

Ellison quickly escaped freshman 'obscurity'

By DOUG GROW

The relative anonymity that surrounds first-termers eluded the 5th District's Keith Ellison, the first Muslim in Congress. The controversies started with his swearing-in, immediately raising his profile throughout the Muslim world. As he prepares now for a re-election run, he's hoping to refocus attention from a politics of scarcity to a politics of generosity.

When Keith Ellison and Virgil Goode meet each other on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives these days, they are almost chummy.

"I say, 'How you doin', Virgil?'" said Ellison. "He says, 'Doin' fine, Keith. And yourself?'"

Ellison <http://ellison.house.gov/> started laughing while we talked.

"I understand ol' Virgil," said Ellison. "He's what you call a panderer. I don't mean that in a bad way. It's just the way he does things. If he thinks his constituents want him to behave in a certain way, that's the way he's going to behave. He didn't know me from a can of paint when he said all of that stuff."

"He's never apologized to me, but that doesn't matter. Sometimes, people say something, but then they look you in the eye in a way that says, 'I didn't mean all that stuff.' Besides, it's not within me to carry grudges. Grudges hurt you more than they hurt the other guy."

Stunning two-year climb

It's been two years this month since Ellison started his stunning climb from being a young, back-row state legislator to becoming the world's best-known member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Two years ago, Martin Olav Sabo announced he was retiring after a long, distinguished career. Along with a bunch of other DFL hopefuls, Ellison, well-known only in North Minneapolis, threw his hat in the ring. He beat 'em all for endorsement.

Then, he won again in a bruising DFL primary. And he won again in the general election, becoming the first Muslim elected to Congress. Then, he chose to be sworn into office with his hand on the Quran.

That's what set Virgil Goode off. The Virginia Republican sent a letter to his constituents: "When I raise my hand to take the oath swearing-in day, I will have the Bible in my other hand. . . . The Muslim representative from Minnesota was



Keith Ellison

elected by the voters from that district and if American citizens don't wake up and adopt the Virgil Goode position on immigration there will likely be many more Muslims elected to office . . ."

Now Ellison is preparing to run for his second term, and he's virtually unopposed in the 5th Congressional District.

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MINNPOST.WORLD

In his moment of triumph, media spotlight largely eludes McCain

By SUSAN ALBRIGHT

While Sen. John McCain will reap strategic rewards of early Republican decision-making, he certainly had bad luck on the media-spotlight front this week. Since Tuesday's results clinched his nomination, virtually all attention has been on the Democrats, with pundits analyzing everything from whether Rush helped Hillary in Texas to who said what to the Canadians about NAFTA.

McCain did get a White House moment — actually many moments, including lunch — with President Bush, though as an account by the Times (of London) Online indicates, the photo op began only after a nervous presidential wait for the candidate:

“... The president grinned easily at the waiting press pack. He shuffled his feet, then did a little jig. ‘I’m just going to tap dance a little,’ the leader of the free world explained.

“Another uncomfortable silence descended. The president peered about him, then looked at his staff with eyes pleading for rescue.

“‘Who should be his VP?’” a reporter yelled.

“‘There will be ample time for questions,’” Mr. Bush repeated.

“‘There’s ample time now,’” a second reporter piped up. But the nominee was still nowhere to be seen.

“‘Let’s start over,’” Mr. Bush chortled, fleeing back into the safety of the White House. ‘Pretend like it never happened.’”

Ouch.

‘A marriage of convenience’

Things got better once McCain arrived, but the media didn’t cooperate by taking the event at face value. Massimo Calabresi, wrote in Time magazine, for example, “The meeting was supposed to project a unified Republican front, a burying of past hatchets with smiles all around. But from the moment a fashionably late John McCain made President Bush awkwardly wait for him



By KEVIN LAMARQUE, Reuters

Sen. John McCain and President Bush shake hands at the White House.

(and tap dance for the assembled media) at the North Portico of the White House, it was clear that this public endorsement of the freshly crowned Republican nominee was largely a marriage of convenience.”

As evidence, Calabresi noted the following: “In his opening statement, he said he’d welcome the president on the campaign trail as his schedule allows, and he repeated that theme five times in ten minutes. He’d hold joint campaign events ‘in keeping with the president’s schedule,’ he said. He hopes the president will ‘find time from his busy schedule’ to campaign with him, he said. McCain apparently hasn’t seen the ‘Week Ahead’ memos the White House has been sending out that show Bush’s lame duck agenda sparsely dotted with feel-good meet-and-greets.

“McCain’s excessive concern for Bush’s day job simply underlined the fact that these two were never going to be the prettiest pair.” Bad blood dates at least to the primaries of 2000, but a newer consideration is whether Bush’s visible support will be useful. The obvious problem of his low popularity ratings wasn’t lost on the president. As the Wall Street Journal reported, “Whether Bush

can actually help McCain much is in doubt, as even Bush seemed to concede. ‘Look. ... If my showing up and endorsing him helps him, or if I’m against him and it helps, either way, I want him to win,’ Bush said, in response to one of several questions on the issue.”

As for the substance of McCain’s credentials and how they’ll play in the campaign, don’t hold your breath for lengthy analysis; the “who’s up, who’s down” of the close Democratic contest will occupy most of the media as McCain gears up for his one-on-one with the winner. While many see his national-security bona fides as his natural strength, he can’t take voter kudos for granted if two articles this week are any indication.

The phone-call question

Mark Benjamin, in Salon.com, picked up on the 3 a.m. phone-call issue brought up in Hillary Rodham Clinton’s ads against Barack Obama.

“In essence, Clinton has now turned the debate about commander-in-chief readiness into a contest of résumés. And the conventional wisdom is that John McCain — ex-fighter pilot, former POW and war hero — wins. But that’s not necessarily the case, say senior military officials and political analysts. In

interviews with Salon this week, several experienced military officers said McCain draws mixed reviews among military leaders, and they expressed serious doubts about whether McCain has the right temperament to be the next president and commander in chief. ...

“It is not difficult in Washington to find high-level military officials who have had close encounters with John McCain’s temper, and who find it worrisome. Politicians sometimes scream for effect, but the concern is that McCain has, at times, come across as out of control. It is difficult to find current or former officers willing to describe those encounters in detail on the record. That’s because, by and large, those officers admire McCain. But that doesn’t mean they want his finger on the proverbial button, and they are supporting Clinton or Obama instead.”

One of several military men told Benjamin, “I like McCain. I respect McCain. But I am a little worried by his knee-jerk response factor.” Retired Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton, who was in charge of training the Iraqi military from 2003 to 2004 and is now campaigning for Clinton, added, “I think it is a little scary. I think this guy’s first reactions are not necessarily the best reactions. I believe that he acts on impulse.”

Calling Obama a “kind of a steady Eddie,” Merrill McPeak, a retired general, said, “McCain has got a reputation for being a little volatile.” However, Benjamin also quotes former Navy Secretary John Lehman, a McCain supporter who downplays this as an issue. “Lehman said that in comparison with some of the people he has worked for, such as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, ‘John McCain is a pussycat.’”

“I have never seen him really lose it and really be just passionately furious,” Lehman said. “When I have seen him lose his temper, it is for effect.”

Susan Albright, a managing editor, writes about national and foreign developments. She can be reached at salbright@minnpost.com.

DNR asks for advice – but does it listen?



RON WAY

A recent decision by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow large “platform” docks in public waters fronting Minnesota lake cabins has brought on a lot more than a chorus of concern that room-size docks would change the aesthetics and biology of shore lands.

It has aggravated what appears to be an ever-growing divide between the DNR and those volunteer advisory groups who feel their advice is ignored. It’s also added heat to simmering discontent among agency staff over decision-making that some feel has become too politicized.

“There is genuine concern among professional staff that Minnesota is not managing its natural resources and ecosystems in a sustainable manner, and that problems are accelerating,” said Paul Stolen of the DNR regional office in Bemidji.

Stolen is president of the Minnesota Association of Conservation Professionals (MACP). The group will have its annual meeting Friday in Little Falls, where it will consider ways to address what Stolen said is growing staff frustration. “Political considerations have led to silencing of, or interference with, information provided by [DNR] professionals,” reads a draft MACP resolution that will be discussed Friday.

The MACP will also hear from a representative of the controversial group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility on ways to gain leverage in decision-making and whistleblower protection.

DNR Commissioner Mark Holsten said these kinds of complaints aren’t new. “There were expressions of this kind of before I came to DNR five years ago,” said Holsten. “You can’t make everyone happy.”

He noted that when making its decisions, the agency must consider the science of resource management along with statutory mandated considerations.

But Jerry Maertens, a DNR wildlife specialist for 35 years before retiring two years ago, said business concerns often take priority. “The platform docks issue is another example of how the DNR makes decisions based on how an industry or business is affected rather than on principles of resources protection,” said Maertens of Bemidji.

At least three members of a docks advisory committee are upset.

“Why even ask people to invest time and energy into serving on a committee only to ignore their most substantial and carefully crafted recommendations?” they wrote in a Feb. 4 letter to Holsten. The signers were Henry VanOffelen with the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Dann Siems with the Beltrami County Soil and Water conservation District in Bemidji, and Merilee Meyers with the Beltrami County Lakes and Rivers Association.

The 19-member advisory group said the DNR should develop regulations to address the docks issue, which promises to produce the level of tension that accompanied the noisy arrival of personal watercraft in Minnesota’s lake country three decades ago.

Instead, Holsten issued a five-year permit to allow dock platforms up to 170 square feet (or larger in “special cases”), a move critics say will allow the installation of so many large docks that control efforts will be blunted.

Regional Manager Mike Carroll said the DNR will develop docks regulations as it prepares long-awaited lakeshore-protection rules, and he added: “We are a diverse department, and while our first responsibility is resource conservation and protection, we have to balance economic and social interests.”

Other advice ignored

The large-docks issue isn’t the only one that has drawn fire from advocacy groups and DNR staffers.

Earlier this year, Holsten decided to allow “limited” access by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) into the Mississippi Headwaters State Forest southwest of Bemidji despite an outpouring of public support to close the forest to the machines.

Maertens said 93 percent of the 1,678 people who spoke at DNR field meetings on the issue favored closing the forest to the ATVs, a position he said was also favored by three of five resource managers inside the DNR.

“ATV drivers ignore signs, drive around gates, drive into the [Mississippi] River, rip around and do the damage including erosion,” said Matt Norton, an attorney with St. Paul-based Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy. Norton said his group is considering legal action to overturn the decision that, he said, largely ignored public comment.

Larry Gates with the Kellogg Conservation Association near Wabasha said the ATV issue is disruptive in other DNR regions. Gates spent 34 years with the DNR where he helped coordinate advisory groups throughout southeastern Minnesota; he said he remains in regular contact with DNR employees.

The DNR has increasingly sided with ATV groups and opened more trails to off-road machines despite widespread damage they cause, he said. He said enforcement is lax, something underscored by a report by a legislative auditor’s report in 2003.

Gates said that over the last two years the DNR and Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) have also “frustrated” efforts by another advisory group regarding a proposed ethanol plant in Eyota, Minn.

In addition, David Zentner of Duluth, a long-time Izaak Walton League activist, said that an advisory group on waterfowl management recommended four years ago that Minnesota continue to be “very conservative” in allowing increased bag limits of ducks because of habitat pressures in the Mississippi Flyway. Zentner said that Holsten “on his own” recently increased bag limits against the advice of the advisory group.

And practice isn’t limited to the DNR and MPCA. Earlier this month, the state’s Commerce Department sent a report on climate change to the Legislature that largely ignored or rewrote a report by a 55-member advisory committee appointed in May by Gov. Tim Pawlenty and staffed by a national consultant paid for in part with \$40,000 in state funds.

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Joel Kramer, CEO and editor

Not surprisingly, Ellison quickly escaped freshman 'obscurity'

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Barb White, a North High grad who currently resides in the 3rd District, has announced she will run. But the conservative pastor is given little chance, even by the Republican Party.

"It's an uphill fight, given the Democratic makeup of Minneapolis," said Mark Drake, the party's communications director.

Time for introspection hard to find

For Ellison, there's been little time for introspection, though he tries to find time most days to write in his journal. He's filled five journals so far. Filled them with thoughts about the huge amount of international attention that came his way. Filled them with thoughts about his world travels (notably, visits to several Mideast hot spots, including Israel, Syria and Iraq), sometimes with the Bush administration's State Department. Filled them with thoughts of his family and of daily tragedies back home in Minneapolis and of the little

things that make him laugh.

"I told Barack [Obama] that I heard he was stealing my thing about being sworn in on the Quran," said Ellison, who has endorsed the Illinois senator for president. "He just laughed." (Some Internet reports to the contrary, Obama is Christian.)

The big frustration of the first term, he said, has been trying to explain why a Congress controlled by the Democrats has been unable to get much done.

"Frustrating to explain to people that we're not veto-proof," Ellison said. "It's frustrating when people say, 'You haven't ended the war.' Well, it's not that easy. All we can do is work harder and hope we have the president next year."

Ellison did vow that he will work as hard in the upcoming campaign as he did two years ago.

"We are using this office as a big community organizer," Ellison said. "We want to change the paradigm in politics. We want to move to a politics of generosity and inclusion. What we have

now is a politics of scarcity: 'There are dangerous people out there, and there's not enough to go around. The bad guys are coming to get our stuff, and we have to protect it.' We have to move away from that."

Dealing with the politics of scarcity

What's the inspiration for this?

"The story of the loaves and fishes," Ellison said.

This led to a deep theological discussion.

"Wait a minute," I said. "That's my story. I had perfect attendance in Sunday School for several years. You're a, umm, a Muslim!"

"I happened to spend most of my youth in Catholic schools," said Ellison, who grew up in a Christian family in Detroit.

"OK, OK, you tell me your view of loaves and fishes," I said.

Ellison became quite animated in his small office in the Urban League building in north Minneapolis as he began telling

the story.

"The disciples come to Jesus and say, 'We've got a problem,'" said Ellison. "'All these people are getting hungry and we don't have anything to feed them. All we have are a few loaves and fishes.' But it was really a problem of perception. Jesus said, 'There's plenty for everyone, and there was. That's what we have now. There's enough for shared abundance. We have to move away from being afraid.'"

This election is about pushing a progressive movement based on doing a better job of dividing loaves and fishes and not getting hung up on what panderers have to say.

Doug Grow, a former metro columnist for the Star Tribune, writes about public affairs, state politics and other topics. He can be reached at dgrow@minnpost.com.

"It's frustrating when people say, 'You haven't ended the war.' Well, it's not that easy. All we can do is work harder and hope we have the president next year."

— Keith Ellison

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The invisible art and craft of indexing

By AMY GOETZMAN

Their work brings no acclaim, very little in the way of financial rewards and nary an invitation to head out on a book tour.

Yet without the efforts of book indexers, readers and researchers would flounder unguided through dense volumes, and poem seekers who recalled only a topic or a first line might wander as lonely as a cloud, endlessly searching for that half-remembered verse. No, it's not this one. No, this isn't the one either.

A well-crafted index may actually yield a bit of accidental poetry of its own. But for the most part, those orderly rows of numbers and notations are purely utilitarian, serving the academic and guiding the curious browser, and possibly even boosting the success of a book.

James Cihlar, managing editor at Minneapolis-based Milkweed Editions, says including an index is a direct investment in the salability of certain books. "If we are planning an index, we send that information to our distributors and sales accounts early on," he says. Milkweed commissions a handful of indexes for its titles each year. "It can make a real difference to whether or not a book gets picked up by a library collection or gets used by schools."

While including an index is a savvy business move in today's publishing market, it's also an old-fashioned craft, often practiced with pen and paper, requiring a sharp eye and an organized mind.

It is an art to which few are called.

According to the only professional association for indexers in the country, the Society for Professional Indexers, there are only five professional book indexers in Minnesota, four in Wisconsin, two in Iowa and none in the Dakotas. (Not all indexers are members.)

Software exists that is capable of creating a complete list of references and page numbers, a flat concordance listing every mention of every term in a book. Some indexers use these programs to assist in their work, but it's no substitute for a human-created index.

Such a computerized listing is so exhaustive and imprecise that it's useless. Worse, it lacks soul.

"A talented indexer comes to a book with previous knowledge [of the subject] and a little sensitivity," Cihlar says. "They can guide the publisher to an extent, help us know what to throw a light on, and understand how a reader will need to use a book."

Indexers also act as proof-readers, alerting editors to inconsistencies and errors. Cihlar has commissioned freelance book indexer Chris Dodge to work on titles such as the Edward Abbey letters collection, "Postcards From Ed: Dispatches and Salvos from an American Iconoclast," and "With Mouths Open Wide," a book of poetry by John Caddy.

While fiction titles hardly ever have indexes, poetry volumes, particularly collected works, and "new and selected" editions, often have an index of first lines and subjects.

Dodge, a writer and former librarian for Utne Reader and the Minneapolis Public Library, also has a passion for environmental and natural history topics, an asset to a press like Milkweed, whose non-fiction titles tend to emphasize the natural world.

Lifetime of careful reading, cataloging

He came to indexing after a lifetime of careful reading and years of cataloging materials for libraries, "a process that includes thinking about and then providing access to intellectual works via subject terminology, using a controlled vocabulary with cross references," he says.

He has indexed 20 books for six different publishers in the past 15 months, and acknowledges he practices a rare craft.

"I think it might be artisanal, like knowing how to make knishes, or silver swords or wooden marionettes, the kind of thing that has gotten some people in Japan named 'living treasures,'" he says.

It can be slow-going, painstaking work. "The time it takes to write an index depends on the book's complexity, length and de-

sign, among other things. Trotsky's 'History of the Russian Revolution,' at 900-plus pages, took me about a month, even though I was just indexing names and classes of people. Another book, at 220 pages or so, has taken less than a week," Dodge says.

Dodge says he has received a credit in only two of the books he has indexed. "The indexer has no face -- and no name, for that matter," he observes.

And these unsung heroes do not become wealthy. Dodge works as a freelance writer as well as indexer, and Denise Carlson, a Duluth-based indexer who works on about 35 books a year, supplements her income in the summers by working as a tour guide and costumed interpreter at Split Rock Lighthouse Historic Site.

"Indexing is pretty solitary work, so the job at Split Rock gets me outside and interacting with people six months out of the year," she says.

The inner and outer life of an indexer

The profession grows by attracting compulsively orderly book lovers who desire a career change: namely, librarians. Many, if not most, indexers have spent time in the stacks. Carlson holds a master's degree in library science and has worked in the James J. Hill Library and at the library at the Minnesota Historical Society. (Her clients include the Minnesota Historical Society Press and the University of Minnesota Press.) She also took indexing courses, offered by — of all places — the U.S. Department of Agriculture. She estimates that more than 50 percent of indexers have taken USDA courses.

But a class taken is not an indexer made. Much of an indexer's skill is innate, and a love of books, cover to cover, is essential. While Carlson considers herself to be an extrovert, she finds great satisfaction in creating something "worthwhile," not to mention expanding her trivia reserves. "I have come to enjoy children's nonfiction a lot," she says. "I always learn something, like the secret life of spiders or what makes a rainbow."

Dodge says that as a reader, he usually looks at a book's index right after looking at its cover, and sometimes inserts handwritten notations to a published index if he finds it lacking. Memorably bad indexes he has encountered include that of the "Chicago Manual of Style" and Ben Watson's biography of Frank Zappa, "The Negative Dialectics of Poodle Play," which he called "too inclusive."

But a greater problem is an index that is too sparse, he says. He aspires to design precise indexes that mirror the author's language and serve the reader. But even within the dictates of the form, an index leaves room for some creativity, moments of random joy within hours of absolutism.

"There are occasionally times when a sort of narrative can develop, or 'poetry,' that can be further shaped by word choice in the subheads," he says. Case in point, from "Vietnam: The (Last) War the U.S. Lost," by Joe Allen (forthcoming from Chicago-based Haymarket Books).

Nixon, Richard, 75–76, 157–175
 passim
 as "peace candidate," 157
 as vice president, 63
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 mobilizes National Guard to deliver mail, 155
 says "if you can't lie, you'll never get anywhere," 198
 says "this country is not headed for revolution," 187
 visits China, 193–194, 198–199
 withdraws from presidency, 201

"I chose to arrange subheads alphabetically in this index, though sometimes chronological entries are more effective," said Dodge. "That said, I intentionally used 'withdraws' in the last subhead above, instead of 'resigns,' so that it would file last, not only to give chronological closure, but also to complete the narrative with a sort of emphatic full stop."

Very nice.
Amy Goetzman writes about books, libraries and the literary scene. She can be reached at agoetzman@minnpost.com.

COMMUNITY VOICES

'Economic opportunity in a city that works'

Editor's note: Here are excerpts from the annual State of the City Address, delivered Wednesday by Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak at the MacPhail Center for Music.

We have come together today in Minneapolis' newest great cultural landmark: the MacPhail Center for Music. This extraordinary building, designed by Minneapolis architect James Dayton, joins the Walker, Institute of Arts, Guthrie Theater, Children's Theater, Ritz Theater, Central Library and new community libraries around the city in the greatest buildup of new cultural facilities in the history of Minneapolis.

We also come together at MacPhail because it's at the center of a remarkable renaissance on the Minneapolis riverfront. Many of us remember the days, not long ago, when this part of town was a forgotten and underused railroad yard. Today, land here is worth 13 times what it was in 1994. Over this time, more than 1,500 jobs have been created and 1,000 housing units have been built. Now we see great visions for Washington Boulevard, a transit hub connecting the Hiawatha Light Rail Line with the new Central Corridor to the university and St. Paul, and expansions of the riverfront renaissance upriver into north and northeast Minneapolis.

Even more important, today we come together at this place, on the downtown riverfront, because it is where our city began. Minneapolis celebrates its sesquicentennial this year: our 150th birthday, which we will celebrate with a series of events during July's Aquatennial Festival.

••••

This story of our past provides a useful guide to our future. We didn't get here by a single act, or by giving breaks to a few lucky people or companies. We got here with a long-term, sustained commitment to innovation, training a diverse workforce, and remaining connected to our region and global economy. That's how we got here and that's how we're going to move forward.

I disagree with the economic philosophy used too often in both Washington and St. Paul. You don't build a recession-resistant economy that creates lasting prosperity with a one-time rebate check, or tax cuts for only the very wealthy. The sad state of the economy today is living proof that a tax cut to the wealthy without investments in people has been a failure.

Minneapolis has shown that you build common ground for a recession-resistant economy by investing in people and investing in an environment where opportunity and innovation is fostered. You build common ground for a recession-resistant economy when you make sustained, long-term investments, not just quick fixes. When quality government invests in quality people, you get quality results. When you don't invest, there are consequences.

Minneapolis will weather this period of economic uncertainty. Our economy has a sound foundation and our city government has a sound economic strategy:

- We are the most literate city and a leading center of the knowledge and creative economy.
- No other city in America has a higher percentage of people between the ages of 25 and 34, which makes our workforce perfectly situated for creative and knowledge based businesses.
- Only one other region in America has more corporate

headquarters per capita.

- Average wages in Minneapolis are up 3 percent from a year ago.
- Downtown office vacancy is down to 14 percent, one percent better than last year.
- We have the fifth highest income of the world's metropolitan areas.
- Forbes named us America's most affordable place to live.
- Marketwatch named this metro area America's best place for business.
- Our region is America's 12th largest exporter.

I believe that Minneapolis has in place a strategic, focused plan that is building economic opportunity in a city that works and that's what I intend to address today. The role of government is to provide the common ground where all people and businesses can prosper. Our ability to build and maintain a strong economy requires the effort of every single city department working together with a unified vision that says our economic plan is focused in two key areas: investing in people, our number one asset, and investing in the common ground, where we all prosper.

Investing in people

Our people-focused strategy targets two areas of greatest need: underemployment and future employment. In 2004, we launched an effort to close the unemployment gap by providing more training to potential employees and placing more hard to employ people into good-paying jobs. Since then, the city of Minneapolis has invested nearly \$7 million in our Close the Gap initiative, placing 14,000 hard to employ city residents into unsubsidized private sector jobs in addition to the 3,300 subsidized city jobs for previously unemployed residents. This is part of the reason that, for the

first time since the 1980s, Minneapolis has seen job growth for three straight years, and these are good jobs.

The centerpiece of our employment strategy is in health care — Minneapolis' most important industry. More than 12 percent of the jobs in Minneapolis are in health care and it's the fastest growing part of the Minneapolis economy, adding more than 2,300 jobs last year alone. This is a growth of nearly 5 1/2 percent, and a larger growth rate than the metro area or state as a whole. To help us deepen Minneapolis' role in health care, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities opened an office in our city's Department of Community Planning and Economic Development to launch an initiative called HealthForce. Its purpose is to work with health-care organizations to determine where they will need employees, and then fill the job pipeline with students from schools like the Roosevelt High School Health Careers Magnet and Minneapolis Community and Technical College.

Our work isn't just about helping people in need; it's about making sure our economy has the educated workers it needs in the future. Major demographic shifts are occurring in this state and country that threaten our economic prosperity. Consider this: The number of high-school graduates in Minnesota will decrease 10 percent over the next 10 years, and our fastest-growing populations have the lowest high-school graduation rates and college participation rates.

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