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2022 Minnesota Legislative Session Outlook

Event

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Online

Cost: Free

Hosted By: Fredrikson's Government Relations Group

Fredrikson's 2022 Session Outlook event provided an early opportunity to hear from legislative leadership in preparation for the January 31st start of session.

The legislative panel consisted of the key leaders from each caucus: Speaker Melissa Hortman, Senate Majority Leader Jeremy Miller, Senate Minority Leader Melisa Lopez Franzen, and House Minority Leader Kurt Daudt. The event was moderated by award-winning Star Tribune political reporter Briana Bierschbach.

Below is a summary of responses from the four panelists to a variety of questions which were asked at the event. For more detail about the program summary or more information about Fredrikson's Government Relations Group, contact Kevin Goodno at 612-492-7348 or kgoodno@fredlaw.com.

Remote Legislature

Many of our attendees this morning traditionally work in and around the Capitol. What can they expect in terms of access to the legislature and what kind of opportunities will the public have to influence decisions that are made?

It was made clear that the Minnesota Capitol Building will be open to the public and all four panelists encouraged the public to make use of that space for legislator interactions. Senator Lopez Franzen advised that everyone should still adhere to CDC guidelines in those situations. She also emphasized the benefits of a hybrid work environment for legislative staff as they work through issues such as childcare. In October of 2021, the House announced that the State Office Building would remain closed to the public through the end of 2022 legislative session. Speaker Hortman clarified that this decision was made due to public safety concerns and insufficient Capitol Security staffing. Senator Miller advised that the first two floors of the Senate Building will be open to the public and that in-person meetings can occur in Senate offices with a staff escort. Representative Daudt made an appeal for the resumption of in-person activities as soon as possible.

Workforce

The workforce shortage has hit all industries across the state and nation. What potential solutions to this workforce shortage do you and your caucus find most promising? Specifically speak to solutions that target typical industries as well as solutions that target health and human services industries which are often subject to reimbursement rates set by the legislature.

Our two Republican panelists provided a similar perspective of shifting away from measures that were intended to keep workers home during the pandemic and transitioning to providing incentives for employees to return to the workplace. Senator Miller focused on various proposals that his caucus will be promoting aimed at recruiting additional police officers and health care workers. Our Democrat panelists focused on the needs of employees to feel safe and secure in returning to the workplace. Speaker Hortman emphasized the need for employee benefits such as paid family leave and childcare assistance. Senator Lopez Franzen promoted expedited training programs and youth apprenticeships to address the shortage. Due to time constraints, our panelists were unable to go very deep on the details regarding Health and Human Services industries and reimbursement rates.

State Budget

The November forecast revealed a \$7.7 billion surplus for the biennium. This is in addition to the federal American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds. What does your caucus hope to see done with this money? Are there areas of agreement and can we expect a compromise by the end of session?

The major area of agreement on this topic was that the legislature must act quickly to replenish the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund. Representative Daudt was interested in using some of the surplus to provide even further tax relief for small businesses. Bonus pay for front-line workers was another topic of common interest regarding the use of ARP funds, but the definition of who falls into that category is where our panelists split. Senator Miller laid out a long list of priorities with the mention of funding for public safety, human services, long term care, literacy programs, nursing, and a robust tax relief package. Speaker Hortman and Senator Lopez Franzen focused on supporting working families with employment benefits, targeted tax cuts, childcare assistance, and increased funding for early education.

Bonding

With over \$5.3 billion in requests from state agencies and local governments, what size capital investment bill will your caucus support? And with a huge surplus and billions more in debt capacity, if not the full amount, why should taxpayers pay more later for the same projects instead of meeting the need now?

There was much agreement in this area with the use of federal funds for infrastructure and a shared interest in completing the bonding bill negotiations early with a focus on state asset preservation.

Equity

Last year, we asked our panelists at this event what the legislature can do to address racial disparities in our state. One year later, what legislative accomplishments are you proud of, where were the missed opportunities, and what do you hope to accomplish in 2022 to address disparities?

Many different ideas were shared in response to this question. Representative Daudt called out Minnesota for having one of the largest achievement gaps in the country and emphasized the work that needs to be done in public education. Speaker Hortman highlighted the work that the House has done to elevate the voices of people of color through the selection process of committee chairs. Senator Miller stressed the importance of maintaining safe communities. Senator Lopez Franzen focused on the economics of equity and investments in youth programs.

There were many excellent questions submitted by our audience members. We were unable to get all the questions answered by our panelists, but they were able to cover the areas of public safety, tax conformity, constitutional amendments, homelessness, and marijuana legalization. Thank you to everyone for participating.

Panelists

Sen. Jeremy Miller, Senate Majority Leader
Sen. Melisa López Franzen, Senate DFL Leader
Rep. Melissa Hortman, Speaker of the House
Rep. Kurt Daudt, House Republican Leader

This program is available to view for free on demand after registration.

Platform Details

This webcast is held using ON24. Read more about the minimum system requirements [here](#).