

March 2, 2005

The Honorable Mark Dayton
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Dayton:

We write to express our deep concern about the impact of President Bush's proposed budget on the people of Minnesota, and to urge you to do all you can to ensure that the budget ultimately approved by Congress does not cause severe, long-term harm to Minnesota's communities and to the children, elderly, veterans, families, and businesses of our state.

If Congress adopts these cuts, everyone in Minnesota will be affected. The impact of the President's budget would be wide reaching, and do real damage to Minnesota's quality of life. As just one example, Minnesota has been a leader in providing health care for all its citizens, boasting one of the lowest rates of uninsured in the nation. Medicaid provides health care to 366,000 seniors, people with disabilities, children, pregnant women, and others in Minnesota. Recently, state budget deficits have led to severe cutbacks, making health care inaccessible for many people, and shifting costs to other parts of the health care system. Governor Pawlenty's proposed budget would cause many more to lose health care coverage. The President's proposed \$45 billion cut in Medicaid further threatens the viability of Minnesota's health care system.

Minnesotans are all too familiar with the severe pain that is caused when deficits are not addressed through a balanced approach. In 2002, 2003, and 2004, Minnesota's state decision-makers chose to close budget deficits primarily through service cuts, drawing down reserves, and budget gimmicks. As a result, Minnesotans are struggling to cope with the impact of serious reductions in vital services as well as steeply higher fees and copayments in areas such as health care, child care, and higher education.

The federal government is an important source of revenues for state and local governments in Minnesota. Minnesota's state and local governments have struggled to balance their budgets over the past several years, and have made cuts in all areas under their jurisdiction, in services as diverse as parks, libraries, public safety, and after-school programs for at-risk youth. The President's budget calls for a cap on federal discretionary funding, which would result in a loss of \$996 million to Minnesota's state and local governments from 2006 to 2010. Other programs that would be harmed by the discretionary cap include special education, vocational and adult education, and WIC. The quality of life for everyone would decline because of these cuts and from weaker environmental and law enforcement protections. We cannot sustain the additional budget pressures that would result from the federal government stepping back from its commitments.

The people of Minnesota are looking to you to set better priorities and make better choices for our state. We need you to look beyond short-term solutions and plan for the future by making strategic investments that support Minnesota families and the communities we live in. Don't cut health care and education for our children in order to spend more on costly tax cuts that mainly help special interests and the wealthy. Don't cut benefits for veterans when so many have given so much to our country. Don't cut investments that we need to build our local

communities and help people get good jobs. These programs didn't cause the federal budget deficit and shouldn't bear the brunt of deficit reduction.

Further, we ask you to oppose ill-conceived budget schemes such as block grants, entitlement caps, or global spending caps that will force significant cuts in critical services now and for many years in the future.

Minnesotans care about our state and all the things that make it a great place to live, raise a family, and do business. We have tried in this letter to draw attention to some of the specific services that would be cut, but there are many more than can be described in this limited space. Please help make sure that Congress writes a fair and balanced budget that shares the burden and considers the impact of its decisions. If we can be of assistance in providing you additional information on our concerns regarding Congress's budget deliberations, please contact Nan Madden of the Minnesota Budget Project at (651) 642-1904 ext. 230.

Admission Possible, St. Paul
Affirmative Options Coalition, St. Paul
African American Family Services, Minneapolis
African Community Services, Minneapolis
All Nations University, Minneapolis
Alliance Housing Inc., Minneapolis
Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, St. Paul
Anoka County Community Action Program,
Blaine
Brilliant Living, Bloomington
CEAP (Community Emergency Assistance
Program), Brooklyn Park
Child Care WORKS, Minneapolis
Children's Defense Fund Minnesota, St. Paul
Children's Mental Health Partnership, St. Paul
City of Lakes Community Land Trust,
Minneapolis
Community Design Center of Minnesota, St.
Paul
Community Fitness Today, Minneapolis
Community Housing Resources, Inc.,
Minneapolis
Dakota Woodlands, Eagan
Domestic Abuse Project, Minneapolis
ElderCircle, Grand Rapids
Ely Community Resource, Ely
Epilepsy Foundation of Minnesota, St. Paul
Family & Children's Service, Minneapolis
Family Institute for Creative Well-Being,
Maplewood
Fargo-Moorhead Dorothy Day House of
Hospitality, Moorhead
Forest Lake Area Youth Service Bureau, Forest
Lake
Fraser, Richfield
Goodwill/Easter Seals Minnesota, St. Paul
Guild Incorporated, West St. Paul
Hawthorne Area Community Council,
Minneapolis
Home & Community Options, Inc., Winona

HOME Line, Minneapolis
Hope Community, Inc., Minneapolis
HousingMinnesota, St. Paul
Immunization Action Coalition, St. Paul
International Self-Reliance Agency for Women
(ISAW), Minneapolis
Jewish Community Action, St. Paul
Jewish Community Relations Council of
Minnesota and the Dakotas, Minneapolis
Jewish Family & Children's Service of
Minneapolis, Minnetonka
Jewish Family Service of St. Paul, St. Paul
JOBS NOW Coalition, St. Paul
Legal Services Advocacy Project, St. Paul
Longfellow Community Council, Minneapolis
Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota, St. Paul
Minneapolis Consortium of Community
Developers, Minneapolis
Minneapolis Highrise Representative Council,
Minneapolis
Minneapolis Jewish Federation, Minnetonka
Minnesota AIDS Project, Minneapolis
Minnesota Alliance for Progressive Action, St.
Paul
Minnesota Catholic Conference, St. Paul
Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless,
Minneapolis
Minnesota Community Action Association, St.
Paul
Minnesota Council of Churches, Minneapolis
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, St. Paul
Minnesota Disability Law Center, Minneapolis
Minnesota Head Start Association, Inc., Duluth
Minnesota NAHRO (National Association of
Housing and Redevelopment Officials), Eagan
Minnesota Rural Education Association,
Alexandria
Minnesota Senior Federation - Metropolitan
Region, St. Paul
Minnesota Social Service Association, St. Paul

Minnesota Youth Intervention Programs
Association, Mendota Heights
National Association of Social Workers,
Minnesota Chapter, St. Paul
National Council of Jewish Women, St. Louis
Park
National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota,
Inc., Minneapolis
Northeast Residence, Inc., St. Paul
Northwest Youth & Family Services, Shoreview
Office for Social Justice, Archdiocese of Saint
Paul and Minneapolis, St. Paul
Office of Ombudsman for Older Minnesotans,
St. Paul
Parenting Program Consultants, Minneapolis
Pathways of West Central Minnesota, Inc.,
Granite Falls
Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota,
South Dakota, St. Paul
Plymouth Church Neighborhood Foundation,
Minneapolis
Pro Kinship for Kids, New Ulm
Productive Alternatives, Inc., Fergus Falls
Project for Pride in Living, Minneapolis
Project SOAR of Northeastern Minnesota,
Duluth
Recreational Experiences Achieving Community
Harmony (R.E.A.C.H.), Inc., Cloquet
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice of
Minnesota, Minneapolis
Residents for Affordable Housing, Minneapolis
RESOURCE, Inc., Minneapolis
Restart, Inc., Minneapolis
Riverton Community Housing, Minneapolis

Rose Center Transitional Housing, St. Paul
Rural Enrichment and Counseling
Headquarters, Hawley
Rural Minnesota CEP, Inc., Detroit Lakes
Sabes Jewish Community Center, St. Louis Park
Sholom Community Alliance, St. Louis Park
Simpson Housing Services, Minneapolis
South St. Paul Restorative Justice Council, South
St. Paul
Southside Family School, Minneapolis
Southwestern Center for Independent Living,
Marshall
Sparc, St. Paul
Spare Key, South St. Paul
Spectrum Community Mental Health/Resource,
Inc., Crystal
St. Paul Jewish Community Center, St. Paul
The Jeremiah Program, Minneapolis
The Word Applied, LLC, St. Paul
Theatre Unbound, Minneapolis
Tri-County Action Program, Inc., St. Cloud
Twin Cities Area Chapter of ACES (Association
for Children for Enforcement of Support, Inc.),
Cottage Grove
Twin Cities Chinese Counseling Center, Lakeville
Twin Ports Area Nonprofit Coalition, Duluth
United Jewish Fund & Council of St. Paul, St.
Paul
Wellsprings Living Center, St. Paul
West Central Minnesota Housing Partnership,
Fergus Falls
Western Community Action, Marshall
Woodland Hills, Duluth