



Assistant Minority Leader

JUSTIN D. EICHORN

Representing the 6th District in Minnesota's Senate

Hello,

Friends and neighbors,

Education is an issue that both political parties care about, but the way each party approaches the issue is sharply different. When Republicans were in charge, we put a ton of money into schools, and we want to do it again with the \$17.5 billion surplus. But we believe that we need to focus on fundamentals, like improving literacy.

Democrats used their budget to spend heavily, but that's about it. Worse, their budget proposals have so many mandates that schools are telling us they will end up losing money. One superintendent recently said, "This could be one of the worst sessions I've ever seen."

Republicans have a better plan: the Students First proposal. It puts more money in classrooms, offers more funding for special education, literacy programs, and school safety. And the best part is that it doesn't have any mandates, so schools won't be losing any money.

In August 2022, the Department of Education released assessment results that showed a steady decrease in students meeting standards in reading, math, and science. Between 2018 and 2022, Minnesota went from 60% of students being proficient in reading to only 51%. A similar trend follows for science, decreasing from 52% to 41%, and math, also decreasing from 57% to 44%. Additionally, in 19 schools across the state, not a single student was proficient in math. Our plan will get us back on track.

You can read more about our plan here: <https://www.mnsenaterepublicans.com/senate-republicans-present-students-first-education-plan-offering-better-alternative-to-democrats-mandate-heavy-education-bills/>

Transportation bill has \$2.7 billion in tax increases despite a \$17.5 billion surplus

It might sound unbelievable, but even though we have a lot of extra money, Democrats are still suggesting that we raise taxes by around \$10 billion this year. The Senate recently passed a transportation bill, which is part of this proposal and includes \$2.7 billion in taxes. Some of these taxes include fees for license plates and vehicle registration, a rise in the sales tax for the metro area, and higher taxes on motor vehicles. Here's a closer look at what's included:

- * **\$901.81 million:** 8% increase to the vehicle registration tax. The bill also slows the vehicle depreciation schedule, so people could pay up to 33% more every year
- * **\$223 million:** Increasing license tab fees. This is a \$7.50 fee per transaction, so everybody will pay more
- * **\$214.8 million:** Increasing the motor vehicle sales tax
- * **\$1.397 billion:** Increasing the metro area sales tax. 83% of this revenue would be used for metro transit, while only 17% would be used for metro county roads. Collar suburbs will be shortchanged by this provision – they would pay the additional tax but receive very little funding back because most metro transit is in the core cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul.
- * **\$59.90 million:** Additional taxes and fees that go to the state of Minnesota

Read more about the bill, and what Republicans did to try to improve it, here:

<https://www.mnsenaterepublicans.com/democrat-transportation-bill-with-2-7-billion-in-tax-increases-is-a-non-starter/>

Environment policy bill – a rare bipartisan victory this year

This week the Senate approved a pretty decent environment policy bill. It is not exactly what we would write if Republicans had the majority, but Democrats were willing to work with us on a number of our ideas.

We have a long bipartisan tradition in this state of protecting and caring for the outdoors. I appreciate Chair Foug Hawj's willingness to work together on these issues and accept some of

our improvements to this bill, and I am especially grateful that he chose to keep the extremely controversial provisions on the sidelines. The result is a good bipartisan bill that all Minnesotans can be happy about.

Contact me

If you have any questions or comments about the issues we are working on, please contact me anytime. My email is sen.justin.eichorn@senate.mn, or you can call me at 651-296-7079.

Don't forget to follow me on Facebook: <https://www.fb.com/SenatorJustinEichorn>.

It is a privilege to serve you!

Sincerely,

Justin D. Eichorn

Minnesota Senate, District 6
