



JOURNAL

A Public Policy Monthly from the Citizens League



Minnesota's Anniversary Project

by Tom Horner

A Minnesota Poll taken during the 2004 presidential election found that 58 percent of those surveyed agreed that "so many people have taken extreme positions these days that it's hard to talk with anyone about politics unless you know they are likely to agree with you."

If nearly six out of 10 Minnesotans aren't talking politics with one another, it shouldn't be a surprise that we are represented by a deeply divided Legislature—and that this year we endured the second longest special legislative session and the first government shutdown in Minnesota's history.

Unfortunately, in today's political environment, there is little incentive for politicians or for those representing special interests to build consensus. Redistricting creates non-competitive safe districts in which like-minded people elect and reward policy makers who share their views ... and only their views. At the same time, there is an erosion of forums devoted to objective news and common ground. Between February 2004 and February 2005, audiences for the 9 p.m. and 10 p.m. television news broadcasts declined 13 percent in a key segment (viewers between ages 25 and 54), to cite just one example.

Many viewers haven't abandoned politics or policy. But instead of getting their information from mass media, they go to the social forums on the Internet where blogs, wikis and the like join people who share political outlooks. Instead of understanding different views, more and more of us seek reinforcement of our own political ideologies, in part because we don't think we can get an objective viewpoint.

The Citizens League is embarking on a multi-year initiative to change this environment by facilitating a vision for Minnesota that is defined by Minnesotans. The goal is to engage the state's citizens in creating a sesquicentennial anniversary agenda: plans for action on a handful of critical issues that could be announced by May 2006, with the first steps accomplished by May 11, 2008, the 150th anniversary of Minnesota's statehood.

The plan calls for creating both short-term and long-term objectives. Re-engaging Minnesotans in the public process requires immediate successes. People need validation and they need to know that their voices and involvement make a difference. But we must also face the reality that many of the state's most difficult challenges have been years in the making and will require years for solutions to take effect. Therefore, the agenda must also include plans that look out a decade or more.

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Celebrate Minnesota's 150th anniversary with a bold new plan for the future: a vision for Minnesota defined by Minnesotans

What's the most significant challenge facing the next generation of Minnesotans? We asked five community leaders from around the state to share their answers. Turn to page 5 to find out what they had to say.

But is Minnesota as deeply divided as election results and political pundits would make us out to be? Or are we a state in which special interests and the extreme fringe of both major parties drive wedges, even as most of the state prefers building bridges?

The challenge of finding consensus is becoming increasingly urgent. Minnesota faces difficult choices in just about every area of our civic, economic and cultural lives. These choices go to the very heart of the kind of state Minnesotans want.

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Building a League of Citizens

Citizens League President Sean Kershaw, Senator Geoff Michel (R-Edina) and Representative Joe Atkins (DFL-Inver Grove Heights) talk about the future of Minnesota politics at the Citizens League show at the Minnesota Public Radio booth at the Minnesota State Fair.



Upcoming projects

The Citizens League Study Committee on Medical Facilities will begin meeting in mid-October. Look for updates from the committee at www.citizensleague.net.

This fall, the Citizens League will also kick off a new research study on education and immigration. This is not a traditional study committee. Rather than trying to find policy solutions to an as-yet-undefined problem, we are going to instead focus on framing the key questions surrounding the education of immigrant students and finding the answers to those questions. Citizens League staff will be supported by a working group of citizens and experts in education and immigration. Look for updates on this project at www.citizensleague.net.

Policy and a Pint:

Co-presented by the Citizens League, 89.3 The Current and The Onion: Emergency Preparedness with United Way Twin Cities CEO Lauren Segal. Monday, October 24, 6 p.m. The Varsity Theater, Minneapolis. For more information: www.citizensleague.net

Leadership and the Fiscal Future of the United States:

Monday, October 17, 9 a.m.

Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota West Bank Campus.

For more information: www.hhh.umn.edu/centers/policy-forum

How to get involved this month

Join the Facts Unfiltered Working Group! We're looking for a few good citizens willing to dig deep into policy research. The new Facts Unfiltered Working Group has two main tasks: to produce a monthly column—filled with unfiltered, unadulterated, unbiased facts about a policy issue—for the *Minnesota Journal* (turn to page 9 for the first installment); and to help Citizens League study committees gather the information they need to start making policy recommendations. For more information, or to join the working group, call or e-mail Victoria Ford: vford@citizensleague.net or 651-293-0575, ext. 17.

www.localevent.net

Community Connections Calendar: The one-stop shop for public affairs programming in the Twin Cities.

Correction

In the print version of the August-September issue of the *Minnesota Journal*, a handful of communities in Table 1 had rankings for 2005 Effective Tax Rate that are slightly incorrect (usually by one place or so). View the correct rankings online at www.citizensleague.net

List of new members, donors, and recruiters

Individuals and Families

Stephanie Andrews and James Schowalter
Anita Segador Beaton
Michael Bischoff
Jon and Laura Bloomberg
Carrie Coleman
James and Celeste Gibson
Norman Glewwe
Jim Goff
Jim Hart
Jim Hunter and Michele Lewis
Carla Johnson
Steve Lepinski
Sarah Lutman
Edward Rapp
Gary and Susan Rappaport
Ann Seha
Richard and Stephanie Soskin
Scott Thiss
Claire Thoen-Levin
Kathleen Y.A. Whitley
Jeff Widseth
John Zimmerman

Firms and Organizations

Academic Health Center Communications
Cold Spring Granite
Designs for Learning
Education Minnesota
Idealogics
Insurance Federation of Minnesota
The James Ford Bell Foundation
Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
Larson, Allen, Weishair & Co. LLP
Northside Residents Redevelopment Council, Inc.

Sponsorships

Comcast
HealthPartners

Matching gifts

Fannie Mae Foundation
Xcel Energy Foundation

Recruiters

Emmett Coleman
Bob DeBoer
Stan Donnelly
Kent Eklund
Dave Hutcheson
Sean Kershaw
Kathryn Kmit
Aaron and Nena Street



Renewing a hall for rational discussion

Rebuilding and redesigning the Minnesota Journal

by Sean Kershaw

Who knew that Steve Martin could have so much to say about public policy writing?

I'm not ashamed to admit that one of my favorite movie quotes is Martin's exasperated appeal to John Candy in "*Planes, Trains and Automobiles*," when he says, "you know... you know when you're telling these little stories? Here's a good idea: have a point! It makes it so much more interesting for the listener."

Welcome to the redesigned *Minnesota Journal*, one of our new efforts to bring renewed purpose and clarity—a point!—to the work of the Citizens League.

Who knew the Citizens League's founders could have predicted one of our current needs?

The very first Citizens League *News-Bulletin* in 1952 stated: "Americans brag with justification about our democratic system. But the democratic system isn't worth talking about unless alert citizens make themselves effective in the affairs of the community. An alert citizen is a fellow with decent instincts *plus facts*."

Facts, presented without demagoguery and within a democratic set of values and "instincts," are potentially an antidote to the poisonous politics around us today, and the foundation of better policy solutions tomorrow. As former Citizens League Executive Director Ted Kolderie has said, we need "a way to see problems well ahead of us when they are not necessarily problems."

Who better to describe the purpose of this Journal than its founder?

Describing his reasons for starting the *Minnesota Journal* in 1983, editor Stephen Alnes said he hoped it would be a "conscious mix of newsletter and newspaper, of fact and opinion, of journalism and academe. The intent is to provide a hall for rational discussion of state and local public policy issues in Minnesota."

Steve was ahead of his time. Minnesota needs this common ground now more than ever.

A renewed purpose

Earlier this year more than 200 of you responded to a survey about the *Minnesota Journal* and told us that you wanted more objective analysis of current issues, more information on innovative policy initiatives elsewhere, and more of the perspectives and opinions that usually go unheard in policy conversations.

We heard you.

Our goal with the *Minnesota Journal* is to strengthen the relevance of the Citizens League by illuminating critical public policy choices, incubating new voices in public policy, and innovating public policy solutions.

Illuminating choices

Public policy "issues" are really just strategy options and choices framed around a public problem. The better you understand these choices, the better you understand the issue.

Our cover stories and features will offer clear and concise explanations of the pressing public policy choices that will shape Minnesota's future economic success and quality of life. We need a better debate to get better solutions.

We'll also make sure you have the facts in this debate. In each issue, our *Facts Unfiltered* section will highlight the critical facts on an important public policy issue.

Incubating new voices

Minnesota must consciously cultivate its next generation of civic leaders—new voices who can offer new solutions that really work, and new leadership that can really get the work done.

Our new *Perspectives* column will bring new and emerging leaders, as well as insight from throughout Minnesota, to the policy discussion.

Innovating policy solutions

We're at a turning point when traditional public policy solutions seldom work. Public policy needs to be about more than turning off/on the supply of public resources into existing policy solutions and public programs. We need new ideas, new ways of framing issues, and new opportunities that engage citizens in every institution.

Our refocused *Take Note* section will spotlight innovative ideas and policy solutions from within Minnesota and from around the world.

Building connections

And finally, nothing gets accomplished without a strong base of support—a "league of citizens." We know that our members and readers are busier than ever. Our new *Connections* section will help you stay involved in the Citizens League and connected to each other.

But more importantly, we know that citizenship isn't a spectator sport. We hope you will help us build this new *Minnesota Journal* by submitting essays, joining the new *Facts Unfiltered* work team, recruiting new authors, commenting on what you read here on our new and more interactive web site, and using the *Journal* to recruit in new members.

Our point: to change the civic and policy landscape in Minnesota! ●

Sean Kershaw is President of the Citizens League. He can be reached at skershaw@citizensleague.net or 651-293-0575x14.

Minnesota's Anniversary Project

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Minnesota's 150th Anniversary Project—or MAP 150—will have several components:

- People from a broad philosophical spectrum are taking the first cut at issues and solutions for the public to consider. Participants at this level of the project are people from public policy and non-profit sectors, advocacy groups, education, business and other sectors. Their role is to narrow the scope of issues and solutions for the public to consider.
- The ideas emerging from these first panels will be put before the public for affirmation or rejection. Through forums and research, Minnesotans from all walks of life will be able to refine and narrow the proposed list of issues and solutions to include in MAP 150.
- Opinion gains power through discussion and agreement. Our hope (if funding permits) is to engage Minnesotans in innovative new ways, including an electronic town hall meeting, a real-time discussion of what is important to us as a state and the actions we should take. This discussion—and the ones that follow it throughout the MAP 150 initiative—will be informed by the facts that are critical to understanding and

evaluating each issue. This effort builds on the Citizens League's successful Facts Unfiltered project last year. As the late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan said, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts."

The hope is to identify the issues and solutions where there is consensus and urgency—where Minnesotans agree on the substance and the need for quick, yet thoughtful action. The agenda that emerges may well be a mixed bag of issues and solutions, not all of which call for government action. Minnesota's past suggests that when citizens start talking, government is only part of the answer. Recommendations could include steps that families, businesses, schools, the faith community or other institutions could take to make Minnesota a better state.

Shaping the agenda will begin by asking people to see choices within existing private and public resources. This isn't to pick sides in the "no new taxes" debate, but to encourage people to grapple with setting priorities.

Creating the agenda is only the first step in MAP 150. If the goal is to achieve the

first steps of the agenda by May 11, 2008, then the issues and solutions proposed as part of MAP 150 need to become part of Minnesota's political discussion during next year's election campaigns and beyond.

In the long run, the greatest measure of MAP 150's success may not be whether any individual agenda item is implemented, but whether the Minnesota Poll taken during our state's sesquicentennial shows that as a state we once again are willing and able to talk politics and public policy.

Much of MAP 150 will depend on funding. This is perhaps the most ambitious initiative the Citizens League has ever undertaken. If successful, we hope to engage other organizations in creating the agenda, announce it by May 2006 and pursue solutions that can be implemented by May 2008, Minnesota's sesquicentennial.

Information on this initiative and on opportunities to participate will be available on the Citizens League web site at www.citizensleague.net. ●

Tom Horner is Vice Chair of the Citizens League Board of Directors and is President of Himle Horner Inc., a Minnesota public relations and public affairs firm.

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Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total number of copies (net press run)	1800	1800
B. Paid and/or requested circulation		
1. Paid/requested outside-county mail subscriptions stated on form 3541	732	742
2. Paid in-county subscriptions	868	837
3. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	0	0
4. Other classes mailed through USPS	0	0
C. Total paid an/or requested circulation	1600	1579
D. Free distribution by mail		
1. Outside—county as stated on form 3541	60	60
2. In-county as stated on form 3541	40	40
3. Other classes mailed through the USPS	0	0
E. Free distribution outside the mail	0	0
F. Total free distribution	100	100
G. Total distribution	1700	1679
H. Copies not distributed	100	121
I. Total	1800	1800
Percent paid and/or requested circulation	94.12	94.04

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Signed, Sean Kershaw, publisher. September 23, 2005

We asked five Minnesota leaders with varying experiences and perspectives to answer one of the core questions of the Minnesota Anniversary Project: What is the most significant challenge facing the next generation of Minnesotans? Their responses—surprising, insightful, and essential—follow on the next few pages.



The interplay of crime, drugs and race

by Mitchell B. Pearlstein, Ph.D.

Given our aging population and the propensity of medical costs to defy laws of gravity, it would be easy to cite questions of health as the biggest challenge festering for a next generation of Minnesotans. It probably would be on-target, too, if for no other reason than health care is probably our biggest policy problem already. Yet while an adequate solution is not yet on the table, I have little doubt our cost troubles will be brought under some control, one way or another. My free market preference is to rely mostly on consumer choice and competition. But whatever steps are finally taken, rest assured they will be taken, somehow. They may not be healthy or wise steps, but the simple fact is the United States is unlikely ever to be wealthy enough to allow health costs to consume much more than the approximately 15 percent of GNP they currently do. Reality has a retaining wall out there somewhere, made of brick, and we'll hit it eventually.

There's another problem, though, for which I have a hard time even imagining sufficient improvement anytime soon: The malignant interplay of crime, drugs, educational failure, and the near death of marriage as an institution in some communities, all made even tougher by historically suffused issues of race. Just three quick sets of statistics to spotlight the sadness and hurdles:

According to the African American Men Project, 44 percent of all African American men between the ages of 18 and 30 in Hennepin County were arrested in 1999. There's little reason to believe things have changed much since 1999.

As of the year 2000, only 23 percent of young black men in Minneapolis were graduating high school in four years.

And according to a recent study by the Minneapolis-based Council on Crime and Justice, approximately 10 million children

in the United States have had a parent in prison sometime in their lives. Think of the dreadful damage this does to boys and girls.

For bad measure, disparities between blacks and whites in Minnesota in a range of areas, including educational performance and prison rates, are consistently among the most severe in the nation.

None of this should cloud the fact that a strong majority of African Americans in the United States, along with other minorities,

are doing well in middle-class ways. Neither do I mean to imply by these horrible numbers that present-day racism is their main cause. Other factors—starting with the explosive dispersal of fathers in almost all communities over the last two generations—are profoundly more important.

Health care problems may be extraordinarily difficult to fix, but at least they're fundamentally problems of policy, meaning that presidents, governors, and legislators have a fighting chance of passing and implementing apt and useful laws. Problems resulting from young people routinely dropping out of school, joining gangs, committing crimes, and bringing babies into this world out of wedlock are far less

amenable to the reach of public officials, as they are mostly cultural and spiritual at root. Or more to the point, unless things change deeply in hearts and souls, I'm afraid little will improve. (For people skeptical or uncomfortable with this kind of religiously flavored talk, they can conceive of what's called for as a "social" movement, akin to those which have succeeded over the last half-century on behalf of civil rights, women's rights, the environment, and the marginalization of smoking.) ●

Mitchell B. Pearlstein, Ph.D. is the Founder and President Emeritus of the Center of the American Experiment.

Disparities between blacks and whites in Minnesota in a range of areas, including educational performance and prison rates, are consistently among the most severe in the nation.



Remake our education system

by David Dayhoff

Remaking our education system—particularly K-12—is the most important policy challenge facing the next generation of Minnesotans. Of course education is important everywhere, but I think even more so here. Many elements of the “good life” in Minnesota depend directly or indirectly upon the success of our education system. At the same time, many Minnesotans are proud of our schools and want—or even feel we have a responsibility—to be a national or even international education leader. It is an especially appropriate aspiration because education is an area over which states (as opposed to municipal, national or international bodies) have the most influence, and I believe most Minnesotans are committed enough to come together to do something about it.

I also believe, however, that we dare not think of ourselves as leaders today, regardless of the condition of our education system relative to anywhere else. To the contrary, we should feel a crushing sense of urgency to overhaul our underperforming system immediately. Every day, the importance of education to our society grows, while our system’s performance becomes more inadequate. Appallingly, significant segments of our student population not only fail to get an education that equips them

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well for the future, they fail to acquire even basic skills. Those who do go beyond the basics still get an education that falls short of what I believe ought to be an ideal in this age of technological splendor and exploding human knowledge.

Another reason education reform is the top policy challenge is that it must involve not just changing the schools, but also their relationships with families. Obviously, many of the causes of poor educational results lie outside the structure of the school system itself; a serious modernization project will by necessity consider those factors, too, and in so doing, the education reform effort will have broad policy impact.

It is so pressing that we revolutionize the system today because it will take years to see our innovations bear fruit. The next generation of Minnesotans is taking shape now, and its productivity, creativity and character will influence all of the other policy challenges we face.

The alarming tone in my words belies my optimism. I believe we can pull it off. Organizations like the Citizens League can help overcome the trench digging that is inevitable as we modernize the system. ●

David Dayhoff is a manager at Cargill, Inc. He resides in Minneapolis with his wife Aimée and infant son Wyatt.



Restore Minnesotans’ civic pride and sense of citizenship

by Brian Rusche

When I moved to Minnesota in 1977, I observed a deep well of civic pride amongst Minnesotans. People understood that Minnesota was special and had a unique role in the Upper Midwest, and in the nation. Much was made of Minnesota leading other states in making smart policy choices. This sense of Minnesota exceptionalism must be resurrected: we should endeavor to build a healthy and prosperous state that again leads the nation by example.

To do so, we need to focus on our identity as citizens. Minnesotans are largely people of faith; we are third in the country in terms of the number of people with congregational affiliations. At least nominally, this suggests that Minnesotans connect with the idea of community. In most faith

To build a strong civic society, all institutions must reward citizenship, teach civic standards, and support civic work.

communities there is rich teaching and tradition to secure the well-being of our neighbors. We have an opportunity to take this sense of faithfulness and reattach it to a civic purpose and a common agenda.

How do we get there? First, Minnesotans need to begin thinking of themselves not just as consumers of government services, but as citizens. The key difference between the identity of a consumer and a citizen is that citizens take on the responsibility of governance. One of our biggest initial

challenges will be to examine and redefine how institutions reward and encourage citizenship. The institutions in which we live our lives—our congregations, workplaces, neighborhood associations, and civic groups—have a tremendous impact on our perspectives. All institutions should “teach” citizenship, give us opportunities to govern our lives, and reinforce a sense of responsibility to community. Somehow we’ve come to expect that people just intuit what obligations and practices go along



Leadership that stands with courage

by Stephanie Autumn

“It is moral courage that determines the standard of leadership in the practical arenas of politics, business, academics and the community” – Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

As Minnesota and its citizens move towards celebrating the 150th anniversary of the state, it is of the utmost importance that we take the time to pursue philosophical and political thought for the huge political challenges that are on our horizon.

American Indians are governed by a variety of complex laws throughout their lifetime, i.e.; treaty laws, county laws, state laws, federal laws, international laws, and most importantly *natural and spiritual laws*. The natural and spiritual laws that exist within our own sovereign nations, communities, and family circles are the center post of our daily existence. Our natural and spiritual laws dictate a responsibility to our community, its people and our families first, and the needs of a single individual second.

American Indian traditional, spiritual, and elected leaders are expected to uphold a higher standard of leadership that promotes respect, justice, and social-economic venues that nurture and protect the health and well-being of people and the environment. This higher standard of leadership, in application, dictates a lifetime commitment to being “clear and present” to the

Minnesota needs to chart a course of courage: to expect and demand a higher standard of leadership— leadership that is guided by values that reflect compassion, courage, and respect for people of all colors.

needs of the people—and to always stand with courage to protect the people in the face of any harm.

Have American Indian communities and nations struggled to find leaders of such caliber and integrity? The answer is a resounding “yes!” But American Indian communities in Minnesota and their tribal

governments are challenging themselves to create political atmospheres, agendas, and leadership standards that will result in violence reduction, elimination of drug and alcohol abuse, increased economic opportunities, revitalization of culture and language, protection of the environment, and quality educational, health, and judicial agencies within their communities.

Can American Indian communities be successful without the support of Minnesota’s political leaders and its citizens? The answer is “no!” Our future depends on all Minnesotans asking for a higher standard of leadership from its elected officials. Minnesota needs leaders who will adhere to ethics and values that will guide them to chart a course of public policy that benefits and protects all of Minnesota’s ethnic and cultural populations. Minnesota needs political leaders to chart a course of public policy that reflects equal concern for the state’s rural and reservation communities as it does its urban communities. Minnesota needs political leaders to chart a course that says that quality of life is of more value than the profit and loss statements of corporate business. Minnesota needs political leaders to chart a course that demands and increases fair and affordable housing and dispels the myth that more prisons means safer communities.

Most importantly, each and every one of us in the state of Minnesota needs to chart a course of courage: to expect and demand a higher standard of leadership— leadership that is guided by values that reflect compassion, courage, and respect for people of all colors. As we celebrate Minnesota’s 150th anniversary let us work together to create new political agendas, strategies, and policies that will nurture and sustain our children, communities, and the land on which we live for the next seven generations. ●

Stephanie Autumn is a member of the Hopi Nation, mother, grandmother, American Indian activist and staff member for the Center for Reducing Rural Violence.

with citizenship. This is wrong. Each generation must pass on to the next what we’ve learned about citizenship and democracy. We should emulate the zeal of newly arrived Americans to learn and practice citizenship. But the key point is not to look at civic work as “government’s turf” or “schools should teach it.” To build a strong civic society, all institutions must reward citizenship, teach civic standards, and support civic work. Minnesota, more than most places, has a predisposition to being a civic-minded place.

A word of warning. I think our democracy is in trouble. The level of cynicism among people—in Minnesota and around the country—is toxic. Citizens need to know that they really can, and must, govern. One of

the biggest barriers to this is the influence of big money in our elections. Many people don’t think they matter because they don’t have the money to buy influence. We need to cast out the money changers and once again lead the reforms toward fair and clean elections. Several other states are way ahead of us in bringing sanity and real competitiveness to their elections. This is a linchpin issue dealing with the mechanics of democracy, but we need a larger change to see the civic role of every institution, too. ●

Brian Rusche is Executive Director of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition, an interfaith public policy organization sponsored by the Minnesota Catholic Conference, the Minnesota Council of Churches, the Jewish Community Relations Council, and the Islamic Center of Minnesota.



Reduce pregnancy rates for teens of color

by Carol McGee Johnson

Growing up African American in Minnesota *in the '50s*, I believed Minnesota was different, special. I thought people of color in Minnesota were far better off than people of color in other states. Imagine my surprise to learn otherwise in *my fifties*.

One disparity brings this home to me in striking ways.

Minnesota teens of color experience some of the highest teen pregnancy rates in America, particularly among Hispanic, African American and American Indian teens, two to five times higher than white teens.

Research also tells us that teen pregnancy is the single greatest lifelong predictor of poverty and a major barrier to economic independence for girls.

It therefore does not require major analysis to determine who will continue to be the poorest individuals in the state of Minnesota in the future: teen mothers and women of color. Understandably then, reducing the rate of teen pregnancy among Minnesota's teens of color is probably one of the best courses Minnesotans can take to increase the economic potential of women of color and the economic health of the state.

What policies stand in the way of such a clear cut objective?

Repeal of the Minor's Consent Law that provides minors with confidential health services would be disastrous for Minnesota's teens of color. By restricting minors' access to confidential reproductive health services,

including contraception, teens of color are at even greater risk for teen pregnancy and future economic failure.

Additionally, there is an equally strong need to support Comprehensive Sex Education for teens of color that provides accurate medical information, is developmentally appropriate for all teens, and culturally appropriate for teens of color who are at higher risk for teen pregnancy. Research has shown that abstinence-only-until-marriage education *does not work*.

Armed with good information, teens of color can make better choices and will be more likely to delay pregnancy. Just as wine growers say, "No wine before its time," communities of color might say, "No child

before its time." The question is one of maturity and growth. All in good time. And, in the event a teen of color becomes pregnant, a full range of reproductive choices, up to and including abortion, should be made available to them.

Our state needs to invest in helping to reduce factors among populations of color that put teens at greater risk for teen pregnancy, such as poverty, and other racial disparities, such as high unemployment, low income, and high crime rates to name a few. Minnesota needs to invest in helping to build protective factors for teens of color, such as greater access to higher education, greater positive self-concept, increased perception of the negative consequences of pregnancy, greater positive attitude toward school and more egalitarian family and gender roles.

The girlsBEST (Girls Building Economic Success Together) Initiative of the Women's Foundation of Minnesota supports programs that build supportive environments for girls, environments in which the protective factors against teen pregnancy are increased and the risk factors are decreased, thus helping to insure girls' future economic well-being. girlsBEST serves girls in 11 programs across the state, 70 percent of whom are girls of color. These programs are culturally rich, girls have access to many mentors and role models, girls develop effective, community-based leadership skills, and become academically prepared for higher education. As a philanthropy, girlsBEST is an important investment that the Women's Foundation is making. We challenge the state to make similar investments in innovative programs that foster protective factors for girls.

To the extent state dollars do not flow to programs that help to reduce the likelihood of teen pregnancy for girls of color, Minnesota is not helping its teens of color to thrive. Instead, the state is helping to seal a future of poverty and economic distress for a vital segment of its population.

Is this what Minnesota wants to be known and recognized for—the highest rates of teen pregnancy in the nation for its teens of color? Just as hurricane Katrina exposed the poverty-stricken underbelly of New Orleans (and America, by extension), it would not take much to expose a portion of Minnesota's underbelly: girls of color at higher risk for economic failure than anywhere else in the country.

Think about it. ●

Carol McGee Johnson is Vice President of Community Philanthropy and Programs for the Women's Foundation of Minnesota.

Minnesota needs to invest in helping to build protective factors for teens of color, such as greater access to higher education, greater positive self-concept, increased perception of the negative consequences of pregnancy, greater positive attitude toward school and more egalitarian family and gender roles.

FACTS UNFILTERED

Over the course of the past three months, the Citizens League Mind-Opener series “Show Us the Money! Public Finance Explained,” has explored various topics in public finance. To recap: what is public finance? Where do we spend our public money? And why does it matter to citizens?

Q What is public finance, anyway?

A Wikipedia defines public finance as “the field of economics that deals with budgeting the revenues and expenditures of a public sector entity, usually government.” In other words: public finance is the ways in which governments raise and spend money.

Q So how do governments raise and spend money?

A There are four main ways that state governments can raise money: taxes and fees, borrowing, transfers from other governments, and procuring property through eminent domain. The federal government can also print money (although this is usually a bad idea; for more information on why, check out “Why Not Just Print More Money?” on About.com).

According to the Minnesota Department of Finance, in 2004, Minnesota’s state revenues totaled \$22.3 billion: 64 percent from taxes (mostly sales and income taxes); 26 percent from federal government grants; and 10 percent from other sources.

Governments can, of course, spend money in a myriad of ways. In 2004, the state Revenue Department reported spending of \$22.5 billion: 37 percent on health and human services, 34 percent on education, 10 percent on transportation and 19 percent on everything else (including property tax aids and credits, public safety, the environment, agriculture and economic development, debt service, and more).

Q Isn't Minnesota's state budget supposed to be balanced?

A Yes and no. There is no explicit requirement for a balanced budget in the state constitution. Rather, the constitution says that the state can issue debt (that is, finance projects by selling bonds) only for specified purposes, and borrowing money to pay for a budget deficit is not one of those purposes. The budget passed by the legislature, however, can be structurally imbalanced (note that in 2004, spending slightly exceeded revenue. The legislature maintains a \$653 million budget reserve that it can dip into to manage these kinds of deficits).

Q What goes into that health and human services category?

A The health and human services bill is wide ranging. It covers four main areas: children and economic assistance, health care, continuing care, and state

operated services. Those subgroups contain many programs, including the Minnesota Family Investment Plan, child care assistance grants, Medical Assistance (Medicaid), General Assistance Medical Care, the prescription drug program, long-term care, mental health care, aging and adult services, the Community and Family Health Program, veterans homes, the Council on Disability, and the Ombudsperson for Families.

Q What is Minnesota going to be spending its money on in the future?

A Medical care. As the number of Minnesota retirees increases, so will the demands on the state’s medical system. Minnesota’s retirement-age population (65+) will start to increase in 2008; the first wave of baby boomers will start to retire in 2011. By 2020, the state’s retirement-age population will surpass the K-12 population for the first time in history. This demographic reality has significant implications for state revenues and spending.

State revenues likely will decrease. Workers approaching retirement want to both maintain their standard of living and increase their savings—so as our population grows older, there will probably be an increase in pressure to reduce taxes. Retirees already pay less in taxes than the general population (as a result of special tax benefits and reduced income and consumption), so as more Minnesotans retire, revenue for state and local government will likely go down.

At the same time, because baby boomers are expected to live longer than their parents, and because medical technology has advanced, the next generation of retirees will need higher levels of medical care for longer periods of time than previous generations. Minnesota already spends \$3 billion each year on Medical Assistance, General Assistance Medical Care and Minnesota Care. These programs are growing fast: the current two-year state budget saw a 15 percent increase in the cost of these programs from the last budget. Unless there are significant changes in policy, Minnesota’s health and human services budget will have to increase dramatically to cover these costs.

Minnesotans will have to make decisions about how to spend money in the future. As a state, it is time for us to begin to think about what our priorities are. ●

For more information on this topic, check out these websites:

The Citizens League’s “Show Us the Money!” series:
www.citizensleague.net

Minnesota House of Representatives House Research:
www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/hrd.htm

Minnesota State Budgets: www.budget.state.mn.us

Minnesota State Department of Finance: www.finance.state.mn.us

Minnesota State Department of Revenue: www.taxes.state.mn.us

Minnesota State Demographic Center: www.demography.state.mn.us

Each month, Citizens League members and staff will collaborate to select an timely policy topic, then ask the important—and sometimes uncomfortable—questions and dig up the answers. Just the facts, unadulterated and unspun.

Questions, comments, corrections? We need more Facts Unfiltered volunteers! If you are willing to roll up your sleeves and dig into the facts, if you have suggestions for a future Facts Unfiltered policy topic—or if you just think we got something wrong—call or e-mail Victoria Ford: vford@citizensleague.net or 651-293-0575 ext.17.

TAKE NOTE

Innovative Policy Initiatives from Around the World

Take Note is taking a new direction. In the past, we've used this space to comment on releases of new sources of data, policy initiatives and political curiosities. But in the 2005 Member Survey, you told us that you wanted to hear more about "innovative policy initiatives from around the world"—and that's what we're delivering. From now on, Take Note will highlight and analyze policy innovations. Enjoy, and let us know what you think.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Hospitals in Pittsburgh cut central line infection rates in half by instituting small adjustments to their processes, such as making sure that gloves were kept at the top of supply kits and regulating the size of drapes used to cover patient wounds.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Maine gives away a free laptop to every seventh- and eighth-grader—and the results are good. So good, in fact, that the state's former governor started a foundation to spread the program.

Making hospitals safer and doctors more effective

"Today, going to an American hospital seems about as safe as parachuting off a bridge." So wrote Steven J. Spear, Senior Fellow at the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, in an Aug. 29 *New York Times* commentary. But a number of initiatives are in the works that should help make hospitals safer and doctors more effective.

In August, President Bush signed a bill authorizing the creation of "patient safety organizations," where health care providers will be able to report errors without fear of malpractice lawsuits. The patient safety organizations will analyze the information and make recommendations on how to avoid similar mistakes.

But research by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement suggests that hospitals can significantly improve safety by following the lead of some of the world's most successful industrial organizations like Toyota, Alcoa and Vanguard. Rather than working around problems, health care workers should slow down and consider what is causing the problem. The case of central lines—catheters inserted into a major vein to deliver medicine or fluids—illustrates the point: "A quarter-million patients nationwide who receive (central lines) each year suffer bloodstream infections as a result, and of those, 15 percent die. To eliminate these infections, [hospitals in the Pittsburgh Regional Healthcare Initiative] taught themselves to find problems and institute small process enhancements at a rate far faster than a national reporting program will most likely allow. Together, these small fixes added up to a significant improvement." And what were these small fixes? "One hospital realized that in its line-maintenance kits, gloves were stored at the bottom, causing nurses to fish through sterile material with bare hands. Other kits had drapes—sheets that isolate the area on which a nurse or doctor is working—that were either too small to be effective or so large that patients knocked them out of the way."

These small changes added up to major improvements in safety. The Pittsburgh hospitals cut central line infection rates in half and some hospitals nearly eliminated the problem. All this just from trying to act like Toyota. ●

Links:

Institute for Healthcare Improvement: www.ihl.org
"The Health Factory," by Steven J. Spear: www.nytimes.com
(requires Times Select subscription)

A new state slogan? Maine: the digitally literate state

In Maine, every seventh- and eighth- grader—and all of their teachers—get a free iBook laptop at the beginning of the school year, almost 40,000 total. Former Maine Governor Angus King, who created the program, said at the time that he wanted to make Maine the most "digitally literate" state in the country.

The Maine Learning Technology Initiative, more commonly called "the laptop program," has been practically and politically successful, beyond even its supporters' initial hopes. Researchers at the University of Southern Maine Center for Education Policy, Applied Research & Evaluation, found that "the introduction of laptops may have the potential to encourage significant and rapid shifts in the role of teachers and students in classroom learning, as well as supporting broader improvements in teaching and learning." Among their findings:

- More than 70 percent of teachers said laptops helped them to more effectively meet their curriculum goals and individualize curricula to meet particular student needs.
- More than 75 percent of teachers said the laptops helped them better meet Maine's statewide learning standards.
- More than 4 out of 5 teachers surveyed reported that students are more engaged in learning and produce better quality work.
- More than 70 percent of students said laptops helped them to be better organized and get their work done more quickly and with better quality.

King, who left the governor's office in 2002, is still working to close the digital divide. This summer, he raised \$850,000 to create the nonprofit Maine Learning Technology Foundation. This year, the foundation is paying for free internet access for students in the laptop program who qualify for free- or reduced-price lunches. ●

Links:

Maine Learning Technology Initiative: www.state.me.us/mlte/
University of Southern Maine Center for Education Policy,
Applied Research and Evaluation: www.usm.maine.edu/cepare/
"Maine closing technology gap for students," www.stateline.org



Minnesota should develop a four-year university in Rochester

by A.M. (Sandy) Keith

As Minnesota established public colleges and the University of Minnesota in the early days, no one could predict that Rochester would emerge as the state's third largest city with a diverse population approaching 100,000, and a metropolitan statistical area of 172,476. Rochester is home to Mayo Clinic, a world leader in health care. It is Minnesota's largest private employer with 47,000 workers, of which 28,100 work in Rochester. IBM Rochester, a world leader in technology, is now home to BlueGene, the world's fastest supercomputer. In a decade, Rochester has become a research and development hotbed, attracting more than 30 companies working at the cutting edge of technological, medical and biological advances. Rochester is poised to become a major player in bio-industry but cannot achieve this goal, which will be of great benefit to the entire state, without the support of a major research university.

Civic leadership

In 1985, Rochester undertook a broad planning process called FutureScan 2000. It was no surprise that higher education was named among the top five priorities to ensure future vigor and quality of life in Rochester. A key recommendation was to form a board of citizens to champion higher education. I agreed to chair this group, which we called the Greater Rochester Area University Center Board of Directors (GRAUC). Today, the GRAUC Board continues to serve as a catalyst for growing higher education in Rochester. Like the Citizens League, GRAUC brings together business and civic leaders, area policymakers and citizens to identify needs, force recommendations and influence policy.

University Center Rochester

Through a series of agreements between the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU) and the University of Minnesota (U of M), a collaborative model

Perspectives is an opportunity to hear from Minnesotans about the issues that affect them and their communities and to bring new voices into Minnesota's policy conversations.

known as University Center Rochester (UCR) was created to serve Rochester's higher education needs. Both systems are justifiably proud of the progress made in student enrollments, increases in programs, and the establishment of the U of M Rochester (UMR) in 1999.

Despite investments in campus infrastructure and incremental steps to advance higher education, funding for expanding upper division, professional and graduate programs has not come close to meeting the region's economic and demographic changes. The current UCR model meets basic workforce needs, but doesn't have the capacity to serve the research-based, educational needs of Rochester's global industries, particularly healthcare and technology. Collaboration clearly is beneficial with regard to open access, technical education and associate degree programs through Rochester Community and Technical College. However, in an era of limited public resources for higher education, it is imperative that the most effective and efficient structures and/or funding mechanisms be considered to advance higher education.

Bioscience: a growth industry

In 2003, Gov. Pawlenty recognized bioscience as a key driver of Minnesota's economic growth. He encouraged the U of M and Mayo Clinic to form the Minnesota Partnership for Biotechnology and Medical Genomics with \$1 million of state funding. Rochester's nearly 500 acres, designated for a Bioscience Tax-Free Zone, stimulated Mayo Medical Laboratories to move into a vacant building there and complete a \$7 million renovation. In the last two years, it has increased its staff by more than 200 FTEs to meet the increased testing workload.

In 2005, the Legislature approved a \$21.7 million medical genomics research addition atop Mayo's Stabile Building, and earmarked \$15 million in state research funding for the Partnership. This will bring more research scientists and provide greater opportunity for new treatments and technology to fight diseases and improve health.

These investments are projected to yield an economic impact to the state of \$320 million along with 4,300 direct and indirect jobs by 2010. They also contributed to IBM creating a Center of Advanced Studies in Life Sciences and Bioinformatics in Rochester to focus on applied research leading to new products, technology and services.

A window of opportunity

The GRAUC Board recognizes that future progress in the Greater Rochester Area is heavily dependent on an increased role for the U of M in economic development. Since UMR's formation in 1999, the University has made significant investments in Rochester by appointing a provost and hiring an academic development team, consolidating the extension service for southeast Minnesota, and initiating academic, research, and outreach programs.

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Perspectives

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Expanding partnerships in genomics and supercomputing by the U of M, Mayo Clinic and IBM, in alignment with the University's Academic Health Center and Institute of Technology, provide evidence of the critical role demanded of UMR in preparing the workforce of tomorrow. Minnesota must invest in a four-year university in Rochester to realize the full potential for strong economic growth and high-skill jobs.

GRAUC's University Growth Vision:

- Preserve the academic base and grow the "South Bank" of the UMR
- Signature baccalaureate, graduate and professional programs focused on health sciences, technology, business and agribusiness
- Innovation in technology-enhanced learning
- Strong public-private partnerships
- Leverage strategic investments

Rochester Higher Education Development Committee

In 2005, Gov. Pawlenty and the Legislature established the Rochester Higher Education Development Committee to research, recommend and develop a proposal for expanded higher education programs or institutions in the growing Rochester area. The Minnesota Office of Higher Education staffs the committee and provides oversight of the \$3.2 million state appropriation. We look forward to the committee's report, due to the governor and Legislature next January, with recommendations on programs, facilities, governance and funding. The University Center Rochester model has served us well, but it limits the opportunity to build upon the research and development engine in biotech that has become the hallmark of our community. Minnesota must strategically align its higher education resources to keep our industries globally competitive so our state continues to create

new medical and technology opportunities that benefit all Minnesota, our nation and the world. ●

A.M. (Sandy) Kieth, retired Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court, is a former state senator and former Lt. Governor of Minnesota. He is currently serving as Executive Director of the Rochester Downtown Alliance.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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Leadership and the Fiscal Future of the United States

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Policy and a Pint: Emergency Preparedness with United Way Twin Cities Executive Director Lauren Segal. Co-presented by the Citizens League, 89.3 The Current and The Onion.

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