



Senate District 54 DFL Newsletter

March 2008
Vol. 16, No. 5

Gem Lake . Lauderdale . Little Canada . Roseville . Shoreview . St. Anthony . Vadnais Heights

What's News in SD54

Michele Courneya, SD54 Chair

February 5, 2008, will be remembered by many as the day they survived the history-making, marvelous, frustrating, exciting, and exhausting precinct caucuses. Several factors combined to make it a crazy night.

Record Attendance. More than 4,200 people attended the SD54 precinct caucuses. This, 3.5 times the previous record of 1,250. We expected record attendance and prepared for 2,500—obviously, not enough.

Earlier February 5 Caucus Date. The state legislature did not support moving the caucuses to Super Tuesday. Under current state law, the schools cannot hold any school activities after 6:00 p.m. on the state-recognized caucus date, March 4. Because the caucuses were held on February 5, there were other activities at the school that night, and we did not have access to all the parking area or the entire building. The Roseville Area High School staff was wonderful, doing everything they could to help out. Thirteen volunteers from the RAHS National Honor Society did everything from directing traffic in the building to finding precincts.

Presidential Preference Balloting Rules. The rules governing the balloting, which we at the senate district level could not change, required:

—Balloting could not start until 6:30 p.m. and had to end at 8:00 p.m.

—Voters had to register in their specific precinct before they could cast a ballot.

—Because the results are binding and determine the percentage of state delegates each particular presidential candidate will receive, the balloting was conducted like an election with similar protocol.

We did use the limited flexibility we had to allow voting after 8:00 p.m. for everyone who was still in line or looking for the appropriate precinct. Over 4,060 attendees voted in one hour and 45 minutes. The conveners and tellers did an excellent job; the few issues we had were resolved and every set of votes counted.

Precinct Caucus Costs. These are paid by the local senate districts, not the state party, and run entirely by volunteers. We do not have the resources to pay for full-time organizers, traffic control, or expensive space. We had over 100 volunteers assisting with the caucuses and held special training for these volunteers.

Even with all these circumstances, we managed to conduct the voting successfully, complete all other caucus business such as delegate selections and considering resolutions, and engage hundreds of first-time caucus attendees in the process, a truly remarkable feat. There are definitely things we could have done better. We will take all the circumstances of this year into account when we plan for next time. The state legislature is already examining the caucus process and exploring options to improve it, including holding a presidential primary while preserving the caucus system for state and local party business. I testified as a representative of the DFL, along with four other senate district chairs, at a hearing held by the State Senate State and Local Government Operations and Oversight Committee on February 13 to discuss the caucuses and provide ideas and input on improving the system. The Democratic and Republican National Committees are seriously considering a uniform set of presidential primaries and caucuses.

Thank you to all our caucus volunteers, and everyone who attended the caucuses. This is where a brighter future begins. A special thank you to Andi and Tom Moffatt, Beth Lareau, and Charlie Quick for their help in sorting and entering data on all the delegates and alternates, and most of the caucus attendees, into the state DFL database. This will make planning the convention easier. The SD54 convention is April 5, 2008. There are over 700 delegates and alternates. The convention planning committees, Arrangements, Nominations, Endorsements, Credentials and Rules and Constitution, met on Saturday, February 9 and reported on their progress at the Executive Committee meeting on February 21.

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What's News...

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Resolutions Meeting, March 20. SD54 will review all the resolutions from the caucuses, and decide which resolutions we will put forward at the Central Committee meeting on Thursday, March 20 at 7:00 p.m. at the Fairview Community Center. Before that meeting, the SD54 Executive Committee has arranged for one of our most experienced volunteers to review all the resolutions, sort them by issue, compare them to the DFL State Platform and Action Agenda, and make recommendations for combining similar resolutions and eliminating resolutions that are already part of the platform or action agenda. This will make it easier to focus on discussing and prioritizing the resolutions we want to put forth on various issues. All the resolutions from the precincts will be available for review or if there are questions. The meeting will start with a brief review and explanation of the resolution process and rules, and a summary of the resolutions put forth under each area of the platform. If you would like to review the DFL State Platform before the meeting, you can find it on the internet by going to www.dfl.org, clicking on DFL Party and Party Documents.

SD54 Nominations Committee wants you!

Every two years, the Senate District 54 (SD54) Convention provides us with an opportunity to energize the leadership of SD54, by extending an invitation to all DFLers eligible to vote on November 4, 2008, to apply for a leadership position within SD54. Positions include: chair, associate chair, secretary, treasurer, affirmative action officer, senate district directors (11 or more), and

The Senate District 54 *Newsletter* is published six times a year to inform and educate interested parties of the happenings within SD54 DFL. The *Newsletter* provides opportunities for readers to submit articles for publication on various subjects of interest to this audience. The Newsletter Committee reserves the right to edit articles as appropriate to meet these goals and space restrictions

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SD54 DFL 2008 Presidential Preference Ballot Tally Sheet

Results as reported to Minnesota Secretary of State

Precinct	Clinton	Obama	Precinct	Clinton	Obama
GL -1	6	13	RV - 9	86	194
LD - 1	43	149	RV -10	71	149
LC -1	43	62	SV - 1	53	85
LC -2	52	66	SV - 2	65	110
LC -3	56	62	SV - 3	59	83
RV - 1	90	161	StA - 1	52	83
RV - 2	85	155	StA - 2	79	146
RV - 3	65	121	VH - 1	29	59
RV - 4	58	80	VH - 2	49	80
RV - 5	112	219	VH - 3	38	50
RV - 6	49	124	VH - 4	24	48
RV - 7	83	170	Totals	1401	2595
RV - 8	54	126			

Other votes included 25 for Uncommitted, 13 for John Edwards, 6 for Dennis Kucinich, and 1 each for Joe Biden and Bill Richardson. For full results of all caucus voting, see <http://caucusresults.sos.state.mn.us>

delegates to the State DFL Central Committee and CD4 Central Committee.

Interested applicants can visit sd54dfl.org for position descriptions and information on the application procedure. A short application (which can be downloaded or filled out online) must be completed and post-marked by March 18, 2008. The nominations committee will review applications, conduct interviews, and make its recommendations to the delegates who will vote on them at the SD54 Convention on April 5, 2008 (10:00 a.m.) at Roseville Area High School. According to our constitution, nominations from the floor of the convention will also be considered for all positions.

If you have questions or wish to request that an application be mailed or faxed to you, please contact Miguel Lindgren, nominations committee chair, at 651-488-7076 (miguelitomn@yahoo.com), or Darren Cox, nominations committee member, at 651-245-7797 (dcox@darrenjcox.com). This is a great opportunity for anyone who has ever wanted to get more involved or to learn how SD54 works. We encourage you to take this opportunity to apply for a leadership position with SD54.

—SD54 Legislative Update—

54A Representative Mindy Greiling

This legislative session started at a faster pace than any I've seen in my years at the capital. This is the year to pass the bonding bill and deal with non-budget year issues. Unfortunately, this time that includes a \$373 million deficit, predicted to be larger when the forecast is unveiled.

Already the transportation bill has passed and been vetoed. The override vote next week will cast the die for the rest of the session. I would have preferred a larger increase in the gas tax, omitting the metro-wide sales tax and relying less on new borrowing that our children and grandchildren will have to pay off. However, the bill provides a significant, sustained investment in our transportation and transit system and fixes the most critical bridges. While I despise regressive taxes, at least the bill will mean lower property taxes. With the dearth of state funding, counties and cities have had to pay for transportation with property taxes instead.

I did not vote to amend the constitution to increase the state's sales tax to fund outdoor programs, the arts, and the environment. While I am a strong supporter of these issues, I do not believe we should budget through the constitution. This is the wrong way to do the right thing. My e-newsletter legislative update included my floor speech on this topic. (See directory above to subscribe.)

The bonding bill is nearly completed. I am pleased that it concentrates on statewide and regionally significant projects that maintain clean water infrastructure, repair and replace state college and university buildings, and other projects that clearly protect or improve lives, property, or public health and safety. Since our state is losing jobs under the lack of leadership from our governor, projects that are job-ready were prioritized.

There is a good debate going on within our DFL family over health care. I am supporting the Minnesota Health Plan, worked on by Sen. Marty, to provide comprehensive, universal health care to all Minnesotans. The plan allows patients to continue using the same private doctors and clinics they already use and saves money through fewer administrative costs.

As K-12 Education Finance Committee chair, I am pushing for returning the high wage earners' income taxes to the pre-1999 level to fund education this year. I do not see a successful year for students in a deficit year otherwise. We have not yet finished paying back schools for their cuts from the last deficit in 2003, and they have

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not received inflationary increases since then. I have asked for an education caucus where House legislators will "have it out" on this soon. Long-term, a bipartisan, bicameral education finance reform task force that I co-chair is reporting out a plan to adequately and fairly fund education. I believe, like the Minnesota Miracle, it may be a fight into the next gubernatorial race before we see significant results from this, but we will at least have a good plan going forward.

I appreciate all the good input many of you send to me. To subscribe to my legislative e-newsletter, send e-mail to the address above. Check out our new campaign webpage: www.mindygreiling.org

54B Representative Bev Scalze

Session Start. The 2008 Minnesota legislative session got off to a jump start on February 12. We have been preparing all summer, fall and winter to get bills ready for roll-out quickly.

Outdoors Funding. This bill was passed in the first week. It passed through all of my Environment and Natural Resource committees, and will give voters the chance to vote yes or no to raise the sales tax three-eighths of one percent to fund environment and natural resources, parks, and our cultural heritage. If passed this fall, it will dedicate 30 percent for enhancement of wetlands, prairies and forests and wildlife habitat, 30 percent for a fund to improve water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams (also drinking water), 14.25 percent for a parks and trails fund, and 19.75 percent for arts and the preservation of Minnesota's history and cultural heritage. While I don't like inserting funding decisions into the constitution, the state has cut these programs 40 percent since 2001, and we are now at the lowest level of funding for the environment

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Proportional Voting in the Democratic Presidential Selection Process

Donald M. Fraser

The fiercely fought contest in 1968 between Vice-president Humphrey and challenger Gene McCarthy for the Democratic Party's nomination for president ended with strong complaints about the process. McCarthy supporters pointed to a number of "non-democratic" practices in selecting delegates to the Chicago convention. In one state, for example, the governor effectively appointed all the delegates. Some states failed to publicize the locations of caucuses. Some states used the unity rule that compelled all delegates to vote the way a majority wanted. In most states the candidate winning the most votes got all the delegates, even if the vote was 51% to 49%. In sum, the challengers claimed that they were denied a reasonable opportunity to select delegates favorable to their candidate.

In response to these complaints, the 1968 convention adopted a resolution calling for a commission to examine the states' processes. The resulting commission was chaired by Senator McGovern. I was a member, and after Senator McGovern became an active candidate for the presidential nomination, I was named chair.

The commission proposed a number of requirements for the states to follow when selecting delegates for future nominating conventions. Among them was the requirement that delegates from each state should reflect the divisions in the state. That requirement has continued up to the present, except for the addition of "superdelegates" appointed because they hold public or party office. The superdelegates are not bound to vote for any particular candidate.

In 1968 only a handful of states used a primary election to select delegates. Most states used caucuses of various kinds. After the new rules were adopted, states began to adopt primary elections as the means of selecting delegates to the national convention. This provided a simple response to the new rules, and left the states free to use caucuses or whatever other system they chose to provide for state and local party governance and selecting state and local candidates. Most states now use primary elections to select national delegates with Minnesota

Minneapolis native, U of M Law School graduate and DFLer Don Fraser served in the Minnesota Senate for eight years until in 1962 he was elected to the U.S. House representing the 5th District. He served there from 1963 to 1979, and was president of Americans for Democratic Action 1974-76. He resigned to run, unsuccessfully, for the U.S. Senate. He was elected mayor of Minneapolis, serving from 1980-1993, the longest service ever in that position.

being one of perhaps a dozen states that continue to use caucuses. Minnesota has complied with the national rules by running a "mini-primary" for presidential choice by having caucus attendees cast a ballot for the presidential choice with no requirement that they stay to participate in other caucus business.

The result in Minnesota is that the delegate slots are awarded at both the congressional district level and the state level based on a ballot count. Thus the delegation to the national convention reflects the division among those who chose to cast a presidential preference ballot at the party caucus.

Why Use Proportional Voting?

Because it's good for the DFL and for us

Margaret Smith in collaboration with Harlan Smith

The old system of winner-take-all voting to elect delegates to conventions meant that some groups within the DFL were completely shut out in decisions made at State and National conventions. Now with proportional voting, every group within the DFL is represented by delegates elected according to the number of its supporters present at the caucus or convention. How did we get from winner-take-all to proportional representation?

In the middle of the Vietnam War we started the struggle to persuade the DFL to use proportional voting for delegate selection. Thousands of us had been protesting that terrible, unnecessary war for years, but President Lyndon Johnson continued to ignore us, sending more and more soldiers to die in the jungles of Vietnam. Finally, a leader emerged. Minnesota Senator Eugene McCarthy announced in the summer of 1967 that he would challenge Johnson for the Democratic nomination in 1968.

The Concerned Democrats Against the War turned into Democrats for Gene McCarthy, and we organized fiercely for the precinct caucuses to be held on March 5, 1968. At the end of February, 1968, came stunning news. President Johnson announced that he would not run for re-election, and Vice President Hubert Humphrey immediately announced that he would be a candidate for the Presidential nomination. Caucus organizing grew even more intensely.

The newspapers helped by running headlines calling the caucus a chance to vote against the war. Hundreds of people poured into the caucuses. It was such an exciting time. We were so hopeful of ending the war! I was elected a delegate to the DFL State Convention for the first time and went with high hopes. We had swept all of the Third,

Fourth and Fifth Congressional Districts and felt sure that we would do well at the state convention. But the Humphrey delegates for the other five congressional districts outnumbered us and we did not succeed in electing a single delegate to the Democratic National Convention.

With winner-take-all we would have had no delegates to represent us even if we had been only one vote short of what the other side had. I went home complaining bitterly to my husband that we had been wiped out. “The DFL ought to use the Hare system of proportional representation,” Harlan said. “It would be good for the DFL—no one would be shut out. Everyone who went to a caucus or convention could feel like they were represented and part of the DFL.”

I had never heard of such a system of voting and it really appealed to me. We started talking about proportional voting in our Senate District Club meetings and presented resolutions at various conventions urging the DFL to experiment with the idea. At our 1970 Senate District Convention there was an agreement to try the Hare system. Harlan volunteered to supervise the counting of the ballots as he was familiar with the system – providing that watchers were also present. One delegate stood up and yelled at Harlan, “I’ll take you to court! This is unconstitutional!” Harlan replied, “Go ahead, take me to court!” confident, from his earlier study of the system, that the court would approve it. During the count, one of the watchers, a sharp political operator, said to Harlan, “This is one system I don’t know how to beat.” The count did not take too long, and the convention was quite happy with how well everyone was represented.

For the State DFL Convention of 1970 we worked up a display demonstrating how the proportional representation system worked. While I was at the convention as a delegate, Harlan stayed with our exhibit, demonstrating proportional voting to everyone who stopped at our display.

At the 1971 summer meeting of the DFL State Central Committee, proportional voting was adopted for use in our caucus and convention system. Nevertheless, many still thought that allocating the ballots by show of hands would be too time consuming. We heard about the new Iowa sub-caucus system in which delegates physically break into groups, each supporting a candidate or issue.

The number of votes required to elect one delegate is determined by dividing the number of people present by the number of delegates allotted to the district. For example, if 100 people are present and we are allocated

five delegates to the state convention, then it takes 20 people to elect one delegate. If any of the sub-caucuses does not have 20 participants, it is not “viable” and its members must join another sub-caucus that represents their second choice(s). A sub-caucus that ends up with at least 20 people may elect one delegate to the state convention. A sub-caucus with 40 people may elect two delegates, etc.

This system was first used at our 1972 caucuses and conventions. It has proved to be a very satisfactory and even a fun way of electing delegates to the up-coming convention—delegates who represent well all the various groups within the DFL.

Report on the January Forum

Three to Get Ready and One to Go!

Georgiana Sobola

Although three candidates for the U.S. Senate were unable to accept our invitation for a forum appearance on January 17, 2008, they were ably represented by articulate and enthusiastic surrogates from their staffs. J.P. Quirin represented Al Franken, Patrick McGarrity represented Mike Ciresi and May Jane LaVigne represented Jan Nelson-Pallmeyer. Jim Cohen had withdrawn by this date.

The candidates themselves had appeared at the State DFL Central Committee: their responses on health care and other issues were reported in our last newsletter. At this meeting, the SD54 Central Committee questions were directed to their representatives. To the first question, “Would these three candidates abide by the endorsement process?” the unanimous answer was “Yes!” The subject of negative campaigning and our opposition to it was brought to the attention of the three campaigns.

On immigration, Mike Ciresi believes our policy must be humane and address economic issues. Al Franken believes we must deal with the illegal immigrants here because we can’t send them all back. Our policy should not penalize families. Enforcement should be the duty of employers. Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer believes we should look at the issue through the eyes of compassion and appreciation for the enrichment of our culture. One goal of our policy should be to decrease the level of illegal immigration but not by military means and fear.

Are the candidates’ advisors all Minnesotans? Are they listening to us? Ciresi claims his advisors to be

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Legislative Update...

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in the last 30 years. There is simply no other way to fund these items at this time: we are falling behind in cleaning up our impaired waters.

Homeowner Protection Package. I serve on the Labor and Consumer Protection Division of the Commerce Committee, and last year we passed some great legislation to curb predatory lending practices of some mortgage brokers. This year we are introducing a package of bills designed to protect homeowners with their new-home or remodeling construction warranties. The bill I introduced will extend the time period from six months to one year after they have noticed defects for homeowners to contact their builder about possible problems with the construction. There are four other bills that are designed to assist homeowners with warranty damage claims due to faulty construction. Our homes are usually the largest investment we make in our lives: this legislation will help protect that investment.

Capital Investment. Since I am the vice-chair of the House “bonding” committee, I have been very busy during the summer, fall and winter visiting projects for possible inclusion in the 2008 bonding bill. We spent 21 days on the road, including five three day trips to the four corners of Minnesota and central Minnesota. During our trips, we made eight to ten stops each day from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. visiting sites and listening to descriptions of each proposal. We have received \$4 billion in requests for a \$1 billion bonding bill, and the decisions will be difficult as we prepare our bill and work with the Senate to come up with the final proposal to go to the governor. He has the option of signing the bill or using his veto pen to veto the entire bill or individual lines. Since he vetoed the small bonding bill in 2007, we have lost the jobs it would have created. We estimate that the large bonding bill this year will produce 10,000 jobs in construction and staffing the new facilities. We have worked hard to include proposals that will create jobs quickly, because Minnesota lost 23,000 jobs in the last half of 2007. This “recession,” as defined by our State Economist, Tom Stinson, shows that for the first time Minnesota has not kept pace with the national job market. The finance report from November shows that we are in a deficit in Minnesota, so there will be other tough decisions as we balance the budget, as required by law.

I welcome your input on these and other issues before the legislature. Please contact me if you have comments or questions. You can call my office at 296-7153, or e-mail me at rep.bev.scalze@house.mn.

Senator John Marty

The record turnout at the precinct caucuses shows that people are ready for change. After eight years of George Bush and six of Coleman and Pawlenty, people are eager to put our state and nation back on the road to a healthier, more positive future.

Part of that future means that we make it unacceptable to turn people away from medical care because they cannot afford to pay. *Like police and fire protection, everybody needs health care.* After years of seeing only patches applied to our broken system, I think it is time for Minnesota to make a bold commitment to fix the problem.

In order to move ahead, we should recognize that there is a big philosophical divide about how to proceed: Is health care a “commodity” or a “community need”? Many politicians view it as a commodity—something that is bought and sold in the marketplace. “Bought” that is, to the extent you can afford it. However, if you believe all people deserve access to affordable health care, as two-thirds of Americans do have, then there is a problem. Many people don’t earn enough to buy healthcare.

Most health proposals from politicians reflect this commodity approach. They reason that if people cannot afford health care, government should subsidize the coverage or allow insurance plans to cover fewer medical services to save money. To achieve universal health coverage, these proposals would require residents to buy insurance. In Massachusetts, this proposal became law, but even with a requirement, Massachusetts has a target of only 95 percent insured. Equally troubling, Minnesotans who have insurance still face astronomical health costs, but get little relief from this type of reform.

As an alternative, we could treat health care as a community need, something everybody needs and everyone gets—just like police and fire protection. Everybody needs police and fire services. When you call the police because your home is being burglarized, the police dispatcher doesn’t ask whether you have police insurance and what plan you have. They don’t waste time and money asking and then having you fill out forms so they can bill your insurance company. The police response does not depend on your insurance status. Everyone is treated equally, it’s the American way.

If health care is treated as a community need, when you are sick you get the care you need, and you will get sick less often because you receive preventive care and health education to assist you in taking responsibility for your health. Like police and fire protection, we all pay for it and we all benefit from it.

—SD54 Calendar March 2008—

Note: Mark your calendars now!!! Due to circumstances beyond our control, the U.S. Postal Service may not deliver the newsletter in advance of the events scheduled. **For speedy e-mail delivery, please contact us at 651-484-8926 or 651-486-7120 and ask to be added to the e-mail list.**

March 20, Thursday, SD54 Central Committee Meeting to select resolutions for the State DFL, Fairview Community Center, 7:00 p.m. All welcome.

April 3, Thursday, Newsletter Planning, Georgiana Sobola's home, 1961 Hamline Ave. N., Roseville, 7:00 p.m.

April 5, Saturday, SD54 Convention, Roseville Area High School, registration: 9:30 a.m.; convention 10:00 a.m. (**Note** SD54 Convention Attendees: Lunch will be available at the convention for a nominal charge. For emergency telephone calls while at the convention, 651-492-9232 and 651-485-4520.)

April 6, Sunday, 4CD Convention committees, Sheet Metal Workers Hall, 1681 East Cope, Maplewood, 1:00 p.m.

April 17, Thursday, SD54 Executive Committee Meeting, Fairview Community Center, 7:00 p.m.

April 19, Saturday, 4CD and Ramsey County conventions, Roseville High Area High School, 9:30 a.m.

April 26, Saturday, 5CD Convention, Washburn High School, 209 W 49th Street, Minneapolis, 9:00 a.m.

May 15, Thursday, SD54 Central Committee Meeting, Fairview Community Center, 7:00 p.m.

June 6-8, DFL State Convention, Rochester

August 25-28, Democratic National Convention, Denver, Colorado

Check the SD54 website at www.sd54dfl.org for more information.

Covering everyone will cost less, not more. This may seem counter-intuitive, but it makes sense when you recognize that people without insurance eventually get care in emergency rooms or hospitals with costly treatments that are ultimately paid by everyone else.

It is time for Minnesota to make sure that every Minnesotan has access to the health care that they need. By treating health care as a community need, not an optional commodity, we will live healthier lives and save money too. Along with Mindy Greiling, Bev Scalze, and 50 other legislators, I have authored legislation to create the MN Health Plan to reach those goals. During the next three or four years, as we build support for this important legislation, we will need your help and support.

I was pleased to see so many new and returning people at the caucuses this year. I look forward to working with you to help win some important victories this November. Then, we can continue working together to fulfill our vision of a state where nobody is left behind.

If you are interested in learning more about the MN Health Plan or seeing my monthly columns on issues

facing our state, please go to www.apple-pie.org and sign up to receive my future columns. To learn more and get involved, go to MNHealthPlan.org.

Forum Report...

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Minnesotans. Franken's, virtually all Minnesotans, have worked on other campaigns here. Nelson-Pallmeyer's grass-roots campaign, with "roots like prairie plants," raises money through small checks from individuals.

Each representative was asked to comment on the style/substance of his/her candidate. Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer is the only one who favors a single-payer health plan. He touts a green economy, is against the Iraq War and believes we need another professor in Washington, D.C. Mike Ciresi has many ideas on the economy, has spent his career fighting corporations and has influenced how corporations operate. His son, Adam, appeared to comment on his father's personal attributes. He is an "advocate for Minnesota, not just an attorney." Al Franken is well known for his books, speeches and satire, which point out political hypocrisies. He believes he can galvanize support for other candidates and causes.

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State Central Committee**

Choosing Resolutions for the State DFL Convention

You and all parties interested in the DFL are cordially invited to attend the
SD54 Central Committee meeting
to participate in choosing the issues we want brought forward to the State DFL Convention.

Thursday, March 20, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.
Fairview Community Center
Roseville, MN

The nominative process will be skillfully led
by our very own expert in this procedure, Paul Lareau.

This is an important and exciting meeting. Please plan to attend.

Fairview Community Center is handicapped accessible.