



# AFSCME Capitol Update



January 10, 2017

## Legislature Convenes

The 2017 Legislature convened January 3. The first week of session was ceremonial with lawmakers taking the oath of office and committees organizing themselves. The Capitol renovation is complete, doubling the amount of public space and repairing water damage, peeling paint and crumbling plaster. Now every Minnesotan can be proud of our beautifully restored gem.

## MNsure and the Affordable Care Act

Last week, AFSCME members asked legislators to agree to premium relief immediately, so Minnesotans can afford the health care they need and deserve. Governor Dayton's proposal would reduce premiums by 25 percent for 125,000 Minnesotans who purchase their insurance from the individual market. Unfortunately, Republicans want to hold the rebates hostage to reforms. We're open to reform, but changes to MNsure should be done transparently through the legislative process with public input.

In Washington, the Republican plan to gut Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act will make America sick again. It's insane for Republicans to try to repeal the Affordable Care Act and throw millions of people off health insurance, raise prescription drug prices and do away with patient protections, without having any alternative in place.

Insurance companies are responsible for double-digit premium increases. Their profits are bad for our health. Rebates are a short-term fix, but the real solution is to reform the insurance industry.

## Governor Dayton's Tax Proposal Highlights

- Invest \$93.9 million in the Working Family Tax Credit for 372,000 families. This proposal increases the credit per family by \$124 per year.
- Make tax filling easier for Minnesotans by allowing the Department of Revenue to conform with the federal tax code.
- Child Care Affordability: Expand child care relief for 95,000 families; deliver \$61 million in tax cuts for child care; and provide an additional \$379 per year to 75,000 families who are already eligible for child care support.
- College Affordability: Grant \$4.3 million in relief to 35,000 college students in Minnesota.
- LGA and CPA: Permanently increase Local Government Aid by \$20 million and County Program Aid by \$10 million.
- Close corporate tax loopholes and create a uniform tax rate for insurance premiums.

## **Bonding Bill Highlights**

- **Corrections:** Asset preservation (\$20 million); Lino Lakes expansion (\$5 million); St. Cloud wall repair (\$4.4 million); Moose Lake control room renovation (\$1.9 million); Togo expansion (\$2 million); and Willow River expansion (\$1.5 million). TOTAL: \$53.8 million.
- **Health and Human Services:** St. Peter Security Hospital (\$70.3 million); Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center safety and security renovations (\$2.25 million); St. Peter Sex Offender Program (\$14.5 million); Moose Lake Sex Offender Program less restrictive alternatives (\$12.4 million); and Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health Services (CABHS) Facility (\$7.5 million). TOTAL (some projects not included): \$125.5 million.
- **MnSCU and University of Minnesota:** Asset preservation (\$80 million); South Central College (\$9.6 million); Fergus Falls (\$978,000); Bemidji State University (\$18.8 million); Rochester Community and Technical College (\$21.6 million); Winona State (\$25.2 million); Saint Cloud State University (\$18.5 million); Minnesota State Mankato (\$6.5 million); U of M asset preservation (\$55 million); Science building (\$28.2 million); and Health Science Education Facility (\$66.6 million). TOTAL (some projects not included): \$201.8 million for MnSCU, \$154.3 million for University of Minnesota.
- **Department of Natural Resources:** Asset preservation (\$34 million) and Itasca State Park renovation (\$3 million). TOTAL (some projects not included): \$76.5 million.

## **Department of Natural Resources**

AFSCME's DNR Mini-Conference is January 16. DNR members will also go to the Capitol each week to stop privatization and support bonding projects that improve the facilities where they work.

## **Child Protection**

Child Protection Lobby Day is January 24. We will ask legislators to provide funding to help counties hire and retain child protection workers.

## **Corrections**

Corrections Lobby Day is March 7. Members have also been coming to the Capitol to meet with legislators and lobby for the Governor's bonding proposal, increased staffing, and a ban on the use of private prisons.

## **Health and Human Services**

We're working with a large group of advocates to lobby higher funding targets for Health and Human Services. Members are coming to the Capitol to meet with legislators and lobby for safe staffing. They will testify before the House Health and Human Services Finance Committee on January 19 at 1 p.m. in State Office Building Room 200.