

# Rep. David Bly

## Column

### Minnesota House of Representatives

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#### **Column: News from the first weeks of the Legislative Session**

The Legislative Session started just under four weeks ago and we're already approaching deadlines as the pace quickens to move bills through the system. There's a lot to do before we're set to adjourn on May 21<sup>st</sup> and I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues to make sure we do the best we can for Minnesotans.

We set Minnesota's two year budget last year and won't need to pass another until 2019. That said, the February Budget Forecast showed we have a small surplus of \$329 million. A lot of that is due to our improved economic outlook, federal funding of the Children's Health Insurance Program, and increased tax revenue. While Minnesota may have a small surplus, a lot of families are still having a hard time getting by. I hear frequently from leaders in the communities I represent that more is needed to meet the needs of constituents. I have been working with various groups addressing issues as varied as prevention of noxious weeds and trying to find a way to assist with emergency mental health and chemical health issues. That's why I'll work to ensure any changes we make this year put the long-term needs of our community ahead of short-term gains for those who are doing so well in our economy.

I continue to hear from long term care workers and those that work with the disabled that they need a raise and yet there are proposals to cut their pay. We need to resist that. I also hear it is increasingly difficult to find child care workers and often the lack of funds to pay them a decent wage is mentioned as a cause. Finally, there is increasing anxiety about guns in our society and how we address the disruption they cause in many walks of life. I doubt we can solve all these problems, but we need to continue having meaningful discussion to seek solutions in the future.

Minnesota's infrastructure including water systems that keep our water clean, public buildings, bridges and dams are desperately in need of repair. No child should go to a school with a leaky roof or lead leaching pipes and no Minnesotan should drive over a bridge that's rated as deficient. Nor should we allow citizens to go without shelter or affordable housing. That's why it's important we pass a robust public infrastructure bill this year to ensure the needs of Minnesotans are met.

With the passage of the federal tax bill and elimination of many deductions, a lot of Minnesotans

are going to see taxes go up next April if we don't see some changes made. There's been a lot of pressure from Republicans to "fully conform" to the federal tax bill, much of which benefits those who don't need the help. We don't have a large enough surplus to leave everyone harmless. I'll work to focus on tax fairness, especially for those in our community who are just getting by.

Lastly, you may have heard that I've decided to not seek reelection this year. It's a difficult decision to leave work I love doing, but my heart told me it is the right time to do so. It's been a pleasure to represent the amazing people of our district.

I am extremely grateful for the trust you've placed in me to speak for you as I've worked to bring the values we share to St. Paul. Rest assured, I'll continue to fight to ensure those values are my focus.

Don't hesitate to contact my office with questions or comments at 651-296-0171 or at [rep.david.bly@house.mn](mailto:rep.david.bly@house.mn).

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*David Bly (DFL-Northfield) is the DFL-Lead on the Agriculture Policy Committee. A retired teacher, David has written extensively about building an economy that works for everyone. More information can be found at [www.davidbly.com](http://www.davidbly.com)*