all solid waste management for the two counties—including recycling!

The main goals of the solid waste plan are:

1. Reducing risk to environmental and public health.
2. Accountability: all people are responsible for the waste they produce.
3. Government as a leader in properly handling waste.
4. Waste as a resource that is recovered to produce energy.
5. Waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting which are preferred over landfills.
6. Product stewardship to minimize the health, safety, and environmental impacts of a product and its packaging.
7. Partnering with businesses to reduce waste.

Each of us can do our part to help the Ramsey County Board meet our goals! Here are some simple tips that you can use:

1. Recycle your organics! Pick up a free organics recycling starter kit or free compostable bags from any Ramsey County yard waste collection site. We are also working to get collection sites in communities around the district.
2. Wash bottles and cans! Rinsing bottles and cans before putting them in your recycling bin helps make the materials more recyclable.
3. Reuse! Reuse! Reuse! Keep reusable shopping bags in your car for when you go grocery shopping or ask for paper bags for your purchases. You’ll often get a discount for bringing your own bags!
4. Having a party—call Ramsey County! If you are having a large gathering, the county has a number of free recycling and organics containers to reduce waste that can be loaned out. Just call 651-266-1199 to reserve one!

Another important thing people can do this year is be involved with our upcoming elections!

Early voting is already underway for the August 14 primaries!

From now until August 13, Ramsey County residents can cast absentee ballots at the Ramsey County Elections Office, from 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

Note: There will be extended hours on Saturday, August 11, and Monday, August 13.

Residents of the following cities can also vote in their city hall now until August 6: Lauderdale, Little Canada, Maplewood, New Brighton, Shoreview, Saint Anthony

Note: There will not be voting before election day at the city halls in Roseville or Falcon Heights.

For all elections related information, please visit https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/elections-voting/voters
Changes in Ramsey County
by Commissioner Janice Rettman

It is my hope that you are having a wonderful summer—with all the events and outings and celebrations—we are all blessed to have opportunities to enjoy each other, new experiences, renew and reinvigorate ourselves by the energy and variety of choices to engage in and learn from. I am indeed enjoying seeing so many of you!

The Ramsey County Conservation District (also known as the Soil and Water Conservation District) elected officials have long been leaders and partners in protecting the water—both above and below ground level. Their leadership and staff have worked with watershed districts, lead the charge in designing and finding funding for well capping, mapping, and providing technical assistance to both resident and businesses alike. Over the past year the elected board made a hard decision to ask both Ramsey County and the Minnesota Legislature to pass some legislation that would allow Ramsey County to assume the day-to-day operations of the work of the staff and have the staff become employees of Ramsey County. Their decision to ask that was I believe an act of stewardship and of what will be best for achieving the legislative mandates. The elected officials on the Conservation District Board showed their commitment to the highest calling of public service and stewardship and will still continue to do their sworn duties! Thank you all for your service!

And finally, have you been yet to the brand new beautiful Bell Museum? Oh you must!!! Nestled by the University of Minnesota St Paul campus, the Gibbs Farm historical site, a stone’s throw from the Minnesota State Fair and Falcon Heights Community Park, the Bell Museum is an absolute gem. Most of you know that the tireless champion of the Bell leaving Minneapolis campus for Falcon Heights was Rep. Alice Hausman. I remember attending some of the early meetings and the “wishing on a star hope” was not an easy one to secure. But the vision was strong, the resolve stalwart, and the end result is magnificent. Go enjoy!! And then send Alice your reviews! Seriously, it is great for our area.

Again, it is my pleasure every day to represent you as your County Commissioner. I love working for you.

Thanks for your support!
by Gwen Willems

As of July 1, the independent Ramsey Conservation District became the Ramsey Conservation Division (still RCD) of the Parks and Rec Department, officially changing its status to become a part of the Ramsey County structure. You can contact the RCD for the same ongoing services, such as rain garden design and well sealing.

The change came as a result of we three Supervisors, frustrated with obstructive behavior that kept the policy board from moving forward. Board work could not be completed when agendas were not approved and attendees no longer felt physically safe at board meetings. We three sought options for a year, hoping for resolution that would retain the staff members, conservation projects, and funding, and finally asked the Ramsey County Commissioners to approve this transition. They did, and the legislature made it a reality.

Thanks to the Ramsey County Commissioners and Minnesota Legislators. Thanks to Administrator Ann WhiteEagle and all of the staff members for their excellent work. Thank you, DFLers, for your endorsement, votes, support, and interest over the years. Serving as a Ramsey Conservation District Supervisor was an immensely enjoyable opportunity and honor to serve residents of the county. I will remain active in environmental issues, which continue to be one of my passions in life.
Capitol Region Watershed District breaks ground
by Gwen Willems, Co-Chair, CRWD Citizen Advisory Committee

Of the forty-five watershed districts in Minnesota, the Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) is the one that covers most territory in Senate District 66. CRWD’s 40 square miles include portions of Falcon Heights, Lauderdale, Maplewood, Roseville, and St. Paul. The district was established in 1998 by a small group of residents whose concern for the quality of water in Como Lake led them to petition the Board of Soil and Water Resources (BWSR). CRWD is a special-purpose local unit of government created to manage, protect, and improve part of the Mississippi River basin, along with the district’s wetlands, creeks, and lakes that drain to the river. Today the watershed district is governed by a five-member board of managers and funded by levies, grants, and fees for services.

It has expanded greatly since 1998 to include projects ranging from residential rain gardens, to tree trenches along the light rail path, to rehabilitating Trout Brook Nature Center, to installing underground rainwater systems at Roseville’s B Dale Club and Falcon Heights’ Curtiss Field.

Since CRWD’s inception, staff members have increased from one to fifteen, with the assistance of two to three seasonal interns, and the organization has outgrown its old facilities in a small-business corridor along Energy Park Drive. In late May, ground was broken on CRWD’s new location, which will transform the shell of an old building into a flexible workplace with varied meeting spaces for maximum workplace choice, utilize green building principles, feature gathering spaces for community organizations, and offer educational opportunities. The organization plans to move into the new building in November 2018.

The groundbreaking marked the official start of the construction phase of the CRWD’s new headquarters in the former MacQueen Equipment building at 595 Aldine Street. The site is in the Midway neighborhood, about six blocks north of University Avenue and two blocks west of Snelling Avenue.

Groundbreaking participants included local dignitaries (Commissioners Janice Rettman and Toni Carter and St. Paul Chief Resilience Officer Russ Stark, among others); community partners; members of CRWD board, staff, and Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC); and representatives of the design and construction firms.

Among groundbreakers at Capitol Region Watershed District’s new facility were (left to right) Richard Weil, CAC Member; Gwen Willems, CAC Co-Chair; Lucia Hunt, Master Water Steward; and Mark Doneux, CRWD Administrator. Photo by Steve Silverman
CRWD is using this opportunity to totally renovate the building into a green facility that meets the gold standards of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). It will incorporate best stormwater management practices and energy efficiency measures to conserve natural resources and use natural lighting from energy-efficient windows. In addition, the facility will feature gathering spaces for community and partner organizations to use, a watershed learning center, on-site educational opportunities to define the CRWD and showcase its work in innovative stormwater management techniques, and a small “pocket park” combining built and natural environments with native species of plants and wildlife and interactive elements for neighbors and visitors to enjoy.

As CRWD administrator Mark Doneux said, “Our new space will create a sustainable, healthy workplace for our staff while conserving natural resources and protecting water resources.”

An illustration of how the renovated building will look from the northeast. 
Courtesy of CRWD.
Chair’s report  
by SD66 DFL Chair Ryan Lee  

Thanks once again to our volunteers who marched with us in the Rosefest Parade, and for everyone who attended the annual potluck picnic! Wayne Groff and Trista MatasCastillo had a great showing of support during the parade, and we were glad to hear from candidates and representatives we hadn’t heard from before, including Matt Pelikan for Attorney General. We couldn’t have put on either of those events without your help! You can find a list of our local DFL-endorsed candidates at our web page.

On Friday, June 29, in-person early voting opened for the primary, and requests for no-excuse absentee ballots opened up for both the primary and general elections! I highly encourage you to vote early by mail or in person, since it not only ensures that you won’t be too busy or face a last-minute emergency that keeps you from voting on election day, but it also frees you up to volunteer for candidates on those days! You can print and mail a request for a ballot at the Minnesota Secretary of State website, or you can submit your request electronically by using this form. You can also print extra copies of the paper request to bring with you when visiting your DFL neighbors or doorknocking for candidates—in additional languages, to boot!

Here are some important dates to keep on your calendar related to this year’s elections:

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

- **September 21: No-excuse absentee voting begins for the General Election**

- **October 16: Last day to pre-register for November General Election.** Registration when voting, either early or at the polls, is still allowed.

- **November 6: General Election.** Unregistered voters can register and vote at their polling place, with required documentation.
  - **When:** Polling places open 7 a.m. - 8 p.m. Voters in line by 8 p.m. have the right to vote.

Vice Chair Katrina Lee is heading up our doorknocking and phonebanking efforts, and she’s been coordinating with the various local campaigns as well as the DFL Coordinated Campaign to mobilize our precinct chairs and vice chairs to get out the vote this fall. If you’d like to volunteer and be notified of shifts, please reach out to her at katrinajadelee@gmail.com.

At the same time, I’ve been reaching out to and building connections with other local groups in the area with progressive values. Stay tuned for more information about issue forums and panels hosted by those groups, as well as arenas in which we can partner with them to promote local candidates and causes. We are also working to build bridges with underserved and underrepresented communities in our district, and are especially looking for members from these communities to partner with us to build trust and effective outreach practices in these troubling times. We were excited to see several of these groups at our organizing convention in March and hope to work together with them more going forward.
It might be vacation season, but everyone in the SD66 DFL is still working full tilt! Here is a quick snapshot of the two projects I am spearheading for 2018: 1) the SD66 DFL website, and 2) organizing and mobilizing our precinct chairs and vice chairs.

1. SD66 website progress

The communications subcommittee met at the Rosedale Panera on 6/16 to discuss our preliminary plans for the new SD66 DFL website. Our goals are to make the site something that isn’t run by just one person, and also a central hub of resources for SD66 constituents, central and executive committee members, caucus and convention-goers, and more. At our July meeting, I submitted to the central committee a proposal detailing three options for updating our website:

Option A: $15/year—recommended

- Katrina hosts and administers the SD66 DFL website on her web-hosting package purchased from GreenGeeks. She would make an in-kind donation to SD66 for $3.50 a month.

- SD66 DFL would need to register and pay for their domain, costing $10 to $15 a year.
  
  - SD66 DFL could choose whether to stay with their current domain registrar (company they bought the domain from) or switch to another, such as Google or GoDaddy).

- Total cost/year: $15

Option B: $48/year

- SD66 DFL purchases its own web hosting, such as through WordPress.com’s Hosted plans or Dreamhost, starting at $4 or $8 a month. Katrina would help administer.

- This option would include a domain at no additional charge.

- Total cost/year: $48 for the low plan, $96 for the high plan

Option C: Free

- SD66 DFL goes through a free host, such as WordPress.com, Weebly, or Squarespace.

- SD66 DFL would not be able to use a custom domain.

- Ads would be present on the website

If one option doesn’t work out, but the site uses WordPress as its base, you can move between the different options using the export/import functions.

The central committee is slated to vote on this issue as part of their business for the August meeting. If you have any input or questions, feel free to reach out to me at katrinajadelee@gmail.com

Once the proposal has been voted on, I’ll work on a preliminary draft of the website to push out to the public by September. If you’re interested in joining the communications subcommittee for SD66 and contributing to the website, please feel welcome to email me at the above address! I’m happy to train people on how to use Wordress, which is a great skill to be able to put on your resume.

2. Precinct chair mobilization progress

Work has also begun in earnest to coordinate among our precinct chairs and vice chairs and give them the information and training they need to build teams within their precincts to get out the vote during this election season. On Saturday July 7, I met with the precinct chairs and members of the coordinated campaign to go over the
new precinct chair web hub, which includes important election dates, a list of all the precinct chairs and vice chairs, resources including a list of SD66 convention delegates, a form to request information from the VAN, and a link to the discussion forum for the mailing list. We had two training sessions scheduled for July, and immediately went out to practice doorknocking following both sessions. We feel like we’re finally starting to get organized, but we still have a long way to go to elect our DFL-endorsed candidates!

The precinct chairs will be working alongside the campaigns for Trista MatasCastillo for Ramsey County District 3 Commissioner, Mitra Jalali Nelson for St. Paul Ward 4 City Council, and Wayne Groff for Roseville City Council.

I want to extend a huge thank-you to everyone who has already put in time on both of these projects! We’re only able to improve the DFL and develop better communication thanks to your efforts.
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

Editor: Gwen Willens (651) 646-8854
Designer: Edwin Beylerian
Committee Members: Judy Berglund, Katrina Lee, Ryan Lee, Charlie Quick, Gwen Willens