

Minnesota Governor Mark Dayton State of the State Address

Posted by [Christine M. Zimmer](#) on February 09, 2011

Governor Dayton gave his first State of the State Address today, giving hints towards what can be expected in his budget, which will officially be released on the 15th. Governor Dayton pledged to invest in more jobs, better education, improved transportation, the health of our citizens, our communities, our environment, and the transformation of government services. Governor Dayton pledged to increase funding for education every year he is in office and to give more Minnesota children the opportunity to attend all-day kindergarten. He used the opportunity and captive audience to plug his bonding bill as an opportunity to grow 28,000 jobs in Minnesota. Apologizing ahead of time for his budget, the Governor asked wealthy Minnesotans "[...]for their forbearance during this fiscal crisis, which I did not create, but inherited, and now, with you in the Legislature, must solve."

Governor Dayton gave several rounds of kudos including to special guests President Robert Bruininks of the University of Minnesota; Chancellor James McCormick of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; Dr. Efe Agbamu, Secondary School Principal of the Year; Mr. James Sonju, Math and Science Principal of the Year; Mr. Ryan Vernosh, Minnesota Teacher of the Year; Col. Eric Kerska, Commander of the Red Bulls; The Wenzel Family; members of the Minnesota National Guard; and Officer Adam Bailey, Police Officer of the Year.

The Republican Majority responded to the State of the State Address with a press conference by house Speaker Kurt Zellers (R-Maple Grove) and Senate Majority Leader Amy Koch (R-Buffalo). The Republican leaders noted that while Governor Dayton continued to discuss increasing taxes, Republican and Democratic governors and legislative leaders across the nation have all agreed raising taxes during difficult economic times is not a good idea. Speaker Zellers and Majority Leader Koch said they have faith in business men and women and the private sector, and believe the key to strengthening Minnesota's economy lies with them, not with government programs. Majority Leader Koch said "investing" is a good thing for the state but remarked Governor Dayton made promises without the dollars to support and keep those promises. Majority Leader Koch also noted the five point plan was short on specifics, but said she appreciated the nod Governor Dayton gave on the permitting and regulations bill and his comments on working with the private sector and restructuring government.

Speaker Zellers said that overall, the address showed Governor Dayton was not where the nation is and that Dayton's message looked backward in time, not towards the future. Majority Leader Koch had been hoping to hear a more optimistic forward looking message.