

# REP. JIM KNOBLACH DISTRICT 14B

## 2017 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



Paid for by Knoblach Volunteer Committee  
PO Box 1481, St. Cloud, MN 56302

### 2017 Legislature most productive in years

Dear Neighbors,

The 2017 Legislative Session will go down as one of the most productive in recent memory.

Among other things, we passed Real ID, increased education funding, made progress on health care reform, delivered the largest investment in roads and bridge infrastructure in state history without a gas tax increase, and delivered the largest tax relief package for Minnesotans in nearly two decades.

Legislation we passed to address a number of issues specific to District 14B is especially rewarding. Information on some of those provisions is included in this session report.

I look forward to continuing my work to serve the people of the St. Cloud area. It is an honor and privilege to serve our community at the Capitol.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim".

Rep. Jim Knoblach  
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee



### TAX RELIEF

It's been nearly two decades since Minnesotans have received meaningful tax relief. The 2017 Tax Relief bill delivers \$650 million in tax relief to Minnesota families over the next two years, and \$790 million in 2020-2021. Bill provisions include:

- Social security tax relief for nearly 284,000 senior citizen tax returns (single and married filing jointly).
- Property tax relief for small business owners by eliminating the state property tax on the first \$100,000 of value on commercial real estate.
- An increased child care tax credit so a family of four making \$50,000 will get \$1,200 more.
- A student loan credit that will give 65,000 students an average of a \$414 reduction.
- A 40% reduction in school levy property taxes on farmland.

# Update on some bills authored by Rep. Knoblach

## Bill subject/number

- Additional public education funding for school transportation expenses (amendment)
- Increased funding to fight sex trafficking (HF1932)
- \$19 million renovation project at Saint Cloud Prison (HF616)
- \$18.6 million Eastman Hall renovation at SCSU (HF339)
- Day care reimbursements raised in Saint Cloud area (HF139)
- Funding for St. Cloud United Way Partners for Student Success program (HF734)
- Funding for Big Brothers, Big Sisters (HF1588)
- Economic opportunity grant program for Saint Cloud area (HF2266)
- Funding for St. Cloud emergency response team (HF1179)
- St. Cloud area remains eligible for state economic development grants (amendment)
- Increase affordable housing construction by several thousand units (HF2112)
- Increase tax credit for public, private and home school students (HF337)
- Special education funding increased (HF2021)
- Extension of Northstar Rail Corridor to Saint Cloud (HF1722)
- Have a nonpartisan Legislature; don't require legislators to run with a party (HF1843)

## Outcome

- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- BECAME LAW
- PASSED HOUSE
- PASSED HOUSE
- REFERRED TO COMMITTEE
- REFERRED TO COMMITTEE



Jim and his wife, Janet, on House swearing-in day.



## K-12 EDUCATION

The K-12 Education Budget partners more than \$1.3 billion in increased funding (8 percent more over the next two years) with key reforms. Saint Cloud District #742 will receive approximately \$5.2 million in new funding the next two years. Funding for early learning initiatives for preschoolers is also provided. Early learning programs Rep. Knoblach got funded in District #742 last year will have continued funding. A number of important reforms for education also have been enacted this year, including:

- Ending the “Last In, First Out” default layoff policy for schools to keep the best teachers in the classroom.
- Overhauling the broken teacher licensure system to help hire more teachers to address the shortage.
- Investing in proven early education programming like pre-K scholarships and school readiness.



## HEALTH CARE

**Emergency Premium Aid & Access:** In January we enacted a 25-percent health insurance premium rebate and helped ensure continued access to doctors for patients receiving life-saving treatment.

**Lowering Costs, Increasing Choices:** We also enacted reforms to provide more affordable options for small businesses and their employees, protect consumers from unfair billing practices, and allow organizations with member owners – such as farm cooperatives – to provide health insurance to their members. In addition, we enacted a reinsurance law that will lower premiums an estimated 20% for those who buy insurance on their own.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

The Minnesota State College and University System received a \$106 million increase in funding. The state grant program, which serves lower-income students, received a \$36 million increase, which is a 10-percent increase in funding.

## TRANSPORTATION

This session, lawmakers successfully defeated the governor’s 16 cent per gallon gas tax hike, and instead invested a historic level of existing funds into our transportation infrastructure statewide. The transportation package enacted this year directs taxes already collected on rental cars, leased cars and the purchase of auto parts to roads and bridges instead of the general fund. Minnesota will join 33 other states that now use their general fund for roads and bridges. Combined with bonding, Minnesota will see billions in additional funding over the next decade for road and bridge construction.



## NEW LAWS WITH EVERYDAY IMPACT



**Real ID:** A Real ID-compliance law enables Minnesotans to use a state-issued driver’s license ID to board an airplane or enter a federal facility.



**Internet speeds:** The Legislature provided another \$20 million investment for the expansion of broadband infrastructure in Greater Minnesota over the next two years.