

GOVERNOR
WENDELL R. ANDERSON

STATE OF THE STATE
ADDRESS



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To the 68th Session
of the Legislature of Minnesota

January 3, 1973

Mr. Speaker, Mr. President, Members of the 68th Session of the Minnesota Legislature, Members of the Supreme Court, Constitutional Officers, and fellow citizens of Minnesota:

The last session of this Legislature accomplished a landmark in Minnesota history -- the most basic tax reform in many decades.

This session of the Legislature must do even more. It is our unique mandate to extend the spirit and energy of reform to government itself.

Two years ago we set out to make state government "more responsive to our people and more imaginative in the service of their needs."

To extend that responsiveness, to enlarge our imagination, is the task before this session.

OPENNESS IN GOVERNMENT

Responsiveness must be built upon a new openness in government, an openness beyond any we have known before.

I congratulate you on your own unprecedented efforts toward this goal.

As the first business of this session you are opening doors that until now have been not only closed, but locked.

You are providing for:

Fair minority representation.

More open committee meetings.

More recorded, public votes.

More public access to records of your sessions,
and all the rest.

Those of you who fought for and won these essential reforms should know this; that thanks to you, no one will ever dare to turn back the clock again.

But this is just the beginning. We must open up the rest of our governmental and political processes as well.

The agenda is long, because for far too long it was ignored.

Since 1913, the people of this state have had to wear blindfolds in the voting booth. This session of the Legislature is going to take those blindfolds off!

Because our first step must be party designation for all those seeking election to the Minnesota Legislature.

The urgency and importance of this measure can be suggested by this comment: If you pass the party designation bill by noon tomorrow, I will sign it before you leave the Capitol that evening.

But party designation is only one of our imperatives.

Every one of us who has ever campaigned knows that there is a deadly cancer infecting our free election system -- the way we are forced to finance our political campaigns.

Open government requires a tough, practical, enforceable disclosure of campaign contributions, and it must be passed this session.

Even disclosure laws, though, are only a very partial solution to the real plague on all our houses.

I have served in state government for 14 years, as a House member, a Senate member, and Governor. I receive great satisfaction from public service, and so do you. I believe in meeting the jury of our citizens in election campaigns, and so do you.

But the traditional way of soliciting campaign money sickens and alienates the public and undermines the very fabric of our institutions.

The late Adlai Stevenson said: "I doubt that it's possible to be elected President...and deserve the office."

Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz put it another way:

"Find a Congressman's financial angel. That's the way I worked to beat a bill raising price supports...I called up one chap and started to explain the bill. He said 'Don't bother. I'll just tell the Congressman I don't want it.' He did. That was it."

Every campaign sees the Democrats criticizing the Republicans for outrageous methods of procuring large contributions, and the Republicans accusing the Democrats of precisely the same thing.

Both sides are right, and both sides are guilty. So when some try to make this a partisan issue -- they're fooling no one.

If we really are serious about putting an end to special interest contributions, then the answer isn't merely disclosure or limitations on spending. It is something much more fundamental.

The only way to really clean up the financing of political campaigns is to provide a method to finance campaigns by hundreds and thousands of small contributors.

And there is only one way to achieve that in the near future. We must give each taxpayer an opportunity to contribute to the party and candidates of his choice.

I recommend that the 1973 Legislature provide for a \$1.00 check-off on the state income tax, just as the Congress and the President have attempted to meet this problem at the national level.

This does not mean that the taxpayer would add a dollar when he pays his tax bill. It means that one of the tax dollars he is already paying would be assigned to public financing of election campaigns -- if the taxpayer so chooses.

We would not be forcing anyone to contribute, but we would be providing Minnesota citizens the opportunity to help end a practice that taints us all.

We cannot guarantee that this plan will work perfectly, but if openness and honesty and integrity are to be more than fine words, then we had better try.

We must continue these reform efforts until any American can run for office in this country without losing either his shirt, his self-respect, or his independence -- or all three.

To turn, for a moment, to another legislative problem:

We all know the long, complicated, expensive story of legislative reapportionment in 1971. We failed. The Federal Courts, not state officials, finally reapportioned our Legislature -- and barely in time.

We did redistrict the Congressional seats.

And we did what we usually do when we redistrict. We protected the incumbents. In fact, we gave six of them even safer seats -- which took some doing.

That's wrong.

That's not open government.

That doesn't give the people the chance to change things.

I believe a candidate from either party ought to have at least a fighting chance to win. We made this more difficult -- perhaps impossible.

And that's what we will do again unless we find a new way to reapportion and redistrict.

I propose a Constitutional Amendment to take Legislative and Congressional reapportionment out of the hands of the Legislature and assign it to a bi-partisan commission, as recommended by the Constitutional Study Commission.

I fully support this top priority recommendation of the Commission.

I also support another legislative reform.

Two years ago I recommended that the Legislature cut its size effective after the 1980 census, if a reduction could not be accomplished in the reapportionment process.

I still support such a measure, and I hope the 1973 Legislature will pass it.

Our citizens also deserve better opportunities to vote.

In the 1972 campaign in Minnesota, several hundred thousand potential voters failed to register, in spite of a vigorous bi-partisan registration effort.

This Legislature must give serious consideration to a system which permits a voter to register on election day if he has not already done so.

Voting is a right and not a privilege. We must insure the people access to that fundamental right.

I do not need to inform the members of this Legislature that perhaps the best way to open a unit of government to the people is to require that its members be elected. Accordingly, I strongly recommend that this session of the Legislature transform the Metropolitan Council -- potentially the most innovative force in our largest urban area -- from an appointive to an elective body.

An elected Council will give the citizens of the metropolitan area the same kind of accountability they now enjoy in elected local government. Our metropolitan needs demand this accountability.

I will have more to say at a later date with regard to the Metropolitan Council, but I would like to share one observation with you now, particularly with the new members of the Legislature.

I was in the Senate in 1967 when the Metropolitan Council was created.

If one fact characterized our treatment of the Council then, and since, it was how late and how little we attended to it. Consideration of the Council was often put off until later: its impact and its needs never received anything like the attention they deserved.

As a result, we are faced today with a conflict in metropolitan government, a vagueness over lines of authority, an impasse over how decisions should be made that affect directly the lives of half the people of this state. Today's indecision is the price of yesterday's neglect. The failure to fully define and anticipate the role of metropolitan government is becoming clearer each day.

I am convinced that history will show our efforts at metropolitan government to be among the most significant innovations ever begun by a State Legislature. Our response must recognize that significance.

I ask this session to give major priority of time and attention to metropolitan government, to establishing clearly its authority and framework. We must treat this as a necessity, not an afterthought.

We also need to open up the executive branch of state government.

Perhaps the greatest strength of our system is that elected officials are held strictly accountable for the performance of their administrations.

What concerns me is that I want to hold our key state department heads equally accountable for their departments and the responsibilities we place on them.

But that's not really possible when we deny to some department heads, with thousands of employees, the right to choose their own management teams, of even 3 or 4. For example, we have an outstanding Commissioner of Highways with over 5,000 employees in his department and we do not permit him to select a single one when he takes office.

There is a danger that we have given the entrenched bureaucracy a veto over the elected representatives of the people.

That's wrong.

We must change it.

I will ask for appropriate changes in the laws to assure the responsiveness and accountability of our administrative leadership.

Another method, long overdue, for opening and strengthening state government is to place more representatives of the public on policy boards and commissions. We can increase the size of boards where necessary to make room for public members.

Finally, the people's right to know is not guaranteed by the openness of government alone. These times also demand that we take steps in Minnesota to protect reporters from intimidation by government in carrying on their legitimate work.

A number of newsmen are now in jail around the country for refusing to reveal confidential sources. I regret that the pressure seems to be increasing.

Reporters are being prosecuted not because they are irresponsible, but precisely because they have been responsible to their basic function of publishing the truth.

Every one in public life occasionally disagrees with some article or coverage. But government officials who fear the press, and seek to suppress it, are very short-sighted indeed. For our system of government itself would die without the freedom of speech and freedom of the press guaranteed us in the First Amendment.

Several states now have laws that shield reporters from revealing confidential sources of information. I recommend the passage of such a bill by this Legislature.

I hope that these recommendations for open government will be acted upon by the Legislature. And I hope you will go on from there to carry out the spirit of openness with which this session has begun.

ECONOMY IN GOVERNMENT

And now, let us turn to the value that our people receive from their tax dollars.

The last session of the Legislature was known for its successful attempt to bring justice to our state tax system. This session must become known for bringing justice to the spending of those tax dollars.

Many Minnesotans believe there is waste and inefficiency in state government. The major reason they believe so is that there is waste and inefficiency in our state government.

For example, more than 3,000 dormitory beds are empty across the public college campuses of our state.

They are empty because of poor planning. The State of Minnesota built more dormitories than it needs. The people of Minnesota are paying the price and will continue to pay it for a long time to come.

We know that more and more elementary school classrooms are standing empty -- not ancient, decrepit buildings for the most part, but relatively recent facilities built at considerable cost to the taxpayers of those districts.

In one of our state departments, there are three vehicles for each employee -- and the grass grows high around some of those vehicles.

One of our state college campuses, the newest facility in the system, stands with twice as many classrooms as it needs. Present projections are that many or most of those classrooms will never be needed on that campus.

Some major and expensive mistakes have been made. They were not deliberate. Many of us here helped make them.

But they wasted state tax dollars.

And wasted dollars do not serve human needs.

Every wasted dollar, every short-range commitment that comes back to haunt us with long-range consequences, deprives the people of the state of funds that could go to meet urgent human needs.

The need for economy in state government has never been so clear. The sick and the handicapped and the helpless will be properly served only when first-rate, tough, hard planning and management are required of every department and agency in this state. We can no longer tolerate a situation where Chambers of Commerce in the communities of our state are pitted against one another in a desperate effort to lobby for short-range advantages, and state policy becomes a matter of who wins the battle.

This was the old way of doing things. We cannot afford it, now or ever again.

That is why I am so pleased with the success of one of the most remarkable projects ever undertaken in state government.

The State of Minnesota is a large and complex enterprise with a multi-billion dollar budget. If we were listed on the Fortune magazine list of 500 largest corporations in the nation, we would be 37th from the top.

With this in mind we asked Minnesota's businessmen to share their expertise with the state. We wanted the state to adopt the best most modern business procedures and techniques, wherever possible.

The response from the business community was overwhelming.

Since June, the Loaned Executives Action Program, known as L.E.A.P., has provided the state with a staff of 74 full-time and 26 part-time people, representing 50 of the top corporations in the state. Under the capable direction of Douglas Dayton, they have devoted the equivalent of 26 man-years to the examination of our state government -- at no expense to the state.

They sent us their best.

We are now receiving 139 separate, far-reaching reports on our various agencies and departments. L.E.A.P.'s summary report will be published in the next few days.

I was surprised, and pleased, and very, very grateful to the Minnesota business community for its toughness and candor. Let me assure you that they did not tell us only those things they thought we wanted to hear.

Now we have the job of following through. We must continue to keep the pressure on every state department -- and on ourselves. The dollars we save will serve the people of our state.

The L.E.A.P. report also includes legislative recommendations. They will be forwarded to you during the coming weeks as we are able to prepare and refine them, and I hope you will give them earnest consideration.

And may I state my strong hope that other units of government will seek the counsel and management capabilities of our business community too. There is no unit of government that cannot greatly improve its effectiveness through such cooperation. I include, most specifically, our local school boards, who are responsible for spending a very major portion of the revenues which are raised within the state.

Two major L.E.A.P. recommendations for reorganizing the central administration of state government will be among my legislative requests -- the centralizing of our state personnel administration and the strengthening of our budgeting, finance, and auditing processes. These steps are extremely important to real economy in our state government.

And I will make one other major legislative request to improve our state government as well.

In part, the respect and esteem we have for the people of our state and their government can be measured by the priority and concern we give to attracting the most talented, the best trained, the best equipped people to state service. That is how we provide the kind of state service our people deserve.

But our state government finds it very difficult to compete for those people.

When I assumed office, I knew that we were not competitive with private business and school districts. But I was alarmed to discover that the state could not compete with county and city governments for comparable talent.

The problem is not just salaries.

In a recent survey of retirement benefits for 41 states, for employees with 20 years of service, Minnesota ranked 39th from the top. We were ahead of Nebraska and South Dakota, and behind everybody else.

For retirees with 30 years of service, we were not much better -- 36th of the 41 states in the survey.

What does this mean?

It means that it is very difficult to attract the best qualified men and women to state government, no matter how dedicated they are.

And it means that people who devote their lives to our state government receive almost nothing in return.

A psychiatric technician at one of our state hospitals, with 20 years of devotion to the mentally ill, can retire with \$107 a month under our present retirement program.

A highway technician, with 20 years of service, retires at the handsome rate of \$101 per month.

A senior highway maintenance worker, with 32 years of state service, receives just \$213 a month.

A Senior Division Head, one of our top management employees, with 46 years service, earns just \$5,600 a year in retirement benefits. After 46 years. And that's at the top of our scale.

Our mandatory retirement age is 70 for the state retirement system. Few retire any earlier. They simply can't afford it.

And just as with any other employee, the retirement age for custody officers in our corrections system is also 70, with poor retirement benefits.

The present system insures that people 68 and 69 years old must deal with prisoners and the criminally insane who are half their age and several times their strength.

Too old to perform the job as it should be performed, unwilling to retire to a humiliating pension, they keep on -- as well as they can.

This is the most appalling, the most dangerous waste in state government that I know.

There is only one answer.

We must improve our retirement benefits.

We must reduce the age for mandatory retirement to 65, and to age 55 for custody officers at our prisons and security hospitals and others whose lives and abilities are placed in jeopardy.

Under this plan, between 1,500 to 1,800 employees would be able to retire by the end of the next biennium.

We can bring more than 150 young, strong, trained new employees into service for our corrections system alone.

My budget message will contain more specific information on this proposal.

With this retirement program, with careful review of all vacant positions, and with the recommendations on complement that I will make in my budget message, I am today setting the goal of trying to reduce the number of Minnesota state employees by five percent by the end of the next biennium.

I believe that can be accomplished while improving the quality of services provided by the state.

With your help, an improved retirement program is another step we can take to provide real economy in state government.

MEETING HUMAN NEEDS

Neither open government nor economy in government is justified solely for its own sake.

But openness and economy will better equip us to meet the central purpose of government, which is to anticipate and meet human needs.

These needs are many and complex.

In the field of human rights, there are several steps that must be taken now.

Our first priority must be ratification of the Federal Equal Rights Amendment. I fully support and strongly encourage such action, as you know.

But state government should also lead the way in making employment and promotions available on a non-discriminatory basis to minorities and women. Our state has not led the way. We must catch up and move ahead. It is a necessary, basic human commitment.

Therefore, I will ask the Legislature to provide support for the State Affirmative Action Program instituted this Fall by Executive Order.

I will also ask the Legislature to extend our anti-discrimination laws to cover the handicapped, and place this new responsibility in the Department of Human Rights.

With a proper opportunity to try, many of our handicapped citizens can become both productive and independent.

They deserve to be judged on their capability to do the work, yet they are often automatically excluded because of their handicaps. Placing them under the anti-discrimination laws is a necessary first step to opportunity.

Another significant step this Legislature must take is to lower the age of majority to 18 years in Minnesota.

Our laws clearly discriminate against 18 to 20 year old citizens. We have already given these citizens the right to vote by amendment of the Federal Constitution. With that amendment we extended to them the most precious right that can be exercised. It would be hypocritical now to attempt to deny these young people their other rights as well, including the right to hold public office.

The needs of the average workingmen and women of Minnesota constitute a very major order of unfinished business that awaits resolution by this session of the Legislature.

This Legislature should pass a state minimum wage law tied to the Federal Minimum Wage which will reflect all future federal increases. The current \$1.75 per hour Federal Minimum Wage should be provided for all full time workers. Time and one-half should be provided for all hours worked in excess of forty hours a week.

We must also increase Unemployment Compensation benefits. Increases should reflect the earning level of the worker.

Our law now provides a weekly benefit equal to fifty percent of the average weekly wage of the worker, subject to a maximum of \$64. Thus, regardless of how high an individual's earnings may have been, he cannot collect a weekly benefit in excess of \$64.

I recommend that the maximum be changed from \$64 to sixty percent of the average weekly wage paid in Minnesota in the preceding year.

Coverage should also be extended to include a number of farm workers. I recommend that agricultural employers who employ a total of four or more workers for twenty or more weeks should be required to provide benefits.

We should also extend Unemployment Compensation benefits to workers who are put out of work by labor disputes in which they are not participants.

Along with adequate wages and benefits, I am equally concerned that working conditions be as safe and as healthy as possible. The new Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act is an important tool to help us achieve these ends.

My Budget will contain requests for state matching funds to permit implementation of OSHA in Minnesota as quickly as possible so that Minnesota's work force may derive maximum benefit.

Workers who are injured on the job should be guaranteed maximum allowable Workmen's Compensation. We need to integrate our benefits with the new disability provisions under the Social Security Act.

We intend to continue to scrutinize carefully how our state programs can be coordinated with federal programs to maximize benefits for all Minnesota workers.

Fair treatment for Minnesota's workers will also require revision of the Public Employees Labor Relations Act.

A means must be provided to settle impasse situations.

I recommend that the Act be amended to provide for voluntary binding arbitration.

The Act should also be clarified to distinguish between supervisory and non-supervisory personnel.

And no consideration of human needs in Minnesota can omit the very real and growing threat to our family farmers.

In California, 45 conglomerates own 61 percent of all the farm land in the state.

I don't want that to happen here.

These figures reflect a major threat to the quality of life of any state. We can still protect our family farms by passing the Family Farm Act of 1973 which will restrict the right of conglomerates and huge foreign corporations to penetrate and take over our family farm system in Minnesota.

I have also signed an Executive Order creating a Rural Development Council, as I indicated I would a few weeks ago.

This Council will be instrumental, I predict, in organizing the resources of state government to focus on the needs of outstate Minnesotans.

Our Vietnam veterans also deserve our help. They served bravely in a war that they should not have had to fight at all. I know we share the commitment made by our voters last November to provide a Vietnam Bonus.

In my Budget Message two weeks from now, I will identify additional legislative priorities.

That Message will deal in detail with education, corrections, welfare, the environment, and the other basic issues confronting our people.

I stated at the outset of this Message that this session of the Legislature is faced with a mandate unique in Minnesota history. I know that you can meet and fulfill that mandate, for this session is itself unique in the annals of our Legislature.

This uniqueness goes beyond even the unprecedented alignment of the caucuses. It goes beyond partisan allegiance and relates more fundamentally to the kind of men and women who now serve in both our Houses.

I don't believe that any session of our Minnesota Legislature has ever been composed of as high a percentage of new members as this one. I don't believe that any session has been as youthful. I know that no other session has had as many women members.

This newness, this freshness provides us with a special opportunity to demonstrate to the people of Minnesota that "Government works...and it works for them."

That is what this session is uniquely qualified to do. To fail would be tragic, to succeed would be to found a whole new era in our public life.

So let us begin this historic session knowing that the only restraints on progress are timidity and doubt. Let our vision be worthy of our mandate. Let each horizon become a threshold.

Let this be a session in which government does work for the people. Starting now.

Thank you.