

REP. JIM KNOBLACH DISTRICT 14B

2017-18 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



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

2017-18 biennium a major success

Dear Neighbors,

The 2017-18 legislative session will go down as one of the most productive in recent memory.

Major accomplishments include a significant increase in transportation funding, the largest tax relief package for Minnesotans in nearly two decades, increased education funding, and progress on health care reform. Unfortunately, additional funding for fighting opioid addictions, helping vulnerable adults, rural broadband, and other measures were vetoed by Gov. Dayton, despite being passed with bipartisan majorities.

A number of provisions I authored that affect Central Minnesota also became law. This review provides information on those subjects and more.

It is an honor and privilege to serve my hometown at the Capitol and I look forward to continuing my efforts to serve the St. Cloud area.

Sincerely,

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

Rep. Jim Knoblach
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee



SIMPLIFYING AND REDUCING TAXES

Tax reform passed in 2017 that takes effect in 2018 includes:

- Reducing state income taxes on social security
- Small business property tax relief by eliminating the state property tax on the first \$100,000 of value
- A student loan tax credit averaging \$414 for 65,000 college students
- An increased child care tax credit so a family of four making \$50,000 will get \$1,200 more
- A 40% reduction in school levy property taxes on farmland

The House and Senate also passed a “conformity” tax bill this year that would have lowered state income taxes and simplified tax returns taxes for 2018. Unfortunately this was vetoed by Gov. Dayton.

Update on some bills authored by Rep. Knoblach

Bill subject/number

Bill subject/number	Outcome
• Additional public education funding for school transportation expenses (amendment)	BECAME LAW
• Increased funding to fight sex trafficking (HF1932)	BECAME LAW
• \$19 million renovation project at St. Cloud Prison (HF616)	BECAME LAW
• \$18.6 million Eastman Hall renovation at SCSU (HF339)	BECAME LAW
• Day care reimbursements raised in St. Cloud area (HF139)	BECAME LAW
• Funding for St. Cloud United Way Partners for Student Success program (HF734)	BECAME LAW
• Funding for Big Brothers, Big Sisters (HF1588)	BECAME LAW
• Economic opportunity grant program for St. Cloud area (HF2266)	BECAME LAW
• Funding for St. Cloud emergency response team (HF1179)	BECAME LAW
• St. Cloud area remains eligible for state economic development grants (amendment)	BECAME LAW
• Funding for renovating St Cloud Armory (HF3160)	BECAME LAW
• Increased funding for Boys and Girls Clubs (HF1284)	BECAME LAW
• Funding for Electrolux dislocated worker training (HF4342)	PASSED BY LEGISLATURE, VETOED BY GOV. DAYTON
• Increase affordable housing construction (HF2112)	PASSED BY LEGISLATURE, VETOED BY GOV. DAYTON
• Extension of Northstar Rail Corridor to St Cloud (HF1722)	PASSED BY LEGISLATURE, VETOED BY GOV. DAYTON
• Add third lane to I-94 (HF4338)	PASSED BY LEGISLATURE, VETOED BY GOV. DAYTON
• Increase tax credit for public, private and home school students (HF337)	PASSED HOUSE
• Special education funding increased (HF4272)	PASSED HOUSE
• Reduce taxes on charitable gaming (HF3384)	PASSED HOUSE
• Have a nonpartisan Legislature; don't require legislators to run with a party (HF1843)	REFERRED TO COMMITTEE



ROADS AND BRIDGES

A total of \$519 million in additional road and bridge funding became law under this year's Capital Investment bill. It includes funding to convert all of Highway #23 between St. Cloud and Willmar into a four-lane divided highway. Additional Highway #23 construction in Foley will also take place. A third lane will be added to I-94 between St. Michael and Albertville. However, the governor vetoed further third lane construction on I-94, as well as starting negotiations with BNSF Railway on extending the Northstar Corridor to St. Cloud.



CAPITAL INVESTMENT

The Legislature passed and the governor signed a bonding bill this year that will impact our area with significant transportation spending. The bill also includes funding for an amphitheater near a quarry in Waite Park, which will become a significant tourist draw for our area. An additional \$16 million in funding for asset preservation in the St. Cloud prison and \$4.45 million to renovate the St. Cloud Armory were also included.



K-12 EDUCATION

The 2018-19 K-12 education budget partners more than \$1.3 billion in increased funding (8 percent more over the biennium) with key reforms. St. Cloud District #742 is receiving approximately \$5.2 million in new funding these two years. Funding for early learning initiatives for preschoolers is also provided.

STUDENT SAFETY

The Legislature put student safety first this session by sending Gov. Dayton more than \$50 million in funding to improve student safety – double the amount he proposed. A total of \$25 million did become law that will be available for construction of school safety improvements. However, an additional \$27 million for school resource officers and student mental health efforts was vetoed by Gov. Dayton.

PENSION REFORM

Minnesota enacted major pension reform this year that will stabilize our public pension programs. The negotiated agreement between the state and employee pension plans is projected to attain 100% funding for most plans over the long term.