

On the ballot: State Rep. 11A

Each week leading up to the Tuesday, November 6 General Election, the Star-Gazette will feature candidates from any number of local races. Below are answers in the State Rep. 11A contest featuring Mike Sundin and Jeff Dotseth

Top Priority:

There are two constitutionally mandated duties for the Minnesota State Legislature, roads for commerce, and a uniform public education system.

The top priority must remain, education. A well-educated workforce is the backbone for a thriving economy. Our public schools must remain second to none to guarantee success for our children. I will seek out and support solutions to close the achievement gap in challenged schools.

Gridlock:

One clear and simple solution to avoid the partisan wrangling in the legislature would be to adopt a rule providing that a bill could not be voted on unless members had at least 24 hours to read it. I will support measures to compel the legislature to adhere to single issue votes, with the exception of bonding issues.

Budget:

Tax conformity with the federal code is unfortunately a must for the next legislature. I did support the last tax bill along with some other democrats due to some provisions that would have provided \$20 million in construction activity in Carlton County. Meaningful tax reform for businesses and homeowners could come in the form of property tax relief.

Education:

Schools are subject to inflationary forces just like everyone else. Adjustments in the general fund will continue to be the source of any increases for schools. We are currently looking at a projected budget surplus that should be dedicated to K-12 Schools as needed.

Education, Higher Ed:

A cradle to grave approach to education and workforce training would serve employers by providing a more rounded employment pool. While Minnesota University's higher education and research programs train some of the world's best employees, we need to be mindful of other career paths that require continuing education.

Health Care:

I spoke passionately on the House floor in support of the "penny a pill" bill that would provide funding from opiate based drugs sales to fund rehab centers and counseling for the addicted. This is a (clean up the mess you created) approach that holds pharmaceutical responsible. Lobbyist for these companies appeared in the last days of the 2018 session to smother this solution with their financial resource and influence over the majority party. I will continue to advocate for shifting the financial burden of rehab programs to the drug companies and away from state funding when possible.

Transportation:

Current funding of the state's trunk highways is not keeping up with maintenance and construction demands. User fees, such as the gas tax assigns fair responsibility of transportation funding to the drivers and industries that utilize our roads. To tap into the sales tax revenues from auto parts for road use without backfilling the void created in the general fund is robbing Peter to pay Paul and is not a solution. I support an incremental increase in the State's gas tax and appropriate millage fee for electric vehicles.

Energy:

As we convert to newer and cleaner energy sources we need to be mindful of moving deliberately with a plan that is will continue reliable affordable service. Any future mandates should be tied to conservation efforts at the residential and industrial levels.

Public Notices:

I understand the convenience and cost savings inherent in distributing public information electronically, which can continue in any case. That said, to continue the trust in government functions, a dependable source of information that reports on public meetings and operations is essential. Bidding opportunities for public works must remain an open and fair process. I have doubts that all bidders would have equal access to a fair process due to the lack of internet service in much of our rural areas. Until there is universal access, we should rely on what has served us well in the past.

Elections:

In Minnesota we hold the distinction of leading the nation in voter turnout already. I am skeptical of the notion that prolonging an election season would increase voter interest. By bombarding voters for an extended period of time, it may lead to voter burnout rather than the intended result. Let's not fix anything that's not broken.

Other Issues:

One thing I've learned in the legislature, is that we don't always get to choose the issues coming forward. One very important pressing issue is the lack of broadband service in rural areas. In every corner of the state there is plenty of room for improvement. Children that are expected to keep up with school work are at a disadvantage, business are limited on the services they could otherwise provide, and public health and safety would benefit through better connectivity. I have been disappointed by the lack of interest by some legislators on this issue. Expanded broadband service should be at the top of every legislators list.

Over the past forty-one years, my wife Terry and I have had the privilege of living in Carlton County and have seen our children succeed in their careers due to an excellent head start provided by Minnesota's public education.

For forty years I have been an active Union Building Trades member serving as an officer and employee. This has enabled me to provide a decent life for my entire family with a secure retirement soon to come.

With the continued support of the good people from Arrowhead to Kerrick Township and everyone along the way, I will continue to serve District 11A and the State of Minnesota to the best of my ability. Thank You.



Sundin

Top Priority: Working to stop the rising cost of health care and bring more price transparency to health care decisions. Next, I will work to bring Minnesota into conformity with the federal tax code so that all Minnesota families can realize the full benefit of tax relief and keep more of their hard-earned dollars.

Gridlock: Elected leaders cannot allow partisan ideology to stand in the way of producing results and doing the work that each is elected to do. We must work together, talk with one another and find common ground. I do support reforms to ensure every legislature can understand the contents of an individual bill.

Budget: We must get our tax code in conformity with the federal tax overhaul so that Minnesotans can realize the full benefit of the tax relief. Governor Dayton should have not vetoed the bill last session which would have provided the first income tax rate cut in over 30 years.

Education, K-12: I will always be an advocate for local schools to ensure they receive their fair share of funding. A student in our community should be worth the same as a student in Minneapolis and St. Paul. We need to bring the tax dollars back to Northern Minnesota.

Education, higher ed: Having a well-educated workforce suited for the jobs today is critically important. I support measures that guide our higher ed institutions to educate people toward the jobs and opportunities that are available for today and tomorrow – especially work in the trades.

Health Care: The opioid epidemic needs to be addressed – but the best answers come through collaboration within a community, where education, law enforcement, health care and community work together to solve the problem. Additional fees are not a good idea, they would be passed on to consumers and ultimately make it more difficult for people to receive the help they need.

Transportation: Transportation is one of three core functions of state government. We can and should dedicate the sales tax on auto parts to funding for roads and bridges. I do not support an increase in the gas tax as it is a regressive tax that hits rural residents hard.

Energy: Both homeowners and businesses suffer far too much from the high cost of energy. Additional mandates and barriers for energy utilities only serve to increase costs for consumers. I oppose additional mandates that do not have our best interest in mind.

Public Notices: I do not agree with some local government bodies eliminating important public notices from newspapers and moving them to government websites. It will save very little money and there are still people that do not have access to the internet and would not have access to those public notices.

Elections: Yes, I am in favor of moving the primary election from August to June in an effort to improve voter turn-out.

Other issues: I will oppose the full government takeover of your healthcare through single-payer. This idea, supported by my opponent would raise taxes on every man, woman and child by \$3000 every year. Instead – we must focus on bringing more choices to the healthcare marketplace and provide price transparency so that families can buy quality health care at a price they can afford.

Personal background and qualifications.

I am running for a political seat, but I am not a politician. I am a lifelong Minnesotan and live on our family farm in Kettle River. I am married and have three children and am blessed with two grandchildren.

I have been in the construction trades most of my life. My father was a self-employed brick layer who taught me the value in an honest day's work. I ultimately shifted into real estate and opened a real estate broker-

age as well as a number of other small businesses. I have served two terms as Baldwin Township supervisor. I have been an active member and past president of North Metro Realtors Association. I am currently a member of Government Affairs Committee for realtors and I am an active member of the, National Federation of Independent Business. I have had the honor to go to Washington D.C. numerous times on behalf of realtors and small business to meet with members of Congress. I am also the Vice President of the Chariots of Light, a Christian motor cycle ministry.

I am running to help restore proper priorities and common sense to state government and to help move beyond the gridlock that prevents meaningful progress from being made on important issues like healthcare, transportation, and economic development.

People appreciate my common sense, "we're all in this together" approach. I hope you'll find that to be a refreshing break from politics as usual and join our campaign to bring efficient and effective government back to Minnesota. I would appreciate your vote on November 6, 2018 so we can take our District 11 A message to St. Paul. Thank you for your support! Jeff A. Dotseth



Dotseth

On the ballot: State Rep. 11B

Each week leading up to the Tuesday, November 6 General Election, the Star-Gazette will feature candidates from any number of local races. Below are answers in the State Rep. 11B contest featuring Jason Rarick and Tim Burkhardt

1. Top priority: I am running for re-election to the House so that I can continue to work on passing term limits and protections for workers and contractors. Getting tax conformity for Minnesota taxpayers will be my top priority this year, without it, hard-working Minnesotans will see a substantial increase in their state income taxes.

2. Gridlock: Unfortunately, what many consider gridlock has been getting worse in recent years. In my experience, the House and Senate have worked together fairly well, even when Republicans controlled the House and Democrats controlled the Senate. The issue came when trying to negotiate with Governor Mark Dayton. I believe both candidates for Governor this year have expressed a commitment to working better with the Legislature and I know that will improve the process.

3. Budget: Again, I believe tax conformity is a top priority. I also believe tax relief is important. As our economy continues to get stronger, the projected surplus grows. State spending has grown tremendously over the last eight years. We need to be wiser with the money we have, slow down the growth of government, and let the people keep more of their own money. Property taxes collected by the state should be the first area addressed.

4a. Education: I believe K-12 education is adequately funded. The problem is in areas like ours, with low property tax values, we are getting less funding per student than districts like Minneapolis and St. Paul. Our school districts do a tremendous job with what they have, but we have all seen and

heard the stories of wasteful spending from the larger metro districts. Equal funding per pupil is something very important and something I will continue to work for on behalf of our small rural school districts.

4b. Education, higher ed: Our vocational schools play a vital role in addressing the workforce shortage. As a society, we must stop telling our youth that they MUST go to college for a four year degree. The trades, manufacturing, and many service oriented careers do not require a four year degree, yet pay as much if not more. We must let our youth know about these opportunities as they are deciding their educational path.

5. Health care: The opioid crisis is a very complicated issue, but a "per pill" fee will only hurt those on these medications, so I believe we need to find a different solution.

6. Workplace regulations: I supported the legislation in 2018. We have some very good legislators from both parties working together on this and I will support it again in 2019.

7. Transportation: I prefer dedicating the taxes from transportation related spending to our roads and bridges. The \$300 million per year added to transportation funding would be tremendously helpful and would not harm education or health and human services funding.

8. Energy: Current storage technology does not support increasing our renewable energy standard right now. I have been working with energy storage companies to help them enter the market. If that is successful, you

will see an increase in renewable energy without government mandates thus keeping costs affordable, which is especially necessary for an area like ours.

9. Public notices: Even though we are seeing a shift in the way people get their information today, not everyone is connected to the internet, so newspapers are still important in our rural towns. So for now, notices should still be included in the newspapers.

10. Elections: I do support a June primary. It would be beneficial to both parties and the people of Minnesota to know who the candidates are before all the local summer events.

11. Other issues:

12. I have served on a number of different boards and committees. I have been an electrician for 26 years and still am outside of the legislative time. I am a lifelong resident of Pine County.



Rarick

1. Top priority: My top priority for the 2019 Legislature is to make significant progress towards reducing and stabilizing healthcare costs, including the cost of prescription drugs. It's time to move towards a system that is affordable, sustainable, and accessible to all; everyone in, nobody out.

2. Gridlock: I would support efforts to make each bill pass or fail on its own merits — up or down. Citizens should be able to see how their representatives vote on a specific proposal and legislators shouldn't be able to subvert transparency by "hiding" their vote in a giant, all-inclusive bill.

3. Budget: Every bill, especially one as far-reaching as a complete tax overhaul, requires thorough analysis. The tax bill passed in late 2017 has created non-stop, and passionate, conversation among the public. Proponents say that the tax bill will stimulate growth and the near term revenue shortfall will be offset by substantial growth in the economy. Opponents to the bill cite the fact that over 80 percent of the tax breaks go to the nation's richest people and corporations, and that the "trickle down" method of managing the economy has been tried many times, without success.

4a. Education, K-12: I don't believe that current funding levels are sufficient if we're going to maintain and grow the quality of our Education system. The basic unfairness of the current per-pupil formula favors larger metro areas over schools located in greater Minnesota, and that certainly applies to all the school systems in this district of Pine and Kanabec counties.

4b. Education, higher ed: More emphasis needs to be placed on en-

hancing our technical school training opportunities as the market shows an increasing demand for many skilled workers in the trades.

5. Healthcare: It was surprising to many that the bipartisan "penny-a-pill" proposal in the 2018 session was never passed. With the skyrocketing cost of prescription drugs and the closely related opioid epidemic, this common sense approach would have helped fund the programs needed to help combat this problem. The defeat of this bill demonstrates the enormous power of the prescription drug and insurance company lobby. The bill, or something closely related, should be put forward again.

6. Workplace regulations: Awareness and enlightenment have moved the subject forward, but more still needs to be done. I would be open to the discussion and creation of not only new standards, but also for rigorous enforcement.

7. Transportation: Revenues from gas taxes are in slight decline and trending downward over the past few years. This is attributable to more fuel efficient vehicles on the road requiring less gas. A combination of some type of wheelage tax needs to also be reconsidered in order to stabilize that revenue stream.

8. Energy: The combination of renewables, like wind and solar, will save money, reduce our need for fossil fuels, and in the process leave us with cleaner air and water.

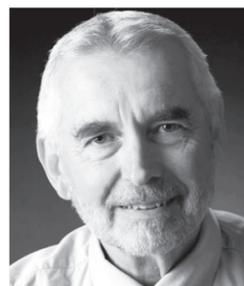
9. Public notices: If government bodies want to be accountable to the

communities they serve, they must make maximum efforts to get the message out to the public. A single government website doesn't improve messaging. Messages/notices need to be communicated broadly.

10. Elections: Giving the public more time for input, as well as getting to know the candidates, is very desirable.

11. Other issues: Veteran's benefits and the availability of needed services.

12. Married to wife, Kathy, for 42 years with two children. Experience includes: 7 County Senior Federation - Executive Director 18 yrs.; Hinckley City Council and Park Board - 10 yrs.; Hinckley Planning Commission - 6 yrs.; Sweet Summer Sounds/Arts in the Park Director - 4 yrs.; MN Association of Small Cities, Region 5 Director and current Vice President - 8 yrs.; Lakes & Pines Board of Directors and Executive Committee - 3 yrs.; East Central Housing Organization Board - 4 yrs.; and Pine Housing Initiative Board - 3 yrs



Burkhardt

VOTE!