



Coalition of Minnesota Businesses, Inc.
80 South 8th Street #3610
Minneapolis, MN 55402
Phone: 612-334-3114
Fax: 612-334-3086
www.MNbusiness.com

August 12, 2008

Associated Builders and Contractors — Minnesota

Insurance Federation of Minnesota

Minnesota Bankers Association

Minnesota Beverage Association

Minnesota Business Partnership

Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Minnesota Retailers Association

Minnesota Trucking Association

National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)

Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

TwinWest Chamber of Commerce

A statewide grassroots communications program involving 11 business organizations. The CMB does not endorse any particular candidate or political party.

To: [first name] [last name]

Fr: Charlie Weaver, Executive Director, Minnesota Business Partnership
David Olson, President, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce

Re: "Spend Smart" is a winning message – and it's essential to Minnesota's future

First, congratulations on your decision to run for the Minnesota House of Representatives. Public service is a tremendous honor and responsibility. All of us affiliated with the Coalition of Minnesota Businesses (CMB) wish you the best in your campaigns.

Like you, we're interested in what's on the minds of our fellow Minnesotans heading into the November elections – and what appears to be a challenging budget-setting session in 2009. Here's a little of what we've learned through polling, focus groups and by talking to many of the more than 20,000 Minnesota employers represented by the 11 members of the CMB:

- 1) **Jobs top the priority list.** No surprise there. People are worried about their economic security. But they're skeptical of state government's role in the economy. Voters across the political spectrum look to the private sector to create jobs and opportunity – and expect government to help, not hinder, those efforts.
- 2) **Voters may support more funding for high priorities.** Minnesotans are willing to invest more in vital areas – particularly in education. But they're skeptical that more money will really make a difference, if the system itself is broken.
- 3) **But raising taxes isn't an option.** A faltering economy is bad news for Minnesota families, businesses and the state budget. Understandably, people don't want to raise taxes on themselves. But they also don't want to raise taxes on others. They consider high taxes a personal burden and a barrier to job growth. And they aren't convinced that government spends their tax dollars wisely.

Minnesotans understand that government plays important roles in their lives. But they're frustrated. People want government to do what they do in their businesses and their personal lives: Set priorities, spend wisely and make sure you get what you pay for.

The enclosed issue card offers a set of Spend Smart Principles that we believe reflect the kind of common-sense changes voters are looking for from elected officials – Republican or Democrat. We also believe these changes will, in the long run, help Minnesota grow jobs and attract business investment by providing a high quality of life with a reasonable tax burden.

Business Community Candidate Questionnaire

Last month, candidates received a questionnaire from Minnesota's business community. If you are among the many candidates who have already responded, thank you. If not, please do so by visiting www.MinnesotaProsperity.org/survey. Your candidate code is [_____]

If you have any questions about the survey, contact: Mike Franklin, Minnesota Chamber of Commerce, 651-292-4661, or by email at mfranklin@mnchamber.com. Thank you and best wishes in your campaign.

OVER

FINDINGS 2008 CMB POLL

(February 2008)

1. Which of these issues is the most important issue currently facing the state? Which is the second most important?

Economy/Jobs	42%	Transportation	27%
Health Care	39%	Education	26%
Taxes/Spending	39%		

2. Is Minnesota still the land of opportunity?

Yes	74%	No	23%
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3. Which is more likely to help people achieve the American Dream?

My employer	71%	My local legislator	23%
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4. Is competition or regulation more likely to help people achieve the American Dream?

Competition	80%	Regulation	12%
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5. Which is more likely to help people achieve the American Dream?

Free Market	86%	Government	8%
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6. Please tell me which of these statements is closest to your opinion:

Minnesota's economy has flourished for decades because our high taxes have supported a high level of public services that everyone has benefited from: 21%

If we want a high level of public services in Minnesota, we first need a healthy economy and strong job growth – the tax revenue will follow if the economy is strong: 76%

The Coalition of Minnesota Businesses is composed of 11 employer groups whose membership includes more than 20,000 Minnesota businesses with hundreds of thousands of employees. Since 1994, the CMB has conducted successful issue campaigns designed to inform candidates and voters about issues important to Minnesota employers and employees. For more information, visit www.mnbusiness.com.