

State Representative District 55A

# LEON LILLIE

## CAPITOL UPDATE



You Can Reach  
State Representative  
**LEON LILLIE**

353 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr Martin Luther  
King Jr Blvd  
St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 296-1188  
rep.leon.lillie@house.mn  
www.house.mn/55A

Dear Neighbors,

One month into the 2006 Session, time at the Capitol has been flying by with days packed full of committee hearings, constituent visits and floor sessions.

I recently took a tour of a health clinic in Maplewood that provides health services to the uninsured. The volunteers and doctors at the clinic work hard to serve their patients. The needs are great - the number of uninsured in Minnesota continues to rise. The visit made me think a lot about what we can do here at the Capitol to help more people get access to health care. I've shared some of my thoughts below.

Please continue to contact me with your concerns on health care or any other legislative issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leon".



**Local high school students visited Rep. Lillie at the Capitol March 21st to discuss tightening restrictions on drunk driving and seatbelt violations**



## Local Health Clinic Fills a Need for Maplewood Residents

Recently, I had the opportunity to tour St. Mary's Health Clinic in Maplewood. The tour opened my eyes to how one group is helping solve one of the biggest challenges our community faces. That challenge is providing health care to the uninsured.

St. Mary's Health Clinics were first opened in 1992 by the Sisters of St. Joseph to provide free health care to low income, uninsured people. Today there are 9 clinic sites operating around the Twin Cities in spaces donated by host facilities, including one in Maplewood. Last year the clinic physicians and nurses provided over 5,000 patient visits, with the help of a committed group of volunteer administrators and interpreters.

St. Mary's Clinics serve the low-income uninsured. Most of St. Mary's patients work. The problem is, their part-time or full time jobs either don't provide health insurance, or offer coverage that's not affordable. Many of the people St. Mary's serves are caught in a coverage gap. Their incomes are too high to qualify them for public health insurance programs like Medicaid or MinnesotaCare, but they don't make enough to buy their own insurance. By providing access to basic health care and medications, St. Mary's is the only place where many of the uninsured from our area can get help with everything from a sore throat to managing their diabetes treatment.

But even with the tremendous work these clinics do, the problem is way too big for one organization. According to the U.S. Census, 458,000 people in Minnesota alone lack health insurance. Last year, I helped fight off a plan that would have added 40,000 more working Minnesotans to that number by cutting them off the MinnesotaCare program.

On Wednesday, March 1st, the 2006 Legislative session began. Legislation will once again be offered that would permit small employers and families to purchase affordable health coverage through MinnesotaCare or the state employee health plan, at no cost to the state. This would be a valuable benefit to thousands of Minnesotans who have few other options, and could very possibly reduce the cost for all subscribers by adding more people to the pool.

Helping the uninsured get access to health care may be one of the biggest moral issues of our time. People who don't have health insurance have more illnesses and die younger than those who do, even when all else is equal. I applaud the terrific work the Sisters of St. Joseph, physicians and volunteers do at St. Mary's Clinics. I think that all Minnesotans deserve access to affordable health care, and I will keep working in the Legislature to support bills that increase that access.

### Representative Leon Lillie

353 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(651) 296-1188  
rep.leon.lillie@house.mn