Dear Neighbors,

Summing up the 2005 Sessions is difficult. I share the frustration that many of you feel in the aftermath of the Special Session. I am also proud of several legislative achievements. Bottom line: poor process; decent results.

There were successes to celebrate. We passed the first substantial increase in education funding in several years. Coming after years of flat or reduced funding, the investment we made in our schools this year should have a real and observable impact.

We also made important investments in public safety. Minneapolis and Richfield will both receive additional state aid to help put more police and firefighters on the streets and provide other essential city services without raising property taxes. We toughened penalties and improved supervision of sex offenders.

We made sure that working Minnesotans whose employers do not offer health care coverage continue to have an affordable health insurance option. Affordable health care is both fiscally sound and the right thing to do.

There were also disappointments. Although the House and Senate both passed an historic transportation package, which would have actually made a real difference to reduce congestion and ... could pass was an increase in transit funding to avoid the threatened service reductions. This is important but not enough.

The legislature—again!—reduced funding critical to cleaning up our air and water. The promise of a Clean Water Legacy bill was not fulfilled. Important investments in our energy infrastructure to ... new laws we passed, but the legislature missed an opportunity to reestablish the state as a renewable energy leader.

Finally, I am deeply troubled by the government shutdown, both because of its real impact on hardworking public employees, but also because of the damage it does to the bond of trust between ... philosophy and values underlying the negotiations and working through those differences is an important job of politics.

I did offer and advocate for specific and reasonable compromise budget solutions to move the negotiations along, but I do not have a magic answer to make future negotiations less difficult. I can only commit to you that I will continue to strive to be a constructive voice.

Paul Thissen
State Representative
District 63A

Rep. Thissen's 2005 Legislative Successes

- Passed law giving Richfield more tools to address airport noise problems
- Passed several pension reforms including changes that will save Minneapolis several million dollars per year
- Passed enforcement tools to take on predatory tax preparers more effectively
- Passed consumer protection regulations for lottery services businesses
- Passed 21st century reforms to Minnesota's law governing coops and condos
- Passed common sense changes to make it easier to pass assets on to children

I want to hear from you! Please call, write or e-mail:
State Rep. Paul Thissen, 301 State Office Building, 100 Martin Luther King Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-5375 • rep.paul.thissen@house.mn

Paul also prepares Issue Briefs on important issues facing the State. If you are interested in a particular issue, please contact Paul's office.
Rep. Thissen introduced and advanced bipartisan legislation to provide assistance to spouses and children to care for a sick family member.


Rep. Thissen was instrumental in crafting the House DFL HealthCare proposal which provided a template for the final budget deal which preserved health care access for 58,000 Minnesotans.

INVESTMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Rep. Thissen sponsored an Early Learning and Care proposal to assure the highest quality of care for our youngest children.

Rep. Thissen proposed an innovative plan to foster more corporate investment in early childhood education opportunities.

WATCHING OUT FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Rep. Thissen led the effort to enact a 20% Renewable Energy Standard in Minnesota.

Rep. Thissen worked to pass legislation setting the stage for the next-generation of reliable and safe energy transmission.

Rep. Thissen continued to fight for better statewide aviation planning to reduce noise and other pollution around MSP airport.

ADVOCATING FOR GOVERNMENT REFORM

Rep. Thissen advocated eminent domain reform all session and convened stakeholders to find a balance between community needs and individual property rights.

Rep. Thissen again carried to the House floor his legislation to fully compensate small business owners whose operations are closed as a result of government decisions.

State Representative Paul Thissen • 2005 Legislative Report

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Prepared and paid for by Thissen Volunteer Committee, 1219 W. 51st St., Minneapolis, MN 55419 - Not Printed at Taxpayer Expense

"As the DFL Lead on the Health Care Cost Containment Division, I worked hard for reforms to hold down rapidly escalating health care costs." - Rep. Paul Thissen

"Moving the state toward a sustainable, independent energy future was a top priority for me this year.

"As a parent of young children, I know how important the earliest years are. We need to make the right investments to ensure every child has an equal opportunity to succeed." - Rep. Paul Thissen

"I am continuously looking for ways to improve the effectiveness of government and the fairness of how government reform.

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IN THE NEWS

Rep. Thissen received the 2005 Paul Wellstone Advocacy Award from the Minnesota Psychiatric Society. The award recognizes those who advocate for mentally ill Minnesotans.

Rep. Thissen was also honored to be awarded the 2005 Hanson Henningson Award for his work to improve health care access for Minnesotans with HIV.

Rep. Thissen was selected to co-chair the Bipartisan Biosciences Caucus.

2020 CAUCUS

Rep. Thissen is a founding member of the 2020 Caucus. The purpose of the bipartisan 2020 Caucus is to understand how government policies we enact today will affect the Minnesota of 2020.

If you're interested, you can visit: www.startribune.com/stories/314/5364562.html

"Working for Health Care Reform"