

It is challenging to find the words to accurately express the impact Senator Kari Dziedzic has had on the State of Minnesota and especially, her beloved City of Minneapolis. As a former member of the City of Minneapolis' Intergovernmental Relations Team, I had the great honor to work directly with Sen. Dziedzic on dozens of issues and projects that impacted the City and its residents, our neighbors. I immediately appreciated her approach to public policy. As a trained engineer, she approached policy development and problem solving through the lens of inputs and outputs. What problematic inputs were going into the system that was giving us an outcome that is causing harm. What inputs could we address and change to provide better outcomes for people? At the core of everything she did, every fight she took on, she was focused on people.

SD60 is one of the most unique Senate Districts in the state. Home to the University of Minnesota, Cedar Riverside, the largest Somali-American neighborhood in the United States, the proud eastern european heritage in Nordeast, the largest community of working artists in the state, and miles and miles of the shoreline of the Mississippi River. Some may have struggled with representing dozens of unique constituencies whose needs and priorities may not always align, but not Sen. Dziedzic. There was rarely a community event or a neighborhood issue she wasn't already on top of. She spoke and checked in with almost everyone who contacted her, or who she thought should be brought into an effort. She was an incredible leader who lifted as she climbed, and knew that the best way to get an outcome was making sure everyone potentially impacted felt they were a part of the process.

Sen. Dziedzic was particularly passionate and effective in her work in housing. Her deep understanding of multi-family development finance, MHFA's various programs, land use and zoning, homeownership efforts, and affordable and supportive housing, was unparalleled. She fully understood the "system" because her work was to solve a problem, and access to safe and stable housing that Minnesotans can afford, is a big problem that needs many tools to solve. I am so thankful for how much Sen. Dziedzic has been able to teach to her colleagues and especially us in the housing advocacy community. It was clear from the beautiful speeches on the Senate Floor from her colleagues, that we have all learned from Sen. Dziedzic.

I am so thankful to have had Sen. Dziedzic as one of my mentors. We immediately bonded over our shared introverted nature, something challenging for a public official and a lobbyist. But she was always telling me how great I was doing, and when I would return a compliment she would usually say "are you sure??", which is laughable. I will greatly miss her steady and consistent presence in the Senate, and her availability at all hours of the day to solve a problem that would help people.

Thank you Chair Port and Chair Lucero for the opportunity to submit a remembrance of Sen. Dziedzic whose work will impact the lives of Minnesotans for generations, may her memory be a blessing to us all.

Thank you,
Alysen Nesse
Director of Government Relations | Momentum Advocacy