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Legislative Update

April 23, 2010

Hello from St. Paul,

It has been an interesting couple of weeks here at the Capitol. One of the hottest topics recently has been K-12 Education reform and specifically, Minnesota's Race to the Top application. Race to the Top is a competitive federal grant program that awards states making big strides towards education reform. Minnesota unfortunately, finished 20th out of 41 applicants. One of the major reasons for the poor finish is that the state did not have support of the teacher's union, Education Minnesota.

On Tuesday, members of the House and Senate came together for a joint committee meeting to discuss education reform and Minnesota's Race to the Top application. During the meeting Tom Doohar, a registered lobbyist and the president of Education Minnesota, was given a seat at the head of the legislative table. This was extremely disappointing and unprecedented. Having a lobbyist, whose organization has donated millions to political campaigns over the years, sit at the head of the legislative table sends the wrong message to Minnesotans. Legislators are elected by the citizens to make decisions not special interest groups.



Fortunately, action was taken shortly after this event to make sure that this does not happen again. On Wednesday, we were able to amend House rules to prohibit lobbyists from sitting with legislators during committee hearing. It is important Minnesotans know their voices are the ones being heard first and foremost.

I have enclosed a link to my video update. In this update I discuss Apple Valley Mayor Mary Hamann-Roland's State of the City Address, education reform and the budget.

Here is the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/taramack37a>

Please continue to call and e-mail with your thoughts on the issues we face. You can also connect to me on Facebook.

Sincerely,

Tara Mack

REPRESENTING APPLE VALLEY
AND BURNSVILLE