

**Remarks for Senate District 23 Nominating Convention  
May 31, 2008**

**Greetings to each and all of you incredibly committed DFLers! I can't begin to apologize adequately for not being with you today! This is simply a case of an irresolvable collision of plans! (Tony and I are in California celebrating both his nephew's wedding and our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.) Judy Gauch has offered her absolution to me several times. I just hope that her many years of committed service and very sound judgment will speak well for me in my absence!!**

**As we move forward into an incredibly important and exciting election season, I humbly ask for your endorsement and continuing support. It has been my honor and privilege to be an active member of the Mankato community these past many years. And it has been a particular privilege to serve as your state representative these last two years. And an amazing two years it has been! I (along with thirty-six other freshmen members of the House --29 DFLers!) have definitely gotten my "feet wet". In fact it might be more appropriate to say of the lot of us that we've had a full dunking! We have been working very hard to be effective voices for our communities, carrying local issues to the state level and, in turn, bringing state perspectives back to our communities to feed the dialogue that builds common vision and quality of life.**

**As Democrats we have truly been guided and driven by the "Stick to the Basics" agenda of the last campaign: Health Care, Excellence in Education, Property Tax, Lower Tuition and Funding for the Environment. Add to this transportation funding and energy issues and you have the focus of our biennium's work. We have taken significant action in *all* of these areas and I'd be happy to discuss each of these at length...but not today! Many of the steps taken, while significant in their own right, are baby steps compared to our goals**

and vision. And we have the two steps forward, one step back characteristic of the legislative dance. Even more so, the dynamic around these issues and our negotiations with the governor (when there actually *have been* negotiations!) have shaped the movement of the biennium. As Senator Pogemiller noted, the override of the transportation bill (special thanks to Terry Morrow!) brought the governor to the table in a way that he hadn't been there before. This laid the ground for the final days and the timely and successful conclusion of the session.

The minority, being particularly small (and it is our goal to make them smaller!) has need to be more vocal and visible, hence the antics of the floor. But behind the antics lies the truth of democracy and that is the minority has a role! It is our responsibility to understand *their* core messages as well as our own and to know how to move our agenda in a way that acknowledges the truth of theirs: What is the appropriate role of government in relation to the private sector? How do we integrate individual initiative and community responsibility? In calling for accountability, how will we be sure that we are measuring the critical components? How do we protect the needy and vulnerable while supporting a healthy economy? How do we face the challenges of our energy and environmental future while maintaining social order? Are we wearing blinders or magnifying glasses?? I'm sure that you get the gist of this.

These are our challenges and they are not simply legislative challenges, but rather the reflection of what is ahead for all of us. We all need to be reading and heeding the subtext of the message as this most critical campaign year moves forward. I hope that you will continue to entrust me with your voice in St Paul and I truly look forward to working with each of you as move toward victory in November!