



Capitol Contact by State Representative Steve Simon

Final Edition, July 15, 2014

A Heartfelt Thanks

Dear Friends,

This is the last edition of my *Capitol Contact* newsletter. I'll be leaving the legislature when my term expires at the end of this year. Although I hope to continue in public service in another role, my legislative service is ending.

First, I want to thank the people of St. Louis Park and Hopkins for electing me in 2004, and for returning me to office four more times. These past ten years have been an extraordinary honor; especially gratifying because I grew up in the two communities that I've been privileged to represent. I tried never to forget where I came from, and I tried never to take for granted the support and patience of the residents I served. I tried to be as open, accessible, and responsive as possible—because all 40,000 of my “bosses” deserve the respect of having a legislator who really listens.

I'm particularly proud of several accomplishments.

As for laws that I've written, I'm most proud of the Child Victims Act (which has allowed victims of childhood sex abuse to seek justice against their abusers, and against the enablers of abuse, even as adults), the False Claims Act (a major anti-fraud law that provides incentives for whistleblowers to report fraud against the taxpayers), and the law instituting “no excuses” absentee voting (so that all of us can now vote from home without having to give a reason or excuse). I hope the reach of those successes will extend beyond my lifetime.

As for collective legislative efforts, I'm proud of playing a role in establishing marriage equality in Minnesota (a triumph of truly historic importance), helping to make our schools even better, expanding transportation options, providing more health care coverage to more people, making our tax system more fair, advancing the cause of voter rights, and safeguarding consumer protection.

I'm also proud of the help I was able to provide to individual constituents; sometimes on urgent matters (like lapsed health care coverage and emergency financial distress) and sometimes on matters of convenience (like securing a license or otherwise dealing with a government agency).

More broadly, I'm proud of having mostly been a bridge-builder. I co-chaired the House orientation for first-term members; a happy and rewarding bipartisan project. I also tried to treat all legislators with respect, even if (and sometimes especially if) I disagreed with them.

Minnesota is an extraordinary place. Our superiority complex is well-earned. Minnesota is also an increasingly diverse place, and the legislature is a reflection (albeit incomplete) of that diversity. The Capitol is full of talented legislators and staff who want to make a positive difference in the life of the state. For ten years, I enjoyed the amazing honor of being part of their world. I'm truly grateful.

Steve

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