

## MINNESOTA GOVERNOR ASKS SESSION TO FOCUS ON JOBS WITH \$323 MILLION BUDGET SURPLUS



Governor Mark Dayton of Minnesota expressed that he wants the rest of the legislative session to focus on jobs. While state finance officials declared on Wednesday that Minnesota has a state surplus of \$323 million for the current two-year budget, the Governor called upon lawmakers to focus on passing job creation bills. However, Republicans argued that the solution of the situation was not in more bills but rather to stay out of the province of private business. The Minnesota Management and Budget Commissioner, Jim Schowalter played spoilsport by commenting that the 'surplus' is already spent, but it is a surplus. According to him, \$5 million would go to the state's budget reserve, and the rest by law, would be paid back to schools. It would take a long time for the state to actually break even. "It's going to be a while before we have a positive forecast balance even if we have good news rolling forward for years to come," said Schowalter. However, both the Governor and GOP leaders agreed that the first state priority was to put people back on jobs and paying taxes. Dayton called upon the Legislature to create an economic development bill that includes both the ideas of the Legislature and that of the Governor. His agenda has a new stadium, tax credit for businesses that hire, and a \$775 million public works spending waiting for legislative approval. The going seems tough with surpluses that are already spent, people clamoring for more jobs now and not more bills, and the IRS fumbling out of sheer frustration that it's difficult to tax people who don't have jobs. They want to tax people, they have to provide jobs. The sentiment was reflected in Dayton's frustration at the Legislature. "They said they are for jobs and want to put people to work. I offered three jobs proposals and I'm still waiting for a jobs bill." The Senate Jobs and Economic Growth Committee of Minnesota heard Dayton's plans on Wednesday, which included proposals that the Governor's supporters claim would result in 14,400 new jobs by increasing taxes on Minnesota corporations that operate overseas. But we thought the downfall of the economy was a direct result of wrong policies that made American companies and products less competitive in the international arena. Putting them under more taxes would make them more competitive and help the economy to reverse? Not surprising in a State where the 'surplus' is already spent, but announced with fanfare as surplus.

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