

Minnesota Government Shutdown

July 01, 2011 by [John A. Knapp](#)

After another fruitless day of negotiations, Governor Mark Dayton announced at a 10:00 p.m. press conference yesterday that he and Republican legislative leaders had been unable to agree on a budget package for the State of Minnesota biennium beginning on July 1. As a consequence, most state functions and services are terminated and approximately 22,000 state employees have become unemployed.

The roots of the disagreement between the Governor and the legislators go back to the 2010 election. Governor Dayton had campaigned on a pledge to raise the income tax to address the \$5 billion projected budget deficit for the 2012-2013 biennium. On the other hand, the Republicans took control of the Minnesota House and the Minnesota Senate, in large part based on their pledges not to raise taxes.

During this past week, the Governor and legislative leaders met on a daily basis and exchanged numerous offers to deal with the deficit situation. In the end, however, the Republicans were unwilling to offer up permanent state revenue increases and the Governor was unwilling to accept a budget with deep cuts and only temporary additional revenue.

In the meantime, pursuant to a Ramsey County District Court Order, essential State services dealing with public safety, federally mandated programs, and the core state financial and security functions are being maintained. Former Supreme Court Chief Justice Kathleen Blatz has been appointed as Special Master to consider individual requests to continue state government funding. Justice Blatz began reviewing requests on July 1 at 8:00 a.m. and will make recommendations to Chief Judge Gearin of the Ramsey County District Court as to which State functions should be funded.

At this time, there are no additional negotiations scheduled between the Governor and legislators nor is there a specific date in the future which would become a deadline against which future negotiations must be aimed.