



Vote NO twice on November 6

Just days from now, Minnesotans will go to the polls and find contests for their State Senator and Representative, a U.S. Senator and the President on the ballot. And they will also find two incredibly important questions on the back of their ballot: proposed constitutional amendments that have the potential to cause harm to Minnesota’s reputation as both a welcoming place and a state that consistently sets the national standard for voter participation.

Most Minnesotans are justifiably proud to live in a tolerant, educated and prosperous state that is accustomed to leading the way in business and technological innovation, vibrant arts and cultural opportunities, and strong civic health. Minnesota has been at the forefront over the last century in winning rights for women,

working people and the disadvantaged, and expanding civil rights and voter participation.



Graphic courtesy of [facebook.com/VoteNoTwice](https://www.facebook.com/VoteNoTwice)

The “all in this together” mindset runs deep. Minnesota is one of the

few states that never outlawed interracial marriage, even in the 19th century. And in the early 1970s, we were one of the first states to allow election-day registration and a simple process of oath-by-signature to exercise the most fundamental right of democracy. This, along with other policies enacted to remove barriers, led to our perennial status as one of the top states in the nation in voter turnout and election integrity.

So understand this, once and for all: We will do great damage to our brand and our reputation if we approve either one of these constitutional amendments on the ballot.

The “Voter ID” amendment (more accurately referred to by its opposition as “Voter Restriction”) imposes

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New project on workforce development

Responding to evidence of a mismatch between employer demand and the supply of more highly educated workers, as well as persistent disparities in education outcomes and in the workforce, Growth & Justice recently launched a new project focused on equity and workforce development. With funding from the Bremer Foundation, the McKnight Foundation and the Jay & Rose Phillips Family Foundation, Growth & Justice will produce a series of policy briefs on proven and promising models for sector-specific workforce development efforts aimed at low-income workers and tied to good, long-term jobs that offer good incomes and career ladders for continued advancement. Equity will be a major consideration of the case studies.

Workforce readiness has been a top concern for Growth & Justice since its founding a decade ago. An early policy report, *Workforce First*, outlined principles for improving results and built a case for education and skills as the primary driver of economic growth in Minnesota.

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The future of education in Minnesota

Fall brings cooler weather, football season, and once again, students heading back to school. But in many communities across Minnesota, something new is happening this year. It’s a fresh effort that’s been proven to raise high school graduation rates and reduce racial disparities in achievement.

The new school year in the St. Cloud area and in Itasca County is taking shape like never before. Commonly referred to as the Strive model, the new approach to education brings together the whole community in a commitment to helping all children succeed, all the way through the education pipeline, from before birth to career launch.

A new emphasis on coordinated efforts and individual attention, using data and evidence-tested methods, is meant to seal the leaks in that pipeline and keep kids on track toward postsecondary completion.

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GROWTH & JUSTICE

Our mission is to make Minnesota's economy simultaneously more prosperous and fair. We are a non-partisan advocate for fair taxation and "smart" public investment — fiscally responsible, accountable investment that advances prosperity for all Minnesotans. We believe a sustainable economy provides the foundation for a just society.

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From the President

By Dane Smith

Forgive me for tooting our own horn a bit, but I like to take the opportunity of this column twice a year to remind our supporters of how connected we are to policy-thinkers and policy-makers in this state.

Exhibit A for this case is our strong presence at the 28th Annual Conference on Policy Analysis, held October 10 at the University of Minnesota's Continuing Education and Conference Center. This event is what I like to call the state's premier "wonk-fest," a full day of presentations, workshops and discussion panels drawing several hundred researchers, data-crunchers and policy experts from business, academia, government and the nonprofit sector.

We've been involved with this conference before, appearing on panels or participating in other ways. In 2011, for instance, I was part of a keynote panel that addressed the central theme of the role of government in

Minnesota. I presented alongside Minnesota Chamber of Commerce policy director Bill Blazar, and former gubernatorial candidate and then-president of the Bush Foundation, Peter Hutchinson.

This year's main topic was a particularly good fit for Growth & Justice: "From Anecdote to Evidence: Advancing the Role of Analysis in Policy Making." I was one of three Minnesota policy leaders invited to a serve on the panel for a discussion of keynote speaker Jon Baron's presentation, "Increasing Government Effectiveness Through Rigorous Evidence About 'What Works.'" Baron is the executive director of the na-


tional Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy and some of the programs and interventions that his group has rated "top-tier" have also been advanced by Growth & Justice.

I pointed that fact out in the panel discussion and made the case that although political leaders often resist evidence that contravenes rigid ideologies, aggressive advocacy of facts and a study of actual outcomes remains an effective way to change minds and hearts about policies. I noted how two decades of science and hard data on the effectiveness of early childhood education was finally having an effect on policy in Minnesota.

Our other major role was in an afternoon session, "Gap Closing Outside the Metro: Educational Equity and Attainment for Greater Minne-

sota Students," which was inspired by a report we issued earlier this year, "[Whole Towns Coming Together for All Students](#)." I moderated a discussion with panelists from Itasca County and Grand Rapids (Invest Early

director Jan Reindl and Deer River Public Schools Superintendent Matt Grose), St. Cloud (Superintendent Bruce Watkins), and the executive director of the Minnesota Rural Education Association (Fred Nolan).

Our high profile at the conference is just one example of our activity on many key policy fronts these days. Policy and research director Maureen Ramirez and I, as well as some of our nine policy fellows, serve on numerous boards, committees, or coalition steering teams, to inform and advance our work aimed at improving both economic growth *and* economic justice, and highlighting the inseparability of those goals. 



a completely unnecessary barrier to voting that likely will disenfranchise tens of thousands of eligible voters in order to root out a tiny percentage of ineligible persons who vote – never mind that there is absolutely no evidence of an actual voter impersonation problem in our elections.

The other amendment would cast in constitutional stone a second-class status for many of our friends and loved ones. It dictates that they will indefinitely be banned in Minnesota from enjoying the benefits of marriage – a civil right if there ever was one – if they happen to be of the same gender.

From a job-creating, economic growth standpoint, there would be no benefit and indeed, likely some harm should the marriage-limiting amendment pass. It has generated a tsunami of opposition from business leaders like former Medtronic CEO Bill George, Carlson Companies leader Marilyn Carlson Nelson, and RBC Wealth Management CEO John Taft. Locally-based corporations opposing the amendment include General

Mills, Thomson Reuters, Capella University and St. Jude Medical, and the list continues to grow.

States and regions perceived as anti-gay tend not to be economic super-achievers. The states and metropolitan regions that compete with us for that status already are moving ahead in recognizing and welcoming same-sex couples and families.


The Voter Restriction amendment sends a terrible message to a broad spectrum of voters – the oldest, the youngest, the poorest, the newest, and to the homeless – many of whom are veterans. State analysts have estimated that 144,000 Minnesotans who are eligible to vote do not currently have a valid photo ID as required by the amendment, and those voters listed above would be disproportionately affected.

The amendment would create a brand new (and still undefined) system of “provisional ballots” for those who lack the required ID, putting the onus on the voter to prove their eligibility. And that creates a whole new realm

of complexity and uncertainty likely to require further legislative debate and extended legal challenges if the amendment passes.

Swearing under threat of felony prosecution that you are legally eligible to vote and live in the precinct in which you are voting has worked remarkably well for Minnesota. It’s an honor system, but one in which plenty of legal checks and balances exist, and allegations of fraud can be quickly investigated.

Fact: There is no systematic fraud or abuse. Fact: There is no significant problem with our election system. Fact: We will deny or discourage voting by tens of thousands of voters in order to catch a handful of scofflaws and ineligible voters every year.

Both the marriage and voter restriction amendments are cleverly worded and marketed to appear to be protecting us from something, pandering to popular and unfounded fears of those who are not quite like the “rest of us.” We can all do better than that. On November 6th, vote NO, twice. 

Learn more about how you can help defeat these amendments and sign up to volunteer at

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www.mnunited.org


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www.ourvotefuture.org

A dark theater. A hushed crowd. A spotlight. A song. A policy conversation.

That was the scene at *Songs & Substance: A Public Policy and Political Philosophy Musical and Lyrical Revue* at HUGE Theater on September 27. Growth & Justice president, Dane Smith, together with Tane Danger, co-founder of The Theater of Public Policy, entertained the audience with live music, thoughtful policy analysis and improvisational comedy. Music fans and Growth & Justice supporters young and old joined together in song throughout the evening.

The inspiration for the new event came directly from Dane Smith: "I've always been inspired by music, by the hundreds and thousands of songs and lyrics in the last century and before, that speak to the great political struggles of our time." He was determined to offer an evening of nonpartisan fun and music in the midst of a grueling election season. Dane led the audience through lyrical and policy analysis of a few of his favorite songs. It wasn't a night for a lecture; it was a night for a conversation.

In a show that spanned generations and genres, Dane Smith and Tane Danger reviewed songs and song lyrics of a political nature. *Songs & Substance* was a collaboration with The Theater of Public Policy (T2P2), an improv and acting troupe that tackles policy issues through improvisational theater. Dane's

song selections drove the show, with Tane offering insights and asking questions about the role of music and musicians in political discourse.

During the night many friends of Growth & Justice shared their talents on the stage. Peggy Flanagan, Jim Harkness, Atom Robinson and Dave Olson performed songs from Joni Mitchell, Johnny Cash, Woody Guthrie, Billy Bragg and Wilco.

During the second half of the show brave audience members sang karaoke to some of their favorite songs. Claudia Kaul won the first ever Karaoke Champion award for her version of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' In the Wind." Other participants in the karaoke contest included Jay Coggins, Chuck Laszewski, Jason Little, Rick Shefchik, and Lee Lynch.

The audience was eager to sing along, and the night ended with a favorite by Pete Seeger, "If I Had a Hammer."

"It was fun to sing together, to laugh and to approach policy conversations in a lighthearted way," said attendee Matt Musel. "This makes me more interested in Growth & Justice."

Growth & Justice has no immediate plans to form a garage band or to write songs any-time soon. Instead, the money raised from the event will be used to support research, communications and advocacy for



Atom Robinson & Dave Olson

smart policies for public investment in Minnesota. While music certainly plays a role in shaping public opinion and in delivering a winning message, Growth & Justice will rely on its tried-and-true methods of policy reports, briefs and case studies and leave the music up to the musicians.

Tane Danger and the rest of T2P2 continue their second season at the HUGE Theater, on Thursday nights through November. 🎸



Dane Smith & Tane Danger



Claudia Kaul

A key message in both the St. Cloud and Itasca efforts is the obvious truth that when all students live up to their full potential, the local economy and local community benefit. Our public education system is our investment in our future workforce and future community leaders.

Growth & Justice has long championed this vision of bringing together the business and philanthropy communities with educators, students and families to invest in Minnesota students. Our 2008 [Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students report](#) foreshadowed the policy vision in place in the new St. Cloud and Itasca initiatives.

Growth & Justice highlighted key strategies all along the pipeline to improve student achievement, reduce racial disparities and ensure that Minnesota students are on track for postsecondary completion. Setting a statewide goal for postsecondary completion was a hallmark of the original SIMS report, and Growth & Justice continues to push for this important high-level benchmark.


Our research-based, cost-effective strategies for improving education from early childhood through postsecondary study align perfectly with the Strive-like blueprints in St. Cloud and Itasca county.

In fact, Growth & Justice is on the "Core Team" working to implement the Itasca vision, "Pathways to Student Success," and as part of this group, G&J president Dane Smith traveled to Cincinnati, where Strive began, to learn firsthand about their accomplishments and to bring those stories and lessons home to Minnesota.

Efforts to establish a similar model in the Twin Cities are moving forward and seek to establish common goals, metrics and a vision for educational achievement for our students. As organizers continue the planning process, they can draw on the collective experience of community-wide conversations that have happened in St. Cloud and Itasca County on

the importance of education, the strengths of the community and the potential of its students.

Bringing together nonprofits, businesses and philanthropy, and engaging families, teachers and other education leaders to work as a team is the right framework for the future of education in Minnesota. The efforts underway in St. Cloud, Itasca County, and the Twin Cities are a

positive step in the right direction. When whole communities commit to the success of all their students, and agree on guiding principles and metrics for tracking success, these partnerships have a huge payoff potential: maximizing the number of Minnesota students who finish high school ready for postsecondary education and workforce training, and ready for the jobs of the new economy. 

Meet the newest members of the G&J Board of Directors

David Fisher


David was commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Administration under Gov. Jesse Ventura, and currently serves as executive director of the Corporate Institute at the University of Minnesota Law School. He has a distinguished career in law and corporate and nonprofit leadership, with broad knowledge and experience in government, business and technology. His long history of community service includes serving as member and vice chair of the Metropolitan Council, as an appointed member of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents Candidate Advisory Council, and as chairman, treasurer and board member of the ClearWay Minnesota board of directors.

H.B. "Bud" Hayden Jr.

Bud and his wife Carol are well-known in the Twin Cities for their philanthropy and public affairs leadership. Bud had a long and successful career as a distributor of construction equipment for Hayden-Murphy Equipment Company and Metroquip Inc. He is the founder and current president of Hayden Enterprises. He's a long-time member and former president of the Minneapolis Downtown Kiwanis, and a board member and officer for the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches. He has also served on the boards of directors of the Minneapolis Builders Exchange and the Minnesota Transportation Alliance.

Hubert H. "Buck" Humphrey IV

Currently Buck leads the Minnesota office of Forbes-Tate, a public policy firm based in Washington D.C. Prior to this role, he led the Office of Communications for the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. He began his career in congressional relations for the Secretary of Agriculture during the Clinton Administration, and more recently has led federal and state relations for two successful bipartisan government and public affairs firms, ASI Communications and Intersect Strategies.

Growth & Justice would like to thank outgoing board member Jorge Saavedra whose tenure ends this year. We appreciate his long service in support of our mission and wish him well. 

Double your impact with Give to the Max!

After the election, we need to hit the ground running with the new Minnesota Legislature, advocating for policy that makes our economy stronger and more equitable. Every dollar donated to Growth & Justice helps us advance progressive policies at the Capitol. On **Thursday, November 15**, you can double the impact your donation makes during Give to Max Day!

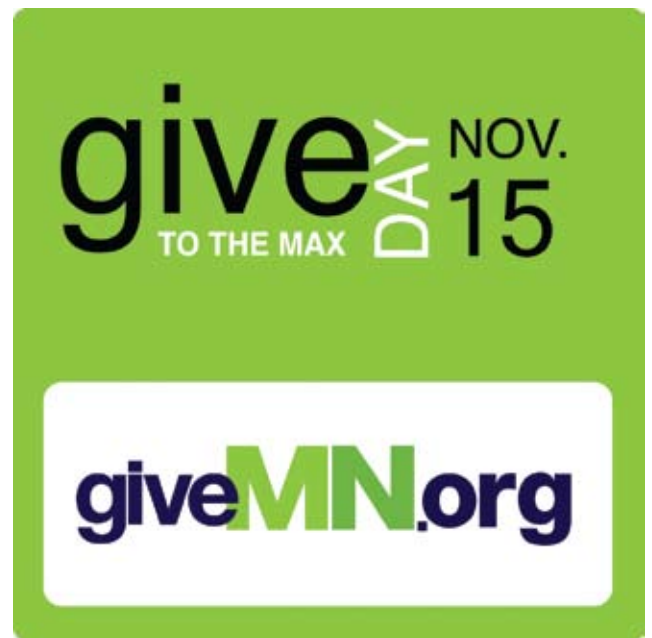
On Minnesota's Give to the Max Day, Growth & Justice will have 26 chances to earn more from your gift! You could help us win one of 25 \$1,000 "Golden Tickets," or the \$10,000 "Supersized Golden Ticket." The more donors we have, the better our chances!

And NEW this year, our board of directors has created a challenge fund for Give to the Max Day. They have

pledged to match ALL gifts dollar-for-dollar (up to \$10,000 total), meaning that **you can double the impact of your gift on November 15th!**

Want to multiply your gift even more? Use social media and word of mouth to challenge your friends to match your donation! This will help us bring in new donors, and further spread our message about how we can have a future for Minnesota that is both fair and prosperous.

Give to the Max Day is midnight-to-midnight Nov. 15. Set reminders now for you and your friends to donate at



givemn.razoo.com/story/Growth-And-Justice

Workforce development project

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Another major project, *Smart Investments in Minnesota's Students*, provides a birth-to-career framework showing best strategies and interventions for dramatically increasing Minnesota's postsecondary attainment rate.

Last spring, Growth & Justice policy fellow Mike Christenson, formerly director of community planning and economic development for the City of Minneapolis, and a vice president at Minneapolis Community and Technical College, authored our most recent paper on workforce development issues.

In the policy brief "Public-Private Partnerships Promoted Progress in Once-Troubled Minneapolis Neighborhood," Christenson detailed how health-sector employers in the Phillips neighborhood collaborated with local philanthropic and government leaders and launched a multi-phase project to train local workers for the jobs that were part of a chronic

labor shortage Allina Health System was experiencing. The successful effort was a win-win, providing trained staff for the employers and putting hundreds of local residents on track toward rewarding careers in the health care field.

As part of this new project, Growth & Justice staff will study examples of successful workforce development models in Minnesota and elsewhere in the region. Growth & Justice president Dane Smith has been appointed to Everybody In, a promising new coalition bringing together a wide array of business, education and social service leaders committed to reducing racial and income disparities in employment in the Twin Cities area. How serious is the mismatch and the gap? A new study released in July shows that our metropolitan area has the greatest gap in the nation between black and white unemployment rates.

The project is still in the early stages, but there are many stellar examples of workforce development models in the Twin Cities region that show great promise and merit further study, including Project for Pride in Living and the Jeremiah Program for single mothers.

Policy and research director Maureen Ramirez says, "What I like about this project is that it brings a number of things together: workforce development, education and equity. And having all three of those conversations at once is what's new and exciting.

"Workforce development is the way that businesses like to talk about education. If you call it that, they listen they, get engaged. Of course, when we talk about education and training, we also want to make sure that we're moving people into jobs in an equitable way—and providing a long-term, sustainable and living wage." ❏

Blog: Author of "So Rich, So Poor" brings truths about poverty to Minnesota

I have the great privilege of introducing author Peter Edelman Tuesday evening to talk about his powerful new book, "So Rich, So Poor: Why It's So Hard to End Poverty in America." Edelman is a Georgetown University law professor who has served at the pinnacles of power, as an adviser to U.S. Sen. Robert Kennedy and in President Bill Clinton's administration. He may be most famous for resigning from the Clinton administration to protest the deep cuts to benefits and eligibility limits in Clinton's welfare "reform" package in the mid 1990s. His book is a primer on the disgraceful prevalence of poverty in the world's wealthiest and most powerful nation. It's also one of the most misunderstood issues in our body politic. The compelling fact that Edelman drove home in a recent New York Times editorial is this: the failure of the private sector to adequately reward people who work hard for their living is by far the biggest driver of poverty and low-income status. Most poor people work and a whopping 104 million people -- a third of our population -- have annual incomes below twice the poverty line, or less than \$38,000 for a family of three. A fourth of all jobs pay below the poverty line for a family of four, or less than \$23,000 annually. As the world's only wealthy democracy without universal health care, and with some of the chintziest economic security benefits in the western world, our working poor and our disabled poor are

significantly worse off than the poor in all the so-called developed nations. Edelman will talk about his book at 7 p.m. on Tuesday Oct. 2 at Common Good Books, at the corner of Grand and Snelling in St. Paul.

— Dane Smith

Blog posted on October 1, 2012

For more stories like this visit the



Growth & Justice Blog at growthandjustice.typepad.com/

Watch for new report on economic inequality

Watch for a policy paper soon from Growth & Justice that will take a fresh look at the troubling and growing economic inequality in Minnesota and in the nation. The researchers and lead authors of the report are Growth & Justice policy fellows Jay Coggins, an associate professor of applied economics at the University of Minnesota, and Thomas Legg, a senior lecturer at the U of M's Carlson School of Management. The paper will outline some interesting contrasts and patterns in the scale of economic inequality by geographic region in Minnesota. It will show how Minnesota's inequality differs from national trends. And it will include a bold new call to policymakers in Minnesota. The most important and pervasive policy challenge of our time is this matter of worsening economic inequality, namely, an increasing concentration of wealth and income at the top, a stagnating and declining middle class, and persistent poverty for too many, particularly in communities of color. Our work consistently makes the case for a broader and more inclusive prosperity, showing how smart public investments in human capital and infrastructure will produce a more sustainable and healthy economic growth. ☑

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Nov. 13 event to outline new directions on tax redesign and budgeting for outcomes

Growth & Justice has been at the leading edge of efforts to redesign both our state tax system and our state-and-local government delivery systems, to maximize both fairness and effectiveness.

In keeping with those priorities, we are sponsoring a presentation of initiatives toward both those goals from two of the state's top leaders. Minnesota Revenue Commissioner Myron Frans will outline the parameters of a thorough tax system overhaul that Gov. Mark Dayton is likely to push for in 2013. And Tina Smith, Gov. Dayton's chief of staff, will talk about a new effort to bring an "outcome-based" budgeting process to state government.

The presentations are scheduled for 8 a.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 13, and will be held at WomenVenture (2324 University Avenue West in St. Paul). The initiatives are especially pertinent for business owners and managers, and our event co-sponsors are Small Business Minnesota, a new association that favors smart public investments and a more equitable economic growth, and WomenVenture, a nonprofit that helps women entrepreneurs and business owners. 