

# CAPITOL UPDATE



## State Representative Joe Atkins

MAY 2005

### ATKINS AMENDMENT MAKES METH BILL TOUGHEST IN NATION

With the addition of language offered by State Representative Joe Atkins, the Minnesota House of Representatives recently adopted the country's toughest methamphetamine bill. The bill restricts access to pseudoephedrine, the principal ingredient necessary to make methamphetamine.

"Methamphetamine is a growing problem in rural, urban, and suburban communities throughout the country," said Atkins. "With this bill, Minnesota is joining many other states that are adopting laws to deal with this devastating drug."

Methamphetamine is easy to make, highly addictive and extremely dangerous. The main ingredient in the drug comes from widely available cold medicines containing pseudoephedrine, such as Sudafed. The Minnesota House bill requires products containing pseudoephedrine in tablet form to be placed behind a pharmacy counter. This has been found to greatly reduce the use of meth in other states.

The Atkins Amendment on the House floor proposed to apply the bill to gel caps and liquids, if it is found that meth makers turn to those forms of pseudoephedrine when tablets become unavailable on store shelves. The amendment passed on a nearly unanimous vote and became part of the bill.

Until Atkins looked into the issue himself, it was widely believed by Minnesota lawmakers that meth could not be made from gel caps and liquid containing pseudoephedrine. Atkins became aware of the issue when he examined what other states had done. Arkansas crime lab officials told Atkins that making meth from gel caps requires only a few extra steps and takes as little as an hour.

"Within a week after the Arkansas meth law was enacted, it was reported that meth could be made from gel caps and liquids," said Atkins. "Without accounting for gel caps and liquids, our new meth law was in danger of being obsolete before it even went into effect."



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# May 2005 Legislative Survey

1.) Should the state allow Hennepin County to raise sales taxes to pay for a Twins stadium?

Yes  No

2.) Should physical education be required in schools?

Yes  No

3.) Should people hurt by doctor negligence have limits placed on the amount of compensation they can receive in court?

Yes  No

4.) Do you support a system that allows school administrators to pay teachers more based on performance?

Yes  No

**You can either mail to Representative Atkins' office or e-mail to [rep.joe.atkins@house.mn](mailto:rep.joe.atkins@house.mn) your responses. Thank you!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

 Please cut and send to Rep. Atkins, 217 State Office Building, St. Paul, MN 55155

## ATKINS'S STEROIDS LEGISLATION GAINING NATIONAL ATTENTION

The measure by Representative Joe Atkins to toughen penalties for steroid pushers has gained national attention. As the issue gains prominence around the country, various news outlets have turned to the bill as a leading example of action on the state level to control steroid use.

As of today, it has been covered by Sports Illustrated, NBC Sports, the Associated Press, the Miami Herald, MSNBC, WWSB in Tallahassee, KTLA Channel One in Los

Angeles, and the Dallas Morning News. This has allowed Rep. Atkins to address a national audience on this issue.

"Every community in the United States is concerned about the spread of these drugs," Rep. Atkins said. "I'm glad that Minnesota is moving to control steroids, and I'm glad to be able to help out the rest of the country as well."

Rep. Atkins's bill recently passed the House of Representatives and the Senate.

## EDUCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY, AND TRANSPORTATION BILLS PROGRESSING

As the end of the legislative session approaches, the House of Representatives is working its way through large bills covering many of the most important topics before the state. Three that have made significant progress recently are the omnibus bills for education, public safety, and transportation.

The education bill was approved by the House on Wednesday, May 3rd, and the Senate approved its bill the next day. Both bills contain important funding increases for schools throughout the state. The House bill increases school funding by 3% per year, and the Senate makes yearly increases of 5%. Both bills also include other critical measures, such as additional money for advanced placement and

special education.

The public safety bill has also been passed by both chambers with wide, bipartisan majorities. This legislation increases penalties for sex offenders, steroids, and methamphetamine. It includes Rep. Atkins's bill to bring Minnesota law into line with Federal law in order to increase penalties for steroid pushers and improve enforcement.

The House transportation bill also recently passed with a strong bipartisan majority. It will invest million on new dollars into improving the transportation and transit infrastructure of the state. This will improve road conditions and reduce congestion throughout the Metro area.

### TO REACH REP. JOE ATKINS

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