

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT

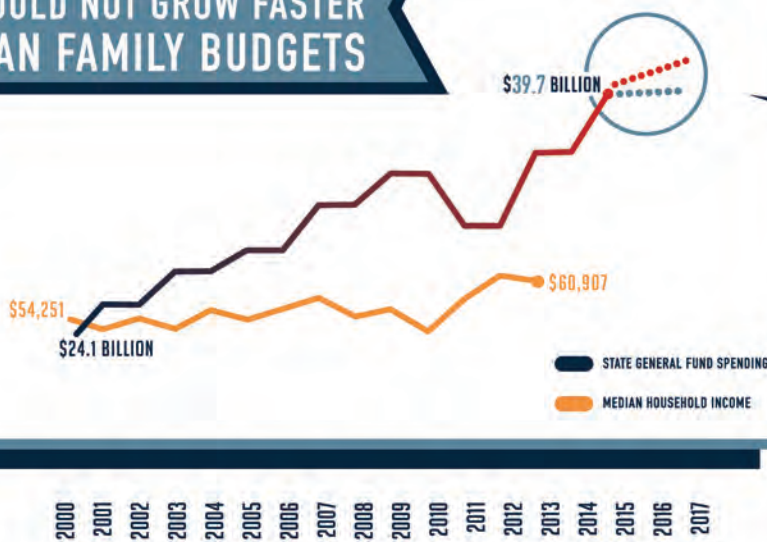


STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**Glenn Gruenhagen**



## REFLECTIONS OF THE 2015 SESSION

### GOVERNMENT SPENDING SHOULD NOT GROW FASTER THAN FAMILY BUDGETS

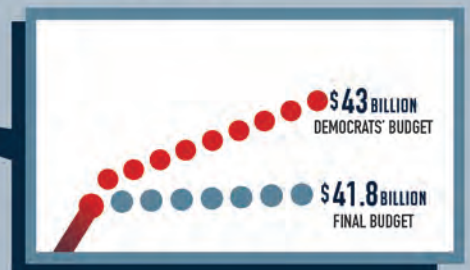


## Roads & Bridges

Republicans put forward a bipartisan, \$7 billion plan to fix our roads and bridges without a gas tax increase. Unfortunately, Democrats stubbornly insisted on a gas tax. As a result, there was no agreement on a long-term transportation plan.

The legislature did pass a \$4 billion continuation transportation bill.

Minnesota's Management and Budget office described the lower gas prices we've been enjoying as "comparable to a tax cut" for Minnesota families, freeing up disposable income. Economists at MMB estimate low gas prices are a major reason for our state's continued economic growth. If lower gas prices are a boost to family budgets and the economy, it stands to reason that higher gas prices will hurt economic activity and reduce tax revenues. In spite of the damage it would do to our economy, Democrats continue to push for a gas tax increase and continue their support for wasteful Light Rail projects. These are the wrong priorities for rural Minnesota. Next session, transportation will again be a Republican priority.



## Respecting Taxpayers

House Republicans worked all session long to ensure that government spending did not grow faster than family budgets.

The bipartisan budget passed by the legislature limited spending and left about \$800 million for next year to address transportation, tax relief, and to serve as a safety net in case of an economic downturn.

Governor Dayton proposed spending \$43 billion, including nearly every penny of the state budget surplus. As illustrated on the above graph, in the past 15 years state spending has increased by 75%. In contrast, during that same time, the average family income has only grown by 12%. This is simply unsustainable, and it's why Republicans pushed for a responsible budget that limited spending.



## Fighting Waste and Fraud

Republicans worked this year to implement real reforms to save taxpayers millions of dollars by making sure state agencies are properly screening participants and making sure taxpayer dollars aren't being wasted. To read more about how waste, fraud, and abuse in public programs, visit the legislative auditor's website at [www.auditor-leg.state.mn.us/](http://www.auditor-leg.state.mn.us/)

## Improving Our Schools



The legislature passed a good, bipartisan bill that will help make funding for Greater Minnesota schools more equitable compared to the Metro, and help improve education for Minnesota students. The bill included \$525 million in increased funding, more than \$1.4 billion more than 2014-2015. Unfortunately, the Governor and the DFL opposed legislation to increase tax credits for non-public school students and other school choice reforms.

## PROTECTING MINNESOTA'S AGING ADULTS AND NURSING HOMES



### \$138 million in new funding

This new funding will help nursing homes keep their doors open and improve quality of care for our aging loved ones.

<b>Benedictine Living Community</b> Winsted, MN	11.5% ↑
<b>Harmony River Center</b> Hutchinson, MN	35% ↑
<b>Glencoe Regional Health Services</b> Glencoe, MN	24% ↑
<b>Oak Terrace Health Center</b> Gaylord, MN	11% ↑
<b>Good Samaritan Society</b> Winthrop, MN	19% ↑

Legislators of both parties came together to support this much-needed fix to help Minnesota's aging adults.

## Energy

The GOP passed several reforms to lower electricity costs that were signed into law. Unfortunately Governor Dayton and the DFL opposed several other reforms that could have lowered electricity costs even more.

## Health Care

I authored and co-authored numerous bills this year to help reduce healthcare costs and increase access for all Minnesotans. This includes the elimination of the MNSure Obamacare Exchange, which has been a disaster due to technical problems and skyrocketing premiums. MNSure has cost taxpayers \$140 million already, and has requested another \$111 million to fix ongoing problems. Several other states, including Democrat-controlled states, have cut their losses and moved to the federal exchange to save money. Unfortunately, Democrats in Minnesota opposed the elimination of MNSure and any reforms that would have moved us beyond the status quo. Health insurers have requested premium increases up to 74% in 2016. Despite the continued failures, Governor Dayton and Democrats continue to support Obamacare and MNSure. We must reform our health care system if we are going to get our costs under control before they overwhelm our state budget.

## Tax Relief

Republicans passed a \$2 billion tax cut plan primarily focused on middle class tax relief. It included income tax relief, property tax relief, and more:

- Eliminating the state tax on Social Security Benefits
- Reducing property taxes for small businesses
- Included a 50% reduction for farmers on school bond levies
- Eliminating the state tax on veteran's benefits

Unfortunately the DFL and Governor Dayton refused to give tax relief to Minnesota citizens, farmers, and businesses. Simply put, Republicans believe Minnesotans deserve tax relief and will continue working on passing tax relief in 2016.



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