

## “For a Better Minnesota” - Remarks to the Winona County DFL

As you can see tonight, we have many great candidates for Governor – with an emphasis on many and on great! While we may not agree on who our candidate should be, I believe we can all agree it’s imperative that we elect a DFLer as the next Governor of Minnesota.

Next year’s election will be as pivotal for our state, as last year’s election was for our country. The fundamental question will be: Do Minnesotans want our state to continue in the wrong direction? The one led for the past 18 years by two Republican Governors and one wrestler turned Libertarian.

Who have led us to underfunded and overcrowded public schools, colleges, and universities; deteriorating bridges and highways; declining public services; and more regressive state and local taxes.

Who have created a state that is increasingly not working – with people who are increasingly not working.

I don’t believe that is the future Minnesotans want. It is certainly not the future that Minnesota deserves. And, with new,

progressive DFL leadership in the Governor's office, it is not the future Minnesota will have.

We must, however, stand up for our progressive principles. We cannot let conservative Republicans control the public debate – as they have been doing for too long.

When I was Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Energy and Economic Development for the last DFL Governor, Rudy Perpich, his priority was jobs. Now we have a Republican Governor, whose priority is his job. Who has sacrificed Minnesota's schoolchildren, college students, teachers, professors, and many others on the altar of his presidential ambitions. And we can't let him get away with it.

When Rudy Perpich left office in January 1991, Minnesota's unemployment rate was 25% below the national average. Minnesotans worked. Minnesota worked. The DFL formula of progressive taxes -- invested in education, infrastructure, health care, environmental protection, and other essential services – worked. And our state led the nation.

Today, Minnesota's unemployment rate of 7.6% is as terrible as the rest of the country's. Over 200,000 Minnesotans are out of

work, and thousands more are underemployed. The Republicans' policy prescription for Minnesota: regressive taxes and worse services, has failed.

And under the falsehood of “No New Taxes” (because property taxes and fees have increased for most Minnesotans), Republicans have put the state in a fiscal stranglehold – gasping from one biennial deficit to the next. Slashing funding for education and other services – and then slashing them again and again.

These are conservative ideologues, who don't like government, who falsely claim that government does everything badly. Who then, when elected, go out to prove themselves correct. They either defund or destruct programs. Then they say, “See, we're right. Government does it badly. Re-elect us, and we'll make it even worse.”

Well, I say enough! Enough bad leadership. Enough accountability sermons from people who won't hold themselves accountable for their failures.

It's time for a better Minnesota. And that's my campaign's theme: A Better Minnesota.

Briefly, A Better Minnesota has a progressive tax system that raises enough revenues to refund our public schools, colleges, and universities – so they can provide the excellent educations, which Minnesota’s children deserve, and upon which Minnesota’s future depends.

A Better Minnesota finds a way – and where there’s a will, there’s a way – to provide affordable health care to every Minnesotan, by taking the money people pay for their health care away from the profiteers and giving it to the providers.

A Better Minnesota takes the federal infrastructure funds – not with partisan sniping, but with professional commitment – to put those dollars to work in Minnesota and to put Minnesotans to work in Minnesota.

A Better Minnesota takes the “Yes, Minnesota!” funding – an historic moment in which an overwhelming majority of Minnesotans voted to raise their own taxes for better environmental protection, natural resource enhancement, and community arts programs – and uses it to better Minnesota.

This is our state. Working together, we can make it better. That’s my promise. And I ask for your support. Thank you.