

## **Dan Burton Dinner May 18, 2008**

**Greetings from St Paul! I am so sorry not to be with you tonight! Honoring Dan and Ronnie Burton has become a cornerstone of our local and regional DFL community building. It's been a significant way of honoring our DFL past, enhancing our energy in the present and honing our focus on the future, in this case the near future of November 2008 where our expectations are an amazing victory for our incredible slate of DFLers! (It's always a good year to be a Democrat but this is a GREAT year to be a Democrat!) That win will be the very best way of honoring Dan and thanking Ronnie for their lifetime of support and commitment to progressive politics!**

**It's been quite a year since I last visited with you about the trials and tribulations of a first term legislator. Well I'm a bit wiser now: I know where all the bathrooms are. I've figured out how to manage the eating thing (turn your book case into a pantry, carry snacks in your purse and be kind to your seat mate--he'll bring you a treat or let you know when someone is ordering pizza!). I know how to space the exercise breaks (walk and stretch at every opportunity!) and I can find my way to the Revisor's office!**

**On a bit more serious note, I'm sure all of you are aware that we are in the end game here in St Paul. We have all been working incredibly hard since the end of the last session to bring this biennium to the most productive conclusion possible. There has been lots of study, planning, meeting...all in service of a vision for Minnesota's future: better schools, better roads, better healthcare; support for our families, our communities and our businesses; as well as a long look at the short window that we have to take effective action for the future of our planet and the life it supports.**

**And much has been accomplished: 1) Last year's K-12 funding package made a start toward addressing the under funding of the last decade. We have a vision for a second Minnesota miracle as we move into the next session with the goal of a complete restructuring of the K-12 funding formula. And we've taken strong steps toward a**

**Minnesota accountability system as we work to broaden the narrow perspective of NCLB. 2) WE PASSED THE TRANSPORTATION BILL! And I'd like to publicly acknowledge Speaker Margaret Anderson Kelliher and Representative Terry Morrow for their roles in bringing the Chamber of Commerce on board and maintaining bipartisan support for the veto override! 3) The framework for healthcare reform was built over nine months and hundreds of hours of hearings. And Senator Sheran has been a vital partner in that work! Unfortunately the governor has abandoned his original vision and we are currently working to salvage some elements of this work with a post veto proposal. 4) We've moved forward with the implementation of the Renewable Energy Standard and insisted on the legislature's role in establishing the groundwork for an effective cap and trade program.**

**The legislature has worked at an incredible pace with the dual intent of shaping a long-range vision to guide future policy decisions and getting this session's work done on time. Unfortunately these goals are not completely shared by the governor and his administration. In these final hours of the session we continue to work for that common vision, pass quality legislation and maintain the threads of our guiding vision. WE WILL EACH NEED TO COMMIT OURSELVES FOR THE DURATION TO SUSTAIN THAT VISION AND MAKE IT A REALITY IN THE NEXT BIENNIUM! WE NEED TO WIN IN NOVEMBER AND WIN BIG!! We must come back with an even stronger majority to bring back the Minnesota of our not so far past, a caring and sharing state with a high quality of life for all, sustainable into an uncertain future.**

**We are with you in spirit as we keep working for that future! Have fun tonight and keep doing great work!**