



Civic Caucus

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Priority Issues/Choices Facing Minnesotans

June 30, 2108

During the spring of 2018, the Civic Caucus put together a list of over 40 major issues /choices facing Minnesotans, along with names of people who might be considered by the Civic Caucus as interviewees on those issues. The first draft of this list was put together following an April 13, 2018, internal discussion meeting in which each member of the Civic Caucus interview group was asked to list no more than five major issues/choices facing the state, along with possible interviewees on the issue. As more responses came in from people beyond the main interview group, the list was revised several times.

On June 24, 2018, the Civic Caucus sent the revised list out to our e-mail list of 6,800 readers. We asked readers for their responses to the list, including their choice of priorities and additions or changes to the list. The list below reflects readers' additions to the list as of June 30, 2018.

Following the list are reader responses to the June 24, 2018, list in their entirety.

Civic Caucus List of Major Issues/Choices Facing Minnesota

(in alphabetical order)

1. **Aging and Long-Term Care**

1. Examine the challenge facing assisted living, memory care and nursing homes as they try to provide **sufficient staffing at living wages**. **Possible interviewees:** Nursing home leaders, Alzheimer's Association, state regulators, legislators, patient-advocate groups.
2. Examine how to improve **safety at group homes** for vulnerable adults and children, looking at safety standards, regulations, staffing levels and adequacy of

state funding. **Possible interviewees:** State regulators, group-home operators, legislators, resident-advocate groups, Commissioner of Health and Human Services Department.

3. The need for informal caregivers is expected to nearly double by 2040. How will employers of all sizes handle the need to be **flexible with employee needs** while maintaining a highly productive workforce? **Possible interviewees:** Maureen Kenney, Director of Aging Services, Wilder Foundation.
4. Evaluate whether assisted living facilities should be licensed, as are nursing homes.

2. Arts

1. Who or what organizations are innovating with **using the arts** as a medium for **community problem solving**, rather than arts for art's sake, good as that always is? **Possible interviewees:** DeAnna Cummins - founder, Juxtaposition Arts, N. Mpls.; Chicago Ave. Fire Arts Center -- Heather Doyle, Artistic Director; Victoria Lauing, Managing Director; Sharon Rodning Bash, ArtsLab; Minnesota State Arts Board, Sue Gens, Director.

3. Agriculture

1. Review the possible impact of **changes in types of crops** grown in Minnesota as climate changes. **Possible interviewees:** Heads of farm organizations; state agricultural commissioner; climate scientists; climate-advocacy organizations; legislators; U of M Agricultural School dean; sustainable farmers/farming experts; Tom Cotter, farmer near Austin, Minnesota.

4. Budgeting

1. Review the ongoing dilemma of **how to distribute additional expenses** for a given service that are attributable to the costs of serving some individuals who require higher levels of service. For example, should specific appropriations be specified for additional expenses or should such expenses be spread uniformly across all beneficiaries? Perhaps ask the folks who run these services what they need to make dollars go further. What more can and should Minnesota do to means-test state services, i.e., its spending programs? **Possible interviewees:** state Commissioner of Finance, Metro Transit, commissioner of Health and Human Services, legislators.
2. Review the history of Minnesota's **Local Government Aid (LGA)** program, its uses by cities and by counties, the distribution formula that was one measure of "need" and its fairness, advise on whether it should be renewed or increased and

to what degree. **Possible interviewees:** present and past directors of the Office of Management and Budget, and leaders of many cities and counties.

5. Business

1. Is there in fact a measurable existing and growing **shortage of qualified workers** in crucial categories, both at large headquarters companies and smaller businesses and manufacturing firms? What are some sensible remedies?

Possible interviewees: State demographer; Bill Blazar, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; someone from Advancing Manufacturing Association; Minnesota Business Partnership, member of Itasca Project steering committee; Steve Hines, director of Labor Market Information, DEED.

6. Campaign Finance

1. Determine options for **controlling rapidly increasing campaign expenses** without violating citizens' first amendment rights. **Possible interviewees:** major campaign finance chairs, DFL & GOP party chairs, watchdog groups.
2. Evaluate the use of social media in campaigns and its contrast with other forms of campaigning. If someone buys an ad, that needs to be reported as a campaign expenditure, but not placements on social media. Blogs. Podcasts. Facebook. Because they are "free," they don't get reported.

7. Civic Life

1. Review how civil **civic engagement** might be more widespread. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
2. Review how to create vibrant communities in a **digital world** that seems more focused on self-centeredness. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
3. Review how well civic organizations are helping **to educate themselves** and others on the important choices that need to be made on the future of the state. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
4. Review how **political parties** might learn to work better together. **Possible interviewees:** chairs of political parties; Larry Jacobs, Professor, Humphrey School of Public Affairs; Paul Ostrow and others from No Labels Minnesota.

8. Child Protection/Foster Parenting

1. Determine how many children are **wards of the state**, how quickly and how effectively the current state and county system of placement in foster care is working as the number of children who are wards of the state increases, due to recent changes in child-protection laws. Review the cost and incentives of this system, where foster parents are recruited, criteria for determining how well children function when sent to various kinds of homes, and the need for other-than-family placements for those who are adolescents. **Possible interviewees:** Department of Health and Human Services, counties, providers of care, child-advocacy organizations and foster-parent organizations.
2. Review state policies on **child outplacement**. That is where kids are temporarily taken away from their families. Families are charged for the cost of outplacement. Eighty percent of these families are at the lowest 10 percent for income. By charging them, we financially destabilize the family. We also spend more money trying to collect from these desperately poor people than we collect. **Possible interviewees:** Trish Skophammer, deputy director of child support, Ramsey County.

9. Cities

1. Review the state's interest in supporting **small towns** in Minnesota.
Possible interviewees: president, association of small cities; several small-town mayors from around the state.
2. City services: Agree on a **basic package of city services** and the state's role in funding them. Services beyond the basics would be 100 percent locally funded or not provided. **Possible interviewees:** League of Cities, legislators.

10. Climate

1. Review the need to **change agricultural practices** for Minnesota to do its part to combat climate change and water pollution. **Possible interviewees:** Same as under "Agriculture" above; plus water-pollution experts; clean-water advocacy groups; farm advocacy groups; Steve Woods, Executive Director, Fresh Water Society.

11. Criminal Justice

1. Review the possibilities for reducing the **number of persons in prison** in Minnesota, including changes to the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines, the age when crimes were committed, and the likelihood of individuals re-committing a

- serious crime. **Possible interviewees:** judges and former judges, prosecuting and defending attorneys, Legal Aid Society, public defenders, Department of Public Safety, sheriffs and leaders of police departments.
2. Review whether and when **voting rights for ex-felons** should be restored . **Possible interviewees:** Groups that work with ex-convicts, county probation offices, State Department of Corrections, Secretaries of State--current and former, League of Women Voters and other groups that may have studied the issue, judges, legislators.
 3. **Bail reform** : Review how often people accused of a crime are able to bail themselves out of jail, those who cannot do this, the cost to the jail system of housing those who cannot obtain bail, and other ways of releasing from jail those charged with a crime that assure they will return for required hearings. **Possible interviewees:** Judges, sheriffs, probation offices, prosecuting and defending attorneys, bail organizations, public defenders, Legal Aid Society.
 4. Review releasing people who have served many years in prison and received **sex-offender treatment in prison** , who are committed following their release to a state mental hospital at Moose Lake or St. Peter for indeterminate periods of time. Determine the cost of this system to counties and the state, what other states do with these ex-offenders, and review alternatives that can be developed to reduce the number of men in Moose Lake and St. Peter. **Possible interviewees:** Judges, legislators, attorneys, public defenders, Department of Health and Human Services.
 5. Review whether **marijuana** for non-medical use should be authorized in Minnesota.

12. **Economy**

1. What is different today from the past in the **landscape of economic development** in this region and what are the prospects going forward? What constrains the region? What are, if any, its unique advantages? Are we getting what we pay for in funding a regional organization to represent this metro area? **Possible interviewees:** Michael Langley, CEO, Greater MSP, and Peter Frosch, vice president for strategy; Lee Sheehy, McKnight Foundation. Bill Blazar, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce; Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED).
2. Review the **impact of local government investment** in economic development. **Possible interviewees:** DEED; city economic development officials, private businesses.
3. What should be the purpose and focus of **economic development policy**: company-specific incentives or assistance? Statewide policies aimed at facilitating economic change and growth? Something else? **Possible**

interviewees: Department of Employment and Economic Development; Metropolitan Council; legislators; Greater MSP; city economic development officials.

13. Education

1. Review the ways **disruptive students** are handled in various school districts, their rates of suspension, what school districts do with suspended students, how State-Approved Alternative Programs (SAAP)-Alternative Learning Centers (ALC), Alternative Learning Programs (ALP), Contracted Alternatives and Targeted Services for K-8 students-are provided in school districts and by contract with outside providers; review the performance of these alternative programs and the educational outcomes of students in them. **Possible interviewees:** school districts; State Department of Education, including commissioner and Sally Reynolds, who works with alternative programs; alternative program providers: ALCs, ALPs, contracted alternatives, targeted services; juvenile detention centers and juvenile correctional program administrators; county probation departments; legislators; child-advocacy groups; Minnesota Association of Alternative Programs (MAAP).
2. Review **how high school and college sports are organized** in the United States, as compared to that of other countries. **Possible interviewees:**

3. Review the levels and **formulas** by which the state distributes money **for education**. **Possible interviewees:** House and Senate education finance staff, legislators on education finance committees, school district officials.
4. Review **tuition policies** that might ease the burden on families and students at state postsecondary institutions, including the feasibility of a significantly larger investment in the Minnesota State Grant Program, which provides need-based financial aid to students from low-income and middle-income families. **Possible interviewees:** Larry Pogemiller, Commissioner, Minnesota Office of Higher Education; University of Minnesota officials; Minnesota State officials; Paul Cerkenik, president of the Minnesota Private College Council.
5. Review how to work on **issues of housing, nutrition, incomes, jobs, and health** care that could be determinative factors in the education of low-income students. Put another way: How do you address these issues without letting principals and teachers off the hook to show measurable results in educating our children? **Possible interviewees:** _____.
6. Review how to really **invest in education**, to get the benefits to the people who populate the process. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
7. Review the extent to which **academic research** in public institutions is based on solving real public problems as opposed to just serving academia. **Possible**

interviewees: deans, U of M; U of M Medical School; Engineering school; Social Work School; Carlson School of Management; Humphrey School of Public Affairs.

8. Review whether a bias against **vocational-technical education** is denying high school students the opportunity to consider attractive, income-producing options for future occupations. There is lots of interest in this question, especially among businesses that can't find entry-level workers. Possibly combine this idea with some rethinking of the timing and sequencing of higher education, e.g., consider: high school, certificate program for some skill (6 months), job, another certificate (this time, while working), job, start a degree program part-time and transition to full-time, degree, job. **Possible interviewees:** employers of technically-trained workers; community college deans/presidents; private technical school leaders (e.g., Dunwoody); Printers Association of Minnesota; Minnesota Newspaper Association; Dan Smith, formerly with Minnesota Department of Education and the Career Pathways and Technical Education Advisory Task Force.
9. Review whether education would be improved if **teachers**, in addition to being accountable for the performance of students, were also chiefly responsible for **deciding how students are educated**. **Possible interviewees:** Madeline Edison, executive director, Educators for Excellence; chair, Education Minnesota; Ted Kolderie and Bob Wedl of Education|Evolving.
10. Review whether **compensatory education aid** is actually going to the students and schools for whom it's intended. **Possible interviewees:** Ted Kolderie, some of same interviewees as under section "C" above, finance directors in Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts, advocacy groups for poor and underachieving students and schools, Minneapolis teachers union.
11. Review the role of **teacher associations**. With the teacher-powered schools movement gaining more traction, wouldn't some state associations be the first to risk become a promoter of this professional option for teachers? What about experimenting with retirement investment? How are funds invested? What are returns? What would need to occur to ensure that retirement funds are sufficient for retirees? **Possible interviewees:** Denise Specht, Education Minnesota; Louise Sundin or other retired heads of local union chapters; Mary Cathryn Ricker, Executive vice president of American Federation of Teachers (AFT) nationally and former head of Saint Paul union (still lives here).
12. Why does no media organization ask the obvious question, in the face of chronic deficits in school districts? Why do they just assume that the **operational model of schooling** is somehow sacred, that it cannot change, that districts cannot or will not consider more economical and efficacious models of operations? It seems that they tacitly accept the current mode, never asking the tough but relevant question. **Possible interviewees:** Andy Wallmeyer, publisher,

MinnPost; an editor from the *Star Tribune*, where they have recently assigned their least experienced reporters to this beat.

13. Is it time to consider undoing the grand scheme of State Senator Roger Moe and separate the systems that now make up the **Minnesota State System of Colleges and Universities**? How well has it worked? Are there problems that appear intractable? Has anything like a common culture evolved? Who might lead such a discussion? **Possible interviewees:** Bob Hoffman, longtime member of board; Steven Rosenstone, retired chancellor; Larry Litecky, White Bear Lake, retired president and former union official; Roger Moe.
14. rethink **testing and its relationship to state educational standards**. We are using and want to encourage all kinds of learning models. Given this environment, what's the best way to check to see if the children are learning to read, write, calculate and think? **Possible interviewees:** Minnesota Department of Education, testing advocates and alternative-assessment advocates.
15. Review whether a targeted approach to attacking the problems of education in the **Minneapolis Public Schools** is preferable to folding those problems into a statewide attack. **Possible interviewees:** Minneapolis Schools superintendent, Education|Evolving, Minnesota Department of Education, Minneapolis parents association, Minneapolis teacher(s) and principal(s), charter school leaders in Minneapolis, legislators.
16. Review the cost of federal and state **special education mandates** that specify in detail who is entitled to special education, how special education is to be delivered, numbers of children per teacher, etc.; the funding provided to local school districts by these levels of government; and the remaining financial burden on the districts. Determine what would happen if the district simply matched the state and federal funds with local funds and then provided the level of services these funds would provide. **Possible interviewees:** Minnesota Department of Education, school districts, special education advocacy groups, college education professors, non-special education teachers and parent groups, legislators.
17. Determine what accounts for the **total cost per student** for elementary and secondary students in school districts, those costs required by the state or federal government, the varying amounts of funds provided by the federal and state governments, and the educational results from varying levels of spending. **Possible interviewees:** School districts, Minnesota Department of Education, legislative staff, legislators.
18. Review the impact of social-services mandates on maintaining the traditional academic curriculum.

14. Elections

1. Review whether changes should be considered that would produce more **competitive elections** in districts whose voters are predominantly aligned with one party. **Possible interviewees:** Secretary of State, experts on redistricting-local or national, GOP and DFL party chairs, League of Women Voters.
2. Determine the impact of **ranked-choice voting** on voter participation; the expense of campaigning; the role of political-party endorsements; its use in place of primaries or for primaries for various kinds of local, state and federal elections; and in all general elections and the concerns that eliminating primaries and having so many candidates on a general election ballot (e.g., as happened in 2017 elections for mayor of Minneapolis and St. Paul) greatly reduces the ability of two (or perhaps more) candidates to debate critical issues one-on-one. Also review sources of financing for supporters and opponents of ranked-choice voting. **Possible Interviewees:** Secretary of State, political scientists, voting observers, political-party leaders, legislators, advocates.

15. Energy

1. What improvements to Minnesota's environment would occur if **energy production technologies** were improved? Changed? Distributed differently? Should energy producers work more collaboratively? When will use of solar, wind, and other alternative energy sources increase sufficiently to produce measurable and positive changes on the state's environment? **Possible interviewees:** olf Nordstrom, Great Plains Institute; Xcel Energy; Public Utilities Commission staff or commissioner(s); energy experts at U of M.
2. How can we best encourage **innovation and competitive pricing**? MN has relied on state mandates and regulations for all things energy. The result is lagging (or the wrong) technology and prices that are increasingly uncompetitive. What's a better model? **Possible interviewees:** Same as for A, but add energy economist.
3. Review current energy production and what is needed to make a significant positive impact on the environment.

16. Environment

1. Review range of threats and trends on **water quality**, including surface waters and groundwater, infrastructure for potable and wastewater statewide. **Possible interviewees:** Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Sierra Club, Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, Pollution Control Agency experts.
2. Review progress of Minnesota's rapid shift to **renewable** energy and other policies involving energy sufficiency and climate action. **Possible interviewees:** Minnesota Conservative Energy Forum, wind and solar industry associations,

Mortenson Construction officials (largest U.S. company building renewable energy infrastructure projects), environmental activist groups, including Climate Generation, Minnesota 350, Great Plains Institute and Fresh Energy.

17. Equity

1. Review state and regional trends **on income and wealth inequality**, including dynamics of widening gap between top 1 percent and top 10 percent versus bottom half, and review large and small policy options for closing gaps. **Possible interviewees:** recently created Opportunity and Inclusive Growth Institute of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank, Kate Wolford of McKnight Foundation, Minnesota Budget Project (Nan Madden), Growth & Justice (Jane Leonard or Dane Smith), Greater MSP staff and leadership.
2. Review status and dynamics of **racial disparities** in education, workforce training, health, environment, and economic outcomes, and all options for closing gaps and improving opportunity, assets and equity for people of color. **Possible interviewees** include: Voices for Racial Justice;, new leaders and staff of ethnic councils; African-American Leadership Forum; Bruce Corrie (St. Paul Planning and Economic Development Director); Human Rights Commissioner Kevin Lindsey; Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Commissioner Shawnterra Hardy; foundation leadership and policy experts, such as R.T. Rybak (Minneapolis Foundation), Ann Mulholland and Eric Jolly (St. Paul Foundation), Kate Wolford and Lee Sheehy (McKnight Foundation), Kathy Annette (Blandin Foundation) or Bob Tracy (Minnesota Council of Foundations).

18. Faith

1. Review how **faith(s) and public life** interact; would seek commentary from Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism. **Possible interviewees:** Chuck Lutz, Archbishop Bernard Hebda (Catholic); Bishop Brian Prior (Episcopal); Lutheran Church Leaders; African American Church Leader, Mega Church Leader, Minnesota Council of Churches.

19. Government Structure

1. Review whether an opportunity for voters and school boards to select from among optional **governing structures** should be available in individual school districts. **Possible interviewees:** chair, Minnesota School Boards Association; Ted Kolderie of Education|Evolving; legislators; League of Minnesota Cities- someone who knows about how the optional forms of city governance process worked; former Saint Paul Mayor Chris Coleman; district superintendents and

school board chairs; national organization(s) that might have looked at this issue around the country, if there are any. _____

2. Review whether **areawide elected positions** similar to that of mayors of cities and governor of the state should also be established for county and school governments. **Possible interviewees:** Ted Kolderieof Education|Evolving, Minnesota School Boards Association, Association of Minnesota Counties, government-structure experts.

20. Health

1. Review the future of **MinnesotaCare**. There are recurring suggestions about phasing this 1993 law out. Positioned as the program for people too poor to get insurance on their own and too affluent to get it through Medicaid, is that positioning now obsolete? What are the demographics of users today? What would replace the coverage for people caught in this gap? **Possible interviewees:** Legislative actors; Tom Moss, retired from both the Department of Health and Human Services and Public Strategies Group (PSG), a consulting firm. He was the key support staff on numbers when the bill was being debated; Jim Schowalter, former commissioner of finance and now president of the Minnesota Council of Health Plans.
2. Alternatives to traditional **health insurance** for groups and individuals: What are they? Look at new models being offered to farmers and through religious groups. Why not let Minnesotans buy policies approved in other states? Restructure medical assistance so it anticipates some recipients going back to private-sector group or individual policy? **Possible interviewees:** Jim Showalter, president of the Minnesota Council of Health Plans; legislators, Minnesota Department of Health and Human Services.
3. Review the cost of construction and capital invested in **expensive medical equipment** (e.g., MRI machines) by hospitals, specialized clinics (e.g., Orthopedics and Mental Health), emergency treatment centers, emergency facilities in hospital trauma centers in the Twin Cities area and throughout the state. Determine how much these investments add to the cost of health care or contain its rising cost and determine if state approval should continue or be increased. **Possible interviewees:** State Department of Health and Human Services, insurance companies, care providers, legislators.
4. Review claims of **toxicity** of certain legalized drugs and whether they should be banned.
5. Review whether Minnesota should move to a **single-payer** health care system.

21. Housing

1. Evaluate the impact of municipal **building codes and ordinances** on the expense of housing. Distinguish/separate building codes from zoning codes, which have two different focuses (the qualitative design of the building itself, vs the quantitative shape, size, location, and allowed uses of a building) and are controlled by different institutions (local municipal governments vs the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry). **Possible interviewees:** Mary Tingerthal, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency commissioner; Deidre Schmidt, executive director, Commonbond Communities; Jim Solem, former commissioner, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency; private housing construction companies.
2. Review the major proposals for creating **affordable housing**. Include a review of financing innovations/changes and regulations to meet the number of affordable units in coming decades. **Possible interviewees:** same as A; housing developers and redevelopers; nonprofit and church groups involved in affordable housing, such as Beacon Interfaith Housing.
3. Evaluate how municipal **zoning codes** affect environmental, racial, economic, fiscal, social, and health policy outcomes. Beyond euclidean separation-of-use regulations, "zoning codes" usually also refer to parking requirements, height requirements, FAR (floor-area ratio) requirements, setback requirements, density or unit/acre requirements, etc. **Possible interviewees:** Tom Basgen (Sustain Ward 3), Jacob Frey (Minneapolis Mayor), Lisa Bender (Minneapolis City Council President), Kevin Gallatin (Highland District Council President), Nick Magrino (Minneapolis Planning Commission).

22. **Human Capital**

1. Review the need for, and adequacy of, strategies designed to increase the **size of Minnesota's workforce**. **Possible interviewees:** State Demographer; Department of Employment and Economic Development; legislators; review Civic Caucus interviews and reports from the Caucus's human capital focus of 2014 and 2015.
2. Review how Minnesota might respond to a critical need to attract more **educated and talented workers**. Many of the new jobs—well paying but requiring different preparation from traditional college—are for skilled technical positions and are not on track to be filled. **Possible interviewees:** Heads of state business associations; technical education providers; state economist; legislators.
3. Educating more **homegrown talent**, utilizing today's under-tapped human resources (aging workers and the disabled, for example), reforming immigration policies to make them better serve Minnesota's needs, and offering the compensation and benefits (child care/early ed and housing support) that will keep more people in this state and in the workforce.

Possible interviewees: DEED.

4. In light of the transition to a digital economy, review the question of **rethinking the concept of jobs**, reconfiguring the social contract, moving toward a system of lifetime learning, and developing a new kind of politics that can deal with economic dislocations. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
5. Review whether Minnesota will develop sufficient **talent from within** to fill available jobs or whether a widespread program to recruit **talent from elsewhere** is essential. **Possible interviewees:** Michael Langley, CEO, Greater MSP; Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) Commissioner; Steve Hines, DEED; State Demographer; State Economist.

23. Immigration

1. Determine the impact of immigration on Minnesota's workforce and possible steps to attract **more immigrants** to the state. **Possible interviewees:** Steve Hines, DEED.
2. Review the public costs of **sponsorship**, health care, education, and job development for refugees and immigrants who come to Minnesota and the level of government that provides funds for these and other expenses. **Possible interviewees:** various state departments: counties and school districts: Chambers of Commerce; sponsors, e.g., Council of Churches, Catholic Charities, etc.

24. Income

1. Review how to **increase incomes** for the lowest-income population. **Possible interviewees:** State economist; academics with expertise in this area; low-income advocacy groups.

25. Infrastructure

1. Review the options for **financing infrastructure investment** in Minnesota, by type, location and price. Look at models outside the U.S., e.g., Canada, Hong Kong. **Possible interviewees:** _____
2. Review federal, state and local policies related to **substantial maintenance, construction and replacement** of structures, the addition of new structures, and the ways in which these are financed by federal, state and local governments. These include: educational and research buildings, land acquisition, prisons, sanitary and storm water collection and treatment, state hospitals, state and local administrative facilities, police, jail and fire centers,

zoos, locks and dams, convention centers, sports and ice centers, etc. **Possible interviewees:** State Departments of Management and Budget and of Administration; universities and colleges; school districts; counties; cities; Metro Council; Department of Natural Resources (DNR); legislators.

26. Judiciary

1. Review whether a different approach should be followed in **selecting judges**. **Possible interviewees:** Former judges, lawyer advisory committees, governor or former governor or staff involved in judicial selection, someone from U of M Law School who might have expertise on the subject.

27. Legislature

1. Review the question of decline of individual legislators' influence versus **concentration of legislative power** in the hands of top leadership. **Possible interviewees:** majority and minority leaders, individual legislators or former legislators, lobbyist or former lobbyist.
2. Review whether to make substantive changes to the legislative process to **combat partisan gridlock**. **Possible interviewees:** Same as A; No Labels members, Jack Davies and other former or current legislators; good government groups.
3. Look at how the **Legislature sets its priorities**. **Possible interviewees:** Legislative leaders; major committee chairs; governor, former governor or governor's staff.
4. Review how to make **sensible public policy** in light of seemingly inevitable informal alliances of interest groups, lobbyists, executive and legislative staff and heads of relevant committees. **Possible interviewees:** Good government groups.
5. In light of the Minnesota Supreme Court's decision in the Rebecca Otto case, review what internal controls might be considered by the Legislature to resist the temptation to load **several different subjects into one bill**. **Possible interviewees:** lawyers for contending parties; Jack Davies.

28. Media

1. Review the long-term impact of continued **contraction** in size and number of **traditional media**. **Possible interviewees:** Andrew Wallmeyer and Andrew Putz, *MinnPost*, former *Star Tribune* and *Pioneer Press* news staff; Ted Kolderie.

29. Metropolitan Affairs

1. Determine how to preserve the Metropolitan Council's long-term leadership in **regional planning**, while at the same time being responsible for operating major systems. **Possible interviewees:** Chair, Metro Council; John Adams, retired professor, U of M; Citizens League Executive Director Pahoua Hoffman.
2. Review whether reliance by cities, counties and school districts on **property taxes** undermines the effectiveness of the Metropolitan Council. **Possible interviewees:** Same as A; League of Cities; Association of Counties; Mark Haveman, Center for Fiscal Excellence,
3. Explore when the Metropolitan Council determines a proposal is of **metropolitan significance**, what it takes to get this determination and the consequences of such a determination. **Interviewees:** Chair and members of the Council, counties and cities, legislators.

30. Natural Resources

1. Evaluate the pros and cons of **removal of locks and dams** on the Mississippi River at St. Anthony Falls and at the Ford Dam. **Possible interviewees:** Local representatives, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
2. Take a look at how Minnesota **manages water**. There have been lots of changes in the last few years. Are we on the best path? **Possible interviewees:** Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota DNR, environmental groups, Commissioner of Agriculture.

31. Pensions and Retirement

1. Seek independent analysis of the long-term **viability** of Minnesota's **governmental retirement systems**. **Possible interviewees:** Mark Haveman, Minnesota Center for Fiscal Excellence; Legislative Commission on Pensions and Retirement.
2. Review options for giving younger workers **incentives to save** for retirement. **Possible interviewees:** Minnesota Business Partnership, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce.

32. Philanthropy

1. Evaluate the **balance in philanthropic giving** between grants for direct service delivery and grants seeking to get at root causes of problems. **Possible interviewees:** chairs of major foundations; one or two donor-advised fund account holders; influence of large private foundations (e.g., Gates Foundation, Margaret Cargill) on practices/behaviors of others; family foundations (Phillips Family Foundation).
2. Review whether nonprofit groups are **changing their objectives** to satisfy the objectives of their funders. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
3. What's the best role for the **United Way**? It's moving toward public policy and directing public-sector dollars. Is that best? Should it instead focus on private-sector solutions to community-wide problems? **Possible interviewees:** Executive director, Greater Twin Cities United Way.

33. Planning

1. Compare arrangements for the **planning function** in Minnesota state government with those of other states. **Possible interviewees:** Tom Triplett, former State Planning director; former Gov. Tim Pawlenty; national organization of State Planning Agencies or comparable organization; selected examples of good agencies in other states-e.g., Washington state; legislators with an interest in planning; Metro Council on how it might interact with a State Planning Agency.
2. How **future-looking** will the state be, i.e., focusing on the issues of the day or longer-term direction. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
3. Review the extent to which **public investment decisions** are based on investing for the future as contrasted with investing to meet today's needs. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
4. Review how important it is to **change the nature of services** as conditions change, such as accommodating changes in means of travel and changes in composition of households. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
5. Review the extent to which some kind of **state planning requirement** should be imposed on state agencies. **Possible interviewees:** _____
_____.

34. Poverty in Minnesota

1. Research on **concentrated poverty** suggests it may have an **overarching impact** on residents-even those who are not themselves low-income-such as reducing

potential economic mobility and negatively affecting their overall health and well-being. **Possible interviewees:** Tim Marx, President and CEO, Catholic Charities.

35. Prisons and Corrections

1. Determine if Minnesota corrections policy is producing **more incarceration** than is desirable. **Possible interviewees:** Minnesota Department of Corrections.
2. Review the work of the Minnesota Sentencing Guidelines Commission and the adoption of **sentencing guidelines** and their impact on the numbers incarcerated in state prisons and the numbers under supervision of county corrections. Determine if these should be changed. **Possible interviewees:** Judges, attorneys, Department of Corrections, national experience, legislators.

36. Public-Service Delivery

1. Review ways to improve the relationship between investment in public services and **accountability for results**. **Possible interviewees:**
_____.

37. Revenues

1. Review the impact on the state's funding of essential services **when revenue formerly flowing into the general fund is diverted constitutionally** for specific functions. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
2. Review how the state should adjust its tax structure in light of **federal tax changes**. **Possible interviewees:** Commissioner of revenue; Mark Haveman, Center for Fiscal Excellence; John James, former commissioner of revenue, legislators.
3. Review how revenue policies deliberately, or inadvertently, stimulate other non-revenue-related policies, such as **development impact**. **Possible interviewees:**
_____.
4. Review how to advance ideas that will impose some form of controlling **escalating expenses of public services**. **Possible interviewees:**
_____.
5. Review whether the **sales tax** should be broadened to cover now-exempt items or, alternatively, whether the rate should be increased, particularly in light of changes that are being considered in taxing Internet sales. **Possible interviewees:** Same as B.

6. Review how to include **expenditure restraint and gaining productivity** in service delivery when making decisions on revenue sources, such as rate or size of the revenue base. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
7. Review possibilities of having only **one bracket** in tax law. Everybody at the same rate. No loophole deductions. Incentive credits used to promote the greater good.

38. Rural-Urban Divide

1. This seems only to get worse and undermines what used to be the state's capacity to reach agreement on key legislative issues. Is there any **common ground**, anything to build on to establish enough mutual trust to work from? Evaluate whether definitions of rural economic development should include agriculture, transportation, LGA, and rural broadband. **Possible interviewees:** Jim Hovland, Regional Council of Mayors (RCM) co-chair (who has taken some trips to rural cities); Caren Dewar, executive for Urban Land Institute Minnesota (which staffs the RCM); Cheryl Hills and others with nine regional development commissions and the Minnesota Association of Development Organizations; Bernadine Joselyn with Blandin Foundation; leaders of six regional Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFS); Jane Leonard (Growth & Justice), former director of rural broadband grants program for DEED.

39. Social Services

1. Review the need for, supply, and quality of **foster homes** in Minnesota, with emphasis on highlighting experiences of mistreated children. **Possible interviewees:** *Star Tribune* reporters who wrote series on children in foster homes; county child welfare officials; Commissioner of Health and Human Services.

40. Sports

1. Is there any support for **unbundling the sports structure** in Minnesota, giving city recreation departments the responsibility for sports and getting the big sports out of schools? Is there, as is often claimed, a perverse effect in the metro area, an incentive to have larger and larger high schools in order to sustain a pool that creates hyper-competitive athletes, despite the known disadvantages of large schools? Would there be rural advantages in such a shift-e.g., being able to keep your teams, even if school districts have to consolidate? Wouldn't this also sweep in the kids who are enrolled in private or chartered public schools? **Possible interviewees:** Someone retired from the High School League and free

to speak; academic who's an expert on school size and effect on sports opportunities.

2. Review the pros and cons of allowing **betting on sports teams** in Minnesota, in light of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision on the subject. **Possible interviewees:** _____.

41. **Transportation**

1. Determine whether **new ways of transportation** are needed to better serve people's residences and their job locations. **Possible interviewees:** commissioner of transportation; Dr. Yingling Fan, Center for Transportation Studies, U of M.
2. Explore ways to improve transit from **inner city to suburban job locations**. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
3. Demand for **elderly and handicapped transportation** is growing rapidly as the numbers of baby boomer elderly increase and as desires and services increase to include Metro Mobility, handicapped taxis and Uber in the Twin Cities area and in some smaller towns in Minnesota. Review how priorities and prices are set for these services, whether transportation or health/welfare agencies are the most appropriate providers of these services, the impact of the federal mandate for these services, and how these services should be funded in the future. **Interviewees:** MnDOT, Metro Council, State Departments of Health and Human Services and of Labor and Industry, legislators.
4. Review the extent of, reasons for, and how to **control escalation** in the expense of building transportation systems. **Possible interviewees:**

5. Review options for **financing tripsto and from work** for low-income workers. **Possible interviewees:** _____.
6. Review the extent to which **heavy trucks** on highways pay for the greater investment to support heavy trucks. **Possible interviewees:** head of trucking association; MnDOT.
7. To discourage over-use of a system, review how to **design payment systems** so that those who benefit will assume a fair share of the expense **Possible interviewees:** MnDOT.
8. In states where demonstrations and testing are under way, it looks like the advent of **autonomous vehicle service** is being led by technology companies and car companies. In Minnesota, the public sector looks more prominent, particularly MnDOT, which apparently was losing out on some grants because it did not have anything going on in automation. What are the state or regional

policies that would prepare a smart region to be successful with the adoption period of autonomous vehicles? **Possible interviewees:** Jay Hietpas, state traffic engineer.

9. Review the **cost of construction index** for the past ten years as experienced by MnDOT and the counties, determine what accounts for it rising at rates that far exceed the cost of living, and determine what can be done to contain this escalation. **Possible interviewees:** MnDOT, counties, contractors, engineers.
10. Review how **standards for roadway construction** have changed, what is now required or desired in the construction of a typical mile of freeway or major roadway and the change in cost. For example, sanitary and storm sewers, storm-water containment ponds, bike lanes, pedestrian walkways on bridges or alongside the road, lighting, signal systems, noise walls, lane dividers and separators, pavement strength, etc. **Possible interviewees:** MnDOT, federal, county and city transportation departments.
11. Transit costs of Metro Transit. Review the **various costs of providing transit** in the metropolitan area, including those directly related to line services, administrative and law enforcement costs and their allocation to various types of service, and the allocation of overhead costs, such as administration and law enforcement. Explore the cost of service during peak commuter service, service to seniors and the disabled, to school districts, the state fair, events, MnDOT, for light-rail transit, express bus and regular bus service, and others. Review how much these costs have changed in the past ten years and projections for changes in the next ten years. **Interviewees:** Metro Transit, Metro Council, MnDOT, transit employee unions, suppliers of transit equipment, Federal Transit Administration, Legislative Auditor, State Management and Budget, legislators.
12. **Funding of Metro Transit.** Review experiments with providing transit vouchers for low-income families and individuals, revenue from contracts with school districts, the Minnesota State Fair, MnDOT, employer transit vouchers and passes, job agency and other purchasers of passes, fare-box revenues from peak period fares, regular fares, senior and youth fares, light-rail transit, express bus and regular bus fares, tax collections from districts that benefit from transit service, state appropriations, and county sales taxes. Determine where revenue from each of these is sufficient to cover the cost of the service, and where adjustments may need to be made. **Possible interviewees:** Metro Transit, Legislative Auditor, State Management and Budget Department, State Auditor, legislators. Minnesota Transportation Alliance.
13. Funding of roads and bridges. Review the various sources of funding for state, county municipal and township roads and the principles that operate to justify these sources, such as use made of the roads, time of day and congestion costs, construction and maintenance costs, time of the year, costs associated with weight, costs associated with the cost of construction, property access, districts

or adjoining property that benefit from investment in and improvement to roads and streets, and bikes and other vehicles that use roads and streets. Review various proposals for funding roads, bridges and streets from existing users and those that will be used by electric vehicles and autonomous vehicle services and what changes may need to be made. **Possible interviewees:** MnDOT, Minnesota Transportation Alliance, counties, cities, townships and many others.

14. Evaluate the impacts of **under-investment in non-automotive transportation**, like transit and pedestrian infrastructure. A large geographic majority of Minnesota has poor or nonexistent means of transportation beyond driving. What is the extent of the environmental, racial, economic, fiscal, social, and health impacts of this? **Possible interviewees:** Dr. David Levinson (Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at the U of M), Reuben Collins (Transportation planner/engineer at the City of St. Paul), Andy Singer and Ethan Osten (co-chairs of the St Paul Bicycle Coalition), Janne Flisrand (Streets.mn Vice-Chair).

42. Water

1. Review the adequacy of state policies to control **water pollution**. **Possible interviewees:** Steve Woods, Executive Director, Fresh Water Society; Pollution Control Agency.
2. Review the question of whether the **Great Lakes** should be tapped as a source of water for the water-poor Southwest states. **Possible interviewees:** Great Lakes Commission.

Reader Responses to June 24, 2018, List of Critical Issues

Carol Becker

You are missing a huge number of critical issues.

For elder care, you should be talking about the unregulated assisted-living industry, as it is much more critical than any of the things you listed. Large numbers of people are being housed in completely unregulated settings. One fire in an unregulated assisted-living complex and this will become a huge issue.

For campaign finance, you should have a discussion about social media and the lack of reporting on use of social media. If I buy an ad, I have to report it but if I use social media I don't. Blogs. Podcasts. Facebook. Because they are "free" they don't get reported. This makes campaign finance reporting almost meaningless.

For Child Support, Trish Skophammer, the Deputy Director of Child Support at Ramsey County did her dissertation on child outplacement. That is where kids are temporarily taken away from their families. Families are charged for the cost of outplacement. 80% of these families are at the 10% for income. By charging them, we financially destabilize the family. We also spend more money trying to collect from these desperately poor people than we collect.

Legal reform: legalize pot. It would have a huge impact on disparities in Minnesota.

IRV - For god's sake, bring someone who is a critic of the system and not someone funded by the wealthy foundations. It isn't a fair fight when one side gets hundreds of thousands of dollars and the other side gets none. That is the real discussion with IRV, not IRV itself.

Charles Denny

All the above. But if limited to five, then:

1. Aging. Include the Alzheimer's Association as interviewee.
2. Business + Human Capital.- They deal the with same issues. Include the Business Partnership as possible interviewee.
3. Economy
4. Education
5. Environment.

Thanks for your efforts to make our state even better.

Karen Nelson

1. Immigration
2. Health. Identify toxins such as Roundup, Atrazine, etc. and consider banning them.
3. Education. Is time for academic curriculum being decreased due to increasing time dedicated to social agenda mandates?

Beth Schlangen

If something is not working/poor results. Ones you should be talking to are the people /consumers and laborers/providers. They know what is needed and wanted. If services are lacking they need to be provided. Others mentioned are not looking out for communities best interests, are butting in where they are manipulating ineffectiveness.

Mindy Kimmel

1-Health including single payer healthcare

2-Economy-rural economic development includes agriculture, transportation, LGA, and rural broadband

Chelle Stoner

Aging and elections

Marina Lyon

Here are my selections from among the 21 topics of issues listed in your email:

Higher Education--Determine how much academic research ties to important state need.

Energy and Environment -- I like study that would include both a review of current energy production and what is needed to make a significant positive impact on the environment

Housing -- Review financing innovations/changes and regulations to determine what is needed to meet the number of affordable units needed in the coming decade.

Gary Williams

TAXES is number one and its not on your list.

Vici Oshiro

I printed all 24 pages so I could get a good look at your options. Found many opportunities to include more than one of the options with others for more efficient use of resources. Have lots of other comments scribbled and will share them when and if someone has the time and patience to look at them

MY 3 choices are:

28. Media -

35. Prisons & Corrections (combine with 11. Criminal Justice?)

38. Rural-Urban Divide - especially if Tim Walz becomes governor.

Good luck and thanks for all you do.

David Robert Groves

I suggest--One bracket in tax law. Everybody at the same rate. No loophole deductions. Incentive credits used to promote the greater good. Outlaw the export of America's money by banks. 18% corporate tax.

Phil Kinnunen

Planning, infrastructure, education.

John Cairns

Education, HEALTH, EQUITY

ARE MY TOP THREE.

Jack Swanson

1. Human Capital
2. Business
3. Rural/Urban Divide

Gregory Marcus

13. Education
18. Faith
31. Pensions and retirement

Paul B. Double

21 Housing - Affordable capped at 30% of community take home wage without government assistance and family size consideration

25 Infrastructure - Dedicated Sinking Funds

41 Transportation - Revenue sourcing from users other than gas and diesel fuel taxes

Gail Kulp

My top 3:

Education - with so many topics it may be necessary to prioritize within. Wise investment in public education to e

provide a level playing field is crucial for all of us.

Health

Transportation

I may have missed it but don't remember reading anything on border to border broadband.

Fred Senn

1. Campaign finance
2. Education
3. Legislature

Scott Halstead

Thank you for your work!

Jim Cammarato

1. Elder Cooperatives:

For example U. of MN elder/retired alumni Coop's that can utilize campus facilities and student interns/volunteers.

2. Expensive performing arts centers must be funded by fortune 500 companies (or equivalent) headquartered in the community. They have an obligation to give back to the community. Building a performing arts center without a benefactor is what Burnsville, MN is now having to deal with.

3. Provide tax credits to farms that exceed the proposed natural barrier between crop fields and water.

4. Don't spend more than you have.

5. Local governments must recruit businesses that match their high school apprenticeship programs.

6. Clean/Pure water is the issue. Everything else falls into place after clean water.

11. Decriminalized marijuana at the federal level and implement a federal tax. States that decide to legalize recreational marijuana can then tax it at a state county and local sales tax rate.
13. Don't expect education to only exist in a classroom.
15. Tax credits for clean energy.
16. Clean/pure water is the solution everything else falls in line after clean water. Stop being distracted by the special interests that are trying to suck funds away from the singular issue.
20. Use a portion of the sales tax revenue on recreational marijuana use and sports book betting to fund health care grants for each state.
23. Immigration made America great but it must be legal. No exceptions.
25. Use a portion of the sales tax on recreational marijuana and sports book betting.
29. The Met Council does not serve its intended purpose and needs to re-set or disband.
30. Water, Water, Water
31. End defined pension plans.
42. Solve the clean water issue first. Do not violate the Great Lakes, build pipelines to drain flood waters from the Red River, Mississippi River etc. to supply the Utah water reservoirs.

John S. Adams

My three choices are actually three facets of the same fundamental topic - namely, how can we ensure that our Metro Areas and our entire state continue to be competitive, continue growing in productive population and in truly productive economic activity:

- >> 13. Education (and training) - for citizenship and career preparation;
- >> 22. Human capital - facing the state's need for its expansion and improved productivity; and
- >> 33. Immigration - as our native MN population growth has stalled (except for specific subgroups), immigrants and their children will supply the growth in Minnesota's population and workforce that will be needed to continue to provide an economic surplus, which can be distributed to invest and to pay for needed services.

The attached statistics are sobering. Minnesota's recent record is "not bad; could be worse," but consider the dilemma facing Illinois (losing population) and other important states that fail to keeping up with the rest of the country. They are in a real bind; once a state falls behind, its chances of catching up and moving ahead of the pack are dim.

Doug Hennes

5a Business

13 Education

27 Legislature

I also have a couple of edits on items; see below:

13d (Education). Review **tuition policies** that might ease the burden on families and students at state postsecondary institutions, including the feasibility of a significantly larger investment in the Minnesota State Grant Program, which provides need-based financial aid to students from low-income and middle-income families. **Possible interviewees:** Larry Pogemiller, Commissioner, Minnesota Office of Higher Education; University of Minnesota officials; Minnesota State officials; Paul Cerkenik, president of the Minnesota Private College Council.

14b (Elections). Determine the impact of **ranked-choice voting** on voter participation; the expense of campaigning; the role of political-party endorsements; its use in place of primaries or for primaries for various kinds of local, state and federal elections; and in all general elections; and the concerns that eliminating primaries and having so many candidates on a general election ballot (e.g., as happened in 2017 elections for mayor of Minneapolis and St. Paul) greatly reduces the ability of two (or perhaps more) candidates to debate critical issues one-on-one. **Possible Interviewees :** Secretary of State, political scientists, voting observers, political-party leaders, legislators, advocates.

Karen Seashore

In no particular order:

Arts: it is what keeps Minnesota culturally vital. We have an amazing arts community that extends beyond the Twin Cities. I might have chosen faith, but the arts engage everyone's soul. We need to foster and nurture it wherever it springs up.

Housing: I am active in Beacon and it is critical -- both in the TC and outside -- to ensure that there is housing for everyone (but particularly for families with children). I choose housing because it is the foundation of other equity initiatives. Without housing, no other social policy can address equity.

Civic life: citizen engagement is one of the features of MN that I loved when I moved here from Massachusetts -- another civic-minded state. Without care, it can erode and we will become a "thin democracy", a civic setting where voting rather than deeper engagement is the norm.

Randy Johnson

1, 5, and 13.

Tyler Hamilton

These two issues/priorities (21.C and 22.A) are missing from this list, but have been hot topics. I would also Amend 21.A to distinguish/separate building codes from zoning codes, which have two different focuses (The qualitative design of the building itself, vs. the quantitative shape, size, location, and allowed uses of a building) and are controlled by different institution (local municipal governments vs the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry).

21. Housing

a. Evaluate the impact of municipal **building codes** on the expense of housing. **Possible interviewees:** Mary Tingerthal, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency commissioner; Deidre Schmidt, executive director, Commonbond Communities; Jim Solem, former commissioner, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency; privatehousing construction companies.

c. Evaluate how municipal **zoning codes** affect environmental, racial, economic, fiscal, social, and health policy outcomes. Beyond euclidean separation-of-use regulations, "zoning codes" usually also refer to parking requirements, height requirements, FAR (floor-area ratio) requirements, setback requirements, density or unit/acre requirements, etc. **Possible interviewees:** Tom Basgen (Sustain Ward 3), Jacob Frey (Minneapolis Mayor), Lisa Bender (Minneapolis City Council President), Kevin Gallatin (Highland District Council President), Nick Magrino (Minneapolis planning commission).

22. Transportation

a. Evaluate the impacts of under-investment in non-automotive transportation like transit and pedestrian infrastructure. A large geographic majority of Minnesota has poor or nonexistent means of transportation beyond driving. What is the extent of the

environmental, racial, economic, fiscal, social, and health impacts of this? **Possible**

interviewees: Dr David Levinson (Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at the U of M), Reuben Collins (Transportation planner/engineer at the City of St Paul), Andy Singer and Ethan Osten (co-chairs of the St Paul Bicycle Coalition), Janne Flisrand (Streets.mn Vice-Chair).

Margaret Donahoe

1. Transportation - add to interview list for funding discussion of highways, transit and other modes: MN Transportation Alliance

2. Infrastructure

3. Urban/Rural Divide

Helen Baer

Wow what an extensive list of issues!

If I had to choose 3:

1. Education

2. Rural-Urban Divide

3. Government Structure

I would choose Education as the most pressing, because having been a recent student of the Minneapolis Public Schools system, I am aware of the impact the access to a public education has had on my upbringing, and my outlook. I also see the tremendous problems that the public schools systems are facing today, and particularly in a climate of stagnancy with regards to policy reform. When the current political climate is so tumultuous, I believe that educating future generations is a priority today more than ever.

I would choose the Rural-Urban Divide and the Government Structure as numbers 2 and 3 for precisely that reason of the turbulent political atmosphere. With the current state of affairs, I believe the Caucus can contribute by adding to the information available to the public as informed voters in the coming elections.

Clarence Shallbetter

Top 3:

21b

39a

41c

Paul Gilje

14a

19b

27a

Jeremy Munson

1. Reduce health care and pharmaceutical costs through price transparency, increasing completion and accountability of pricing.
2. Improve school financing by managing the school trust lands with the interest of schools, teachers and children in mind.
3. Reducing regulations and taxes to improve our job market in MN
4. Strengthen rural communities by shifting LGA dollars to small towns with the greatest unmet needs, including a specific focus on wastewater treatment facilities

Stephen Brosaker

1. Aging and Long-Term Care

1. Examine the challenge facing assisted living, memory care and nursing homes as they try to provide sufficient staffing at living wages. Possible interviewees: Nursing home leaders, state regulators, legislators, patient-advocate groups. Bring in owners of elder care organizations. Bring in children whose parents are in these situations to speak about their observations. Bring in a university researcher who is looking carefully at what is happening. Bring in workers to share their experiences. [I have seen the same staffing problems to care for my mother with 3 different organizations: poorly trained workers, many who have limited education and English language skills, high turnover (workers

7. Civic Life

- a. Review how **civil** civic engagement might be more widespread. I interpret this to mean improving civil civic discourse as a prerequisite for engagement. Possible interviewees: University researcher/s to speak about what influences shifts to or from civil discourse. Representative individuals from each generation about what they think civil discourse is and

how we got to where we are now. News paper editors. TV Producers. Talk Radio producers. Political Party leaders. There is an organization that gets people together from different persuasions to talk and get to know each other - this has made a difference. Bill Barberg - Insight Formation (Golden Valley) has relevant experience helping communities connect to address local concerns.

13. Education

e. Review how to work on issues of housing, nutrition, incomes, jobs, and health care that could be determinative factors in the education of low-income students. Put another way: How do you address these issues without letting principals and teachers off the hook to show measurable results in educating our children? Possible interviewees: **School leaders of schools that serve students with these needs. Contact MAAP for a list of schools. High School For Recording Arts, Minnesota Internship Center**, Schools with 70%+ students qualified for Free & Reduced Lunch program. Nancy Riestenberg (MDE). I have years of experience in schools that seek to address and overcome these barriers. These barriers are powerful influences on when, whether and how much learning students get in school. Surely someone at the U of M or local university is doing research on these things. I object to the phrase "let principals and teachers off the hook." The reason they are working in these schools is to make a difference. Schools are not funded or mandated to address the community and family factors that affect students' learning. Yet all who work with these students know that something must be done and many try. Bring in (or skype) a systems dynamics modeling expert to talk about how diverse factors in a community compound together to produce results that are very hard to change. Don Greer (Bozeman, MT) is a real expert on this - he worked with Rapid City, SD to develop community-wide initiatives to address chronic issues around housing, nutrition, incomes, jobs, health care and racial conflicts.

h. Review whether a bias against vocational-technical education is denying high school students the opportunity to consider attractive, income-producing options for future occupations. There is lots of interest in this question, especially among businesses that can't find entry-level workers. Possibly combine this idea with some rethinking of the timing and sequencing of higher education, e.g., consider: high school, certificate program for some skill (6 months), job, another certificate (this time, while working), job, start a degree program part-time and transition to full-time, degree, job. Possible interviewees: employers of technically-trained workers; community college deans/presidents; private technical school leaders (e.g., Dunwoody); Printers Association of Minnesota; Minnesota Newspaper Association; Dan Smith, formerly with Minnesota Department of Education and the Career Pathways and Technical Education Advisory Task Force. **The Principal of Hutchinson High School to talk about how the school redesigned the high school program with career tracks.** Other schools are seeking to develop technical education programs. However there is an extreme shortage of licensed high school vo-tech coordinators. Tony

Scallon (Minneapolis) would be a good person to share about this side of the system. This topic has significant role in helping with the qualified worker shortage around the state. No Child Left Behind's policy resulted in schools abandoning vocational education along with many other valuable subjects like music, art, computer programming and IT skills, etc.

Terry Stone

43. Size of Government

This list mentions the size of a lot of things except government. The size of government has a roughly linear inverse effect on government efficiency, corruption, waste, transparency, speed and policy efficacy. Does it have to be this way? Maybe not; **a discussion of the topic** would be instructive since the size of government affects its ability to address the other 42 topics.

In addition, incorporate the size of government into each discussion by asking for each topic:

- a. Is the topic under discussion a **core function** of government?
- b. If it is a core function of government, which level of government (local or state, **small or big**) can address the topic best?
- c. If the topic is a matter suitable for government action, is there a private/public partnership, a joint powers agreement, a foundation or an NGO that can address it better or for less money?

Bob Brown

While I would love to comment on many policy areas, I think it is best to consider campaign finance, civic life, and elections first if we are to have government that can function fairly and effectively. As to interviewees, I would suggest anyone but David Schultz or Larry Jacobs - those two seem to have monopolized discussion on public policy in the local media. Give us some fresh voices.