



Capitol Contact by State Representative Steve Simon

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SPECIAL SESSION: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ACTION

I'll be ditching the "talking points" that the political types have provided for me. Here are my genuine thoughts about the problems with having a special session:

- ◆ A special session reminds me of the student with a paper due on a Monday, who chooses not to work on the paper over the weekend because the student believes that the teacher will grant an extension. Even if the teacher will probably grant the extension, shouldn't the student at least aim to complete the paper by Monday? I get the sense that some legislators (of both political parties) didn't aim to make the deadlines.
- ◆ A special session can lead to counter-productive finger-pointing. We need to get the job done, not play the blame game.
- ◆ In a special session, the number of decision-makers is typically limited. Basically, the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the Senate Majority Leader make the major decisions, especially about the budget numbers. That means less public access.

As a first-term legislator, here's how I believe that we can do better

- ◆ I have joined with other first-termers to author legislation that would cut off extra pay for legislators if work is not done by the "regular session" deadline.
- ◆ I believe that we need tighter legislative deadlines. If that means a few more late nights and early mornings, then so be it.
- ◆ I believe that both political parties need to compromise. I'm encouraged by the recent moves toward the middle by the governor and legislative leaders of both parties.

Here are my hopes for the upcoming special session:

- ◆ We will finally agree on an adequate school funding package.
- ◆ We will finally agree on the need to revitalize our transportation system.
- ◆ We will finally agree on preserving health insurance for working people.
- ◆ We will finally agree on fair revenue increases, while avoiding gimmicks.
- ◆ We will all reach agreement without compromising our values.
- ◆ We will work as hard and as long as it takes to get the job done.

As always, please feel free to contact me about any issue, idea, or concern.

To contact Representative Steve Simon

313 State Office Building, 100
Martin Luther King Blvd.

St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-9889

Home: (952) 920-1611
rep.steve.simon@house.mn
www.house.mn/44A

**Steve
SIMON**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE