

State of the State

By [John A. Knapp](#) on February 16, 2012

Governor Mark Dayton delivered his second State of the State address to the Legislature Wednesday evening calling for unity and cooperation. In his 27-minute speech, the Governor stressed the importance of compromise between Republican and DFL members of the Legislature and emphasized the importance of job creation and improving the State's economy. Dayton politely urged the Legislature to adopt his Jobs Plan to get Minnesotans back to work asking members to take their best ideas and turn them into jobs to help the 168,000 Minnesotans currently seeking employment.

Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle agreed that job creation must be their number one priority before the 2012 Session began on January 24. Between the Senate decision not to confirm a member of the Public Utilities Commission appointed by Governor Dayton and the Governor vetoing the first four bills to land on his desk, the tone at the Capitol has been mostly combative.

Dayton said Wednesday evening that the passage of a bonding bill, a key component of his Jobs Plan, is critically important to investing in the future of Minnesota. The Governor outlined his bonding priorities in the \$775 million Capital Investment proposal he submitted to the Legislature last month and called on lawmakers to figure out their priorities quickly and to pass a bill.

Governor Dayton also called on lawmakers to pass legislation for the construction of a new stadium for the Minnesota Vikings for which there was very little applause from legislators. Dayton told members of the House and Senate that waiting until after the November election to face the stadium issue is not an option. "Pass the Stadium Bill this Session. Please," he said.

The Governor also asked the Legislature to make a very unselfish decision and address renovating the Capitol building in Saint Paul. That could mean moving out of the Capitol "for four years or so" to restore the statehouse for future generations of Minnesotans. Although preserving the Capitol is very likely to have bipartisan support, it is yet another project for which lawmakers will need to find funding.

Governor Dayton concluded by saying that Minnesota is a remarkable state. DFL and Republican leaders alike have made the State great, he said, and they must continue the tasks of the policymakers who have gone before them. He stated that it is only by working together that they will be able to achieve a lasting legacy and told members he is "ready to work on both sides of the aisle for a better Minnesota"