

December 10, 2007

CAPITOL INSIGHT

2007 LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS



State Representative
AUGUSTINE
"WILLIE"
DOMINGUEZ

539 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

(651) 296-8659

rep.augustine.dominguez
@house.mn

www.house.mn/58B

COMMITTEES

Commerce and Labor

K-12 Finance Division

Local Government and
Metropolitan Affairs

Public Safety
Finance Division

Veterans Affairs Division

Disparity in School Support
Services (*Sub-Chair*)

A LEGISLATOR'S COMMITMENT TO ADDRESS METRO ISSUES

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I welcome the opportunity to share with you legislation passed this session to benefit a number of Minnesotan's priorities – health care, education, energy, public safety, and jobs and economic development. As an elected public servant who came to the capitol to represent the interests and needs of my community in the Northside and downtown Minneapolis, I intend to continue working on these important issues and others as I work with the constituents of District 58B. We can't sit back and wait for solutions.

As a freshman legislator at the House of Representatives I had the opportunity to serve on six committees (Commerce and Labor; K-12 Finance Division; Local Government and Metropolitan Affairs; Public Safety Finance Division; Veterans Affairs Division and Subcommittee Chair of Disparities in Student Support Services). These committee seats put me in a great position to address the concerns of our communities in the north side and downtown. I was very pleased to be the first legislator to bring the first hearing on K-12 Education and Policy into the Northside of Minneapolis.

Sincerely,

State Representative

A. Willie Dominguez

District 58B

During the 2007 Legislative Session bills that I worked hard to accomplish include:

EDUCATION

- Provided over \$800 million or an 8% increase in new state funding for Minnesota K-12 Schools that does not rely on property taxes. This illustrates our priorities that all children deserve the investments to fund their education. A quality of our children's education shouldn't depend on the level of property tax base where they happen to live.
- Special education received more funding: \$330 million to fund rising special educations that eat up school budgets. School districts will receive state aid and some federal aid to pay for special education services.
- Made strategic investments in our youngest learners to close the achievement gap by pursuing a few measures to focus on this issue:
 - After-school community learning grants and literacy promotion. I authored legislation to create a statewide, competitive after-school community learning grant program that will receive \$5.375 million over the next two years. These funds are directed by the Minnesota Department of education to reinstate programs to 2003 levels.
 - Moved forward to make All-Day Every-Day Kindergarten available to more students across the state.
 - Safe Schools Levy used for additional student support services personnel.
- Restored important early childhood funding:
 - Head Start (Invests \$40.2 million or a 5.24% increase in funding).
 - School Readiness (Allocates \$20.09 million or a 10.5% increase).
 - Early Childhood Family Education (\$42.99 million is available for ECFE, and increase of 14.9%).
- Slowed down rising tuition in our state colleges and universities.
- Passed legislation for a Minnesota Reader Corp (\$1.5 million in FY 2008 and \$1.5 million in FY 2009).

PUBLIC SAFETY

Our investment in public safety was the largest in Minnesota history. We put more cops on the streets, more forensic scientists at the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, added judges throughout the state, and funded more crime victims' services.

Public safety legislation I authored:

- Established an offender re-entry pilot project on the Northside (\$400,000 2008-09).
 - Co-authored a Net Offenders Re-entry Program. Funds have been directed to Emerge, a new venture of Pillsbury United Communities (PUC), home to the Northside Job Connections program, an employment intervention strategy to assist ex-offenders secure and retain employment.
- Provided employment services for ex-criminal offenders.
- Upgraded camera technology in squad cars (\$500,000 for FY 2008, FY 2009, and FY 2010).

HEALTH CARE

- Our budget ensures Minnesotans will cover more kids with health insurance. More than 30,000 in the next few years.
- Includes important reforms to lower skyrocketing costs for the 93% of Minnesotans who already have health insurance.
- Our nursing homes and staff will receive critical funding to help them serve their communities.
- Expanded access to mental healthcare.
- Began health care reforms to establish uniform billing and price transparency as well as payment systems.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Minnesota will continue to be a leader in the development of renewable energy.

- Passed boldest Renewable Energy Standard (RES) in the nation.
- Funding for Next Generation Energy and AURI (Agriculture Utilization & Research Institute) will help state develop new energy program.
- More investment in renewable homegrown sources of energy like wind and ethanol.
- Addressed climate change – limited greenhouse gas production.
- Provided clean water and habitat funding.

JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

We have restored our commitment to rebuilding Minnesota's future.

- Predatory Lending Protection (co-authored): With many areas of North Minneapolis suffering from the effects of increased home foreclosures, I worked to pass the toughest laws on predatory lending in the nation. These new laws will restore the trust between lender and borrower, and will help prevent the further spread of home foreclosures in North Minneapolis.
- MN Youth Program (co-authored): job training for hundreds of low-income or at-risk young people.
- YouthBuild (co-authored): Construction training for at-risk youth who will build affordable housing.
- Authored legislation prohibiting mandatory unpaid labor for public assistance recipients.
- Authored commissary privileges for Veterans homes.

Thank you for all of your support during my first term in the House of Representatives. It is truly an honor to represent you and I am pleased to have been a contributing voice in the many accomplishments of this legislative session. Please feel free to call or with any ideas or issues you have on metro or state issues. I can be reached by phone at (651) 296-8659, by mail at 539 State Office Building, 100 Martin Luther King Blvd., St. Paul, MN 55155 or by e-mail at rep.augustine.dominguez@house.mn.