

Thank you, Bill, for that kind introduction.

I have been asked by Bill and others familiar with this Forum to discuss a topic that is near and dear to my heart: how to get involved in and become a part of the political process, especially in relation to the executive branch.

It is my understanding that many of you in the audience today are new to this process. Well, Mark Twain once described the process of lawmaking as bearing a striking resemblance to the processing of sausage. You don't want to see what happens during the course of either, but the end result usually ends up looking pretty good. If you leave tomorrow from this forum having learned nothing else from my presentation, know this: sausage sometimes doesn't taste very good.

Formulating good policy depends on a number of factors:

- Good Intentions
- Good Input
- Sensible Processes
- Responsive Stakeholders
- Clear Objectives and Guidelines for Positive Results

I can tell you from years of experience that good policy is difficult to formulate. There are so many steps along the way that can go wrong.

You, as citizens of the state, with a definite interest in seeing your initiatives pass through the legislature, have a great deal invested in ensuring that your goals are met. And what's more, you have a great deal of clout. Much more than you realize.

The key to any successful lobbying campaign is grassroots organization.

- Your real political muscle is flexed at the local level. Getting local organization on behalf of your cause is of utmost importance.
- Begin with local elected officials. I understand that you have concerns with the state relinquishing funding to local units of government. I urge you instead to take advantage of this new emphasis on local control.
- This new Governor wants to place trust in the hands of the people by granting more authority to localized units of government. Communities need to rise up to this new challenge and elect competent, civic-minded leaders. You, in turn, must establish positive, working relationships with these local leaders so that your needs and thinking are in line with each other.
- This is no simple task. It takes time and energy. But you can't change a community by taking on the state. It all starts at the local level.

- You will be amazed what a mobilized group of citizens can accomplish.
- (This is your bread and butter; freelance for awhile on the influence that these folks, as constituents, hold in the Capitol, etc.)

When you have established your local networks, you will find that you have much greater influence in the halls of the State Capitol.

This brings us to my boss, Governor Jesse Ventura. This guy is, in all honesty, a bird of a different feather. The political system in this state, or this country for that matter, has never seen the likes of this man before.

You, as citizens of Minnesota, are the employers of someone who trusts you. He doesn't make up his mind based on what lobbyists tell him. He goes out into the communities of the state and talks with common, everyday people about their concerns. He will listen to what you have to say, and he will come to a decision based on the information he receives.

This is not normal, folks.

He does not base his decisions on political expediency.

He does not base his decisions on appeasing special interests.

And he DEFINITELY does not base his decisions on maintaining the status quo.

- His decision to sport a Jimi Hendrix T-shirt, ten earrings, a bandana, and a feather boa to his inaugural ball is the one exception to that rule, of course.

He may not always agree with what you have to say, and you may not always agree with what he has to say; but you can be sure that he will arrive at a decision because he believes, in his heart, that it is in the best interests of the people of Minnesota.

This Governor's Administration is structured in a manner that guarantees that your voice is heard. He has hand-picked his Commissioners of the various state agencies regardless of



political ties. He chose his cabinet based on the level of expertise they have shown previously in their respective fields, and also on their visions for making Minnesota a better place to live.

This group includes Christine Jax, the Commissioner of the Department of Children, Families and Learning. You heard earlier from Tammy Pust, one of the legislative affairs directors at CFL. Much of your focus concerns the work of this agency. Get to know these people. They are there for you.

The Governor's Office, I assure you, works very closely with all the agencies of the executive branch to stay on the same page. We hope to present a consistent message throughout state government.

That message is summed up in the Beliefs and Budget Principles of the Ventura-Schunk Administration, which, I believe, are being handed out to you in the form of a wallet card.

- Folks, this is a valuable resource.
- When you are approaching our office, or the offices of any of the various state departments, please bear these beliefs and budget principles in mind.
- We are serious when we say that we use these. We do.

Go over the Budget Principles.

- Be fiscally conservative and prudent – Never forget it's the people's money
- Do the right things and do them well
- Provide incentives for desirable behavior

Go over the Beliefs.

- Accountable, responsive and limited government
- Personal responsibility and opportunities for self-sufficiency
- Bring government back to the people



This Administration looks forward to working with libraries across the state.

One of our top priorities is expanding the technological capabilities of Minnesota. Libraries will serve as a focal point in this effort.

- Local, public libraries have long been a vital resource for communities. This role should not, and will not, change.
- Only the resources that libraries have historically provided will change.
- Teleconferencing, on-line registration for state services such as tax forms and drivers' licenses, internet usage for research, development of community-based web pages, linked statewide and nationwide card-catalogs, and long-distance learning are only a few of the capabilities libraries will offer in this information age.

The Commissioner of the Department of Administration, David Fisher, is a big-picture thinker who is leading the charge to bring Minnesota to the forefront of technology.

We WILL succeed in establishing a central, statewide link that will reach out to all Minnesota communities. Make sure that your libraries are prepared and thinking progressively about the possibilities of statewide connectedness.

I can tell you that working with the likes of Bill Brady, Peg Werner and Elaine Keefe is a truly gratifying experience. They are wonderful, bright, hard-working people.

We, in state government, look forward to working with all of you to bring our shared goals to fruition.

Thank you.