

## State Representative District 55A

# LEON LILLIE

## SESSION UPDATE

April 18, 2005



### YOU CAN REACH STATE REPRESENTATIVE LEON LILLIE

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*Dear Neighbors,*

*The House of Representatives is currently working together with the Senate and the Governor to set the state budget for the next two years. In this process, we will all be confronted with hard choices and competing priorities. However, there is one crucial area that we should all be able to agree needs an increase: Education.*

*School District 622, covering Oakdale, North Saint Paul, and Maplewood, will be making cuts this year of \$4.6 million. Dozens of people will lose their jobs, including 35 teachers and other instructional staff. Special education will be cut. Sports and after-school activities will be reduced. Most other school districts in the state are facing similar troubles.*

*This is not acceptable. An excellent education system is the best way that we can ensure that our children have access to all of the opportunities that our society can provide. It is also the bedrock of a successful state economy: there is no resource more valuable to growing companies than a highly educated workforce.*

*We need more money in the budget for education. While I am glad that the House leadership and the Governor claim to agree that our schools need more funding, actions speak louder than words, and their actions are lacking. The increases the*

*Governor has proposed barely even cover the cost of inflation, and do almost nothing to restore the cuts he has made in previous years. To supplement this inadequate funding, he has proposed the largest local property tax increases in history, but this is also an unacceptable solution. The state needs to take responsibility for our children's future, not shift the burden to local governments, and we all know that property taxes have gone up too much already.*

*I have been working hard with members of both parties to respond to concerns about our schools. I joined an effort led by Dan Dorman, a Republican Representative, to build a bipartisan solution by increasing funding for education in the budget. Unfortunately, he was one of only two members of his party to vote for the effort, and the measure was defeated.*

*As the budget process moves forward, I will continue to look for opportunities to work with my DFL and Republican colleagues to generate new ways to solve our problems in education, health care, job creation, and transportation. Nothing will get done unless we all work together, and the bottom line is that something has to be done, particularly to help education.*

Sincerely,

### **BONDING BILL PASSES INTO LAW, SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR Bill Includes Money for Century College and Trails in Maplewood and North St. Paul**

After months of discussion and debate, the Governor finally signed the state bonding bill into law on April 11th. I was one of 115 Representatives from both parties to vote for its passage. The bill includes nearly \$6 million for Century College as well as an additional \$10 million for the MNSCU

Science and Workforce Initiatives, in which Century College will participate. The bill totaled \$945 million, and also included millions for corrections, the environment, and trails and parks, including trails in Maplewood and North St. Paul.

It is an excellent bill for our district and

an excellent bill for the people of Minnesota. If we're going to succeed as a state, we need to make the right investments in higher education, our environment, and our communities. This bill will create 10,000 new high-quality jobs and help us ensure that Minnesota, especially North St. Paul and Maplewood, continue to have a strong economy for years to come.

It's also important to note that this was a bipartisan bill, with both Republicans and DFLers having a say in the final outcome. Of course, the process had its ups and downs, but at the end of the

day, we were all able to work together, which is the way it should be. This is work that should have been done last session, so I'm very pleased that this year we have been able to overcome the partisanship and political games that held it up last year.

Our community is waiting for these projects to begin, so I'm happy to say that we can move ahead with them. Now that we've gotten the job done here, construction workers and other folks across the state can get their jobs started: bringing these projects to life.



**REPRESENTATIVE LEON LILLIE WANTS TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

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