

**Top priority: If elected, what is your top priority for the 2019 Legislature? Why are you running for office?**

My top priority is making state government accountable to taxpayers again and changing the culture in some of our state agencies from that of controlling and directing us to actually serving the taxpayers. Time and again we have seen important functions of government completely fail. Elder abuse, child care fraud, the failures of the MNSURE website and the MNLARS disaster. Real Minnesotans are getting harmed by government failures, and hundreds of millions in taxpayer dollars are being wasted or even stolen. Balancing the state budget is important, but instilling a service culture back into government and ensuring that tax money is actually helping Minnesotans is even more so.

**Gridlock: The 2018 Legislature adjourned without addressing key items including a tax conformity bill. End-of-session gridlock is becoming a recurring theme at the Capitol. What specific measures do you support to increase the transparency and reduce the increasing partisan deadlock of the lawmaking process? Do you support reforms that would prohibit consolidating multiple subjects into a single omnibus bill?**

Unfortunately, we've apparently come to accept that each session ends in chaos and finger-pointing, with a late-night backroom deal and votes on omnibus "garbage" bills that practically no one has read. There is no reason to accept that anymore. Strong leadership from a governor who is engaged with BOTH parties from the beginning of session until the end will go a long way to solving this problem. I've also very specifically stated that I will veto omnibus bills that don't comply with the "single subject" requirement (regardless of which party sends them to me) and that I will promote a "pay for performance" law that denies pay to the governor and legislative leaders if we cannot get our budget done within the confines of the regular session.

**Budget: The 2019 Legislature will be tasked with passing a tax bill to update to the federal changes passed in 2017. Should Minnesota just conform to the federal law, or should the Legislature take the opportunity to provide some tax relief?**

Federal conformity and Minnesota tax rates are two different issues, and both need to be addressed in the next legislative session. Federal conformity is important because without it Minnesotans' tax preparations become even more complicated, while high tax rates are undermining Minnesota's competitiveness. Minnesotans are overtaxed, and deserve a more competitive tax system than what we have right now. I will take the opportunity as governor to both comply with the federal law and allow Minnesotans to keep more of what they earn.

**Education, K-12: Is the K-12 system adequately funded? If not, how would you pay for more funding?**

K-12 education is one of the few state responsibilities specifically addressed in the Minnesota Constitution, so it will be one of my highest funding priorities. Unfortunately, however, some politicians believe that the only thing that matters in education is increasing the budget every year. While money matters, accountability, funding simplification and empowering parents and teachers is even more important. We need to radically simplify the funding formula, start eliminating mandates on our school districts, allow teachers to teach in a way that best fits their students rather than a way that bureaucrats require and give parents more choice in the kids' education and more control over their kids' schools.

**Education, higher ed: Many employers remain frustrated in their ability to find qualified workers for the available jobs. What role does higher ed play in addressing this problem?**

Higher ed has to be more than sending kids to a 4 year college. Our MNSCU system should work closely with employers to help match skilled students with available jobs. But we also must change the bias in our state that every kid needs a 4-year-degree to be successful. There are many other options available to our students - including technical training, 2-year degrees and apprenticeship programs - that we should celebrate and promote.

**Health care: Should a fee be assessed against pharmaceutical companies to help combat the opioid epidemic?**

Fees don't prevent drug abuse and every penny assessed against pharmaceutical companies will be immediately passed onto consumers, increasing the cost of prescription drugs even more. Prevention, treatment, and aggressive law enforcement are the answer. I support using as much general fund money as necessary to tackle the law enforcement and addiction problems.

**Workplace regulations: The 2018 Legislature considered but did not pass new legal standards for workplace harassment. Should the 2019 Legislature take action?**

I've spent much of the past 20 years investigating workplace harassment and discrimination claims and providing harassment prevention training for employers throughout the country. I believe the standards in place are adequate, but we don't always do a good job of effectively enforcing those standards in a fair and consistent matter. Ultimately, employers will have to lead the way, and they have powerful legal incentives to do so right now.

**Transportation: What is your preference for raising additional money for roads and bridges: Dedicating transportation-related money from the general fund, such as the sales tax on auto parts, or raising the gas tax? Or is current funding sufficient?**

Minnesota is already one of the highest tax states in America. We don't need a gas tax increase. We've also seen a state spending increase of over 50% just in the last 8 years, so there is room to focus more general fund money on transportation. I believe, however, that we need to focus that transportation spending on the modes most beneficial and efficient: roads, bridges and a world-class bus system.

**Energy: Should Minnesota increase its renewable energy mandates on utilities, or is current law sufficient?**

I believe our current law is sufficient and, frankly, increased reliance on renewables will be driven by consumer demand much more than government mandates going forward. We should celebrate the progress we have made and do all we can encourage investment and further innovation in this sector of the economy.

**Public notices: Some local government bodies continue to push for eliminating public notices from newspapers and moving them to government websites, even though independent research continues to show that far more people see the notices when they're published in newspapers and on newspaper websites, and that removing them from newspapers would in fact save very little money. What's your view on permitting important public notices to be disseminated only by local government bodies by means of their own websites?**

I would need to see the research on viewership, but I'd be open to posting notices digitally if it can be shown that as many people will see the notice as would if printed in a newspaper.

**Elections: Do you support moving the primary election from August to June in an effort to increase voter turnout?**

Yes.

**Other issues: Are there other issues you want to address?**

This election is about two very different visions of the future for Minnesotans. I believe the focus of government should be on people, not on more government itself. I will allow Minnesotans to keep more of what they earn to spend on their own families and businesses, make state government accountable again and change the culture in our state agencies to one of serving the people who pay their salaries.

**Briefly summarize your personal background and qualifications.**

Jeff was born and raised in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota and graduated from Detroit Lakes High School in 1985, Concordia College in Moorhead in 1989 and Georgetown Law School in Washington, D.C. in 1992. Jeff and Sondi (Crookston) have been married for 25 years. They have two boys, Thor (20) and Rolf (17), and one bulldog, Chester (9).

Jeff has been self-employed for 18 years, providing workplace investigations and training to employers throughout the country. He served six years in the Minnesota House and is now in his third and final term as a Hennepin County Commissioner.

Jeff has taught Sunday School and confirmation and been active in his church's music program. He has coached youth football, baseball and soccer, has tutored homeless children in Chicago and Minneapolis and has served on a number of volunteer community boards and organizations including Young Life, Plymouth Christian Youth Center and Concordia's Alumni Board.