



State Representative

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At the Capitol with Rep. Steve Drazkowski

EXPECT PLENTY OF FIREWORKS DURING 2008 SESSION

By Steve Drazkowski

State Representative, District 28B

Typically, the second year of the legislative biennium is known as the “bonding year”, where lawmakers approve a bill that funds government construction projects around the state, and approve some policy issues. But our DFL leadership has made many promises in the last 14 months, so I anticipate there will be a long list of issues we will try to solve in a short amount of time.

Transportation obviously has to be addressed. Last year, DFL leadership tried an all or nothing funding approach with multiple tax increase proposals, and we ended up with nothing. With a little bit of compromise on both sides, it shouldn't be too difficult to find some common ground. Both parties want to get something done in this area as it's quite obvious that MnDOT needs the money. If each side can give a little, I have no doubt that we could craft a proposal that a majority of lawmakers from both sides of the aisle could support.

I also expect debate that would increase funding for nursing homes and our long-term care facilities, as well as additional funding for education. Keep in mind that this is going to be difficult as we set the budget last year, and we are facing at least a \$373 million deficit this year.

But when this debate comes up, I and other rural lawmakers will once again be looking to address all the rate disparities between the inner cities and rural Minnesota. There's no reason nursing homes in St. Charles and Pine Island should be reimbursed at rates lower than those in Minneapolis - they're both doing the same job. The same goes for our students - a student in St. Paul should not be worth more than a student in Wabasha or Zumbrota.

We've also been told that this is going to be the 'Session of Health Care' by our leaders, but I'm told that same promise was made last year. So far, we haven't seen a health care agenda, so who knows what's in store. When I find out, I'll be sure to let you know.

In the meantime, feel free to contact me with any legislative input or questions you may have as the 2008 session moves forward.

Please let me know what you think. You can write me at 247 State Office Building, 100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, St. Paul, MN 55155. You can call me toll free, at 1-888-683-3436 or e-mail me at: rep.steve.drazkowski@house.mn. To sign up for my email updates, please visit www.house.mn/28B and click on “Email Updates.”