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For Immediate Release

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HOUSE BRIEFS 2011 Session Preview

Dear Neighbors,

The 2011 legislative session begins tomorrow, and I wanted to send along a preview of the work ahead.

1. Job #1: Job Growth
2. The Budget
3. Health Care

1. Job Growth

As the 2011 session gets underway, job number-one for our new majority is job growth in the private sector. With the economy in a slow but fragile recovery, it is incumbent on the legislature to help improve Minnesota's business climate with fundamental changes and meaningful reform. As so many of you have said, government needs to get off the back and out of the pockets of Minnesota families and businesses. By reducing the tax burden on job creators, reforming the regulatory process and removing barriers to job creation, we can increase our state's economic competitiveness and promote job growth in the private sector. With an open door to opportunity, the hardworking people of our area and all of Minnesota will put us back on track for recovery and growth.

2. The Budget

As we reinvigorate Minnesota's economy, the Legislature must also reduce the cost, size and scope of state government. Facing a \$6.2 billion budget deficit, it is paramount to reform government and create solutions for long-term fiscal stability. Like you, I understand the importance of setting a budget, setting priorities and living within our means. By focusing on needs instead of wants and pursuing innovation, we can reduce costs, improve efficiency and still deliver the critical services our citizens rely on.

Republican colleagues and I have developed several reforms including zero-based budgeting, reducing the size and cost of the state government workforce and reviewing and retiring unnecessary spending. Additionally, after working with local entities as part of a mandate relief group, I will be supporting efforts to ease the burden of mandates and maintenance of effort for local units of government. Reform does not just mean passing cuts to cities, school boards, and counties to pick up the tab. We're looking for innovation, efficiency and savings at all levels of government to realign this state to economic reality and deliver the sustainable balanced budget our citizens deserve.

3. Health Care

Health care remains an important issue in 2011 with rising costs driving state budget deficits and straining family finances. As an advocate for market-based, sustainable health care solutions I am dismayed by Governor Dayton's intention to enroll the state in Medicare expansion under the federal health care law.

While touted as a positive step forward, in reality the early MA expansion goes backward by undoing our nation-leading, cost-saving bipartisan GAMC reform of last session. Further, the move relies on over \$4 billion from a deficit-ridden federal government at a time when people are alarmed, and downright angry, over government debt and spending. Finally, the MA expansion has far fewer eligibility standards than our new program and allows the very fraud and misuse our reforms sought to address.

Unfortunately, it is the Governor's prerogative to enroll Minnesota in the early MA portion of the federal health care law. Nevertheless, I will continue to stand up for real health care reform that leaves the choices, the dollars and the value with the people of Minnesota.

As the 2011 session begins, I encourage your continued feedback and involvement. Together, we can bring fiscal responsibility to Minnesota government and job growth back to our communities.

Sincerely,

Peggy