Monique DOWARD
MINNESOTA SENATE
DISTRICT 11

District 11 Forward

People Over Party. Solutions Close to Home.

A campaign publication from Monique Doward for Minnesota Senate District 11



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Why Monique created this newspaper and took her message directly to voters Page 3.



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Zoom, Coffee and More with Monique. Page 4.

THE RACE TO AI, THE HIDDEN COST

Why I Am Calling for a Five-Year Moratorium on New Large-Scale and Hyperscale Data Centers in Minnesota



By Monique Doward

When using ChatGPT from OpenAI, Claude from Anthropic or Gemini from Google, the answers appear almost instantly. It can seem as if artificial intelligence simply exists somewhere in “the cloud.”

But AI does not live in the clouds. It operates through physical infrastructure computer chips, servers, cooling equipment, electrical substations, transmission lines and massive data centers.

OpenAI is developing a global network of advanced data centers to support demanding AI workloads. Anthropic has described Project Rainier as a computing cluster using hundreds of thousands of AI chips across multiple American data centers. Google reports that its Gemini models were trained using the company’s AI-optimized infrastructure and Tensor Processing Units. (OpenAI, Anthropic, Google)

These programs may feel digital, but the infrastructure powering them is very real and so are the costs.

America Wants to Win the AI Race

The White House titled its national strategy “Winning the Race: America’s AI Action Plan.” The plan connects American AI leadership to economic and military benefits and includes measures intended to counter Chinese influence. It also calls for expanding data centers and the energy infrastructure needed to power them. (White House AI Action Plan).

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Help Build A Better Minnesota

By Anonymous

The Forward Independent Party offers a political home for people who believe solutions matter more than party labels. We support independent leadership, accountable government, fair elections, respectful debate and practical policies guided by facts. Our movement is built from the community up not dictated from the top down.

Republicans, Democrats, independents and people who have never joined a party are welcome. You can volunteer, help organize your county, attend a meeting or consider running for office. We are always looking for neighbors who want to help build the party and create more choices for Minnesota voters.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT

home.forwardparty.com/minnesota

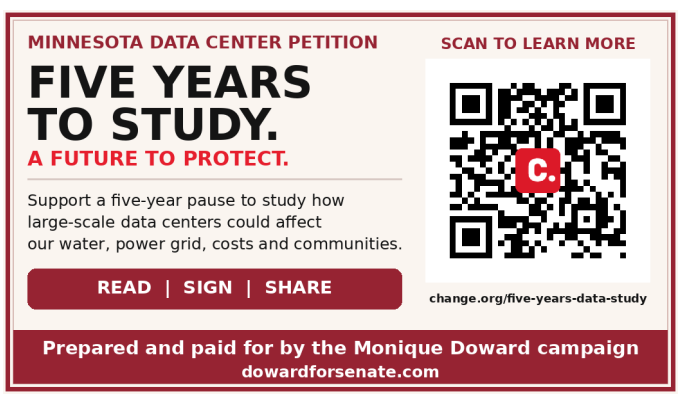
Fuel Prices: A Minnesota Crisis?

B*y Monique Doward*

From the pump to the store cost of everything is rising. How far will rising fuel costs reach into Minnesota households? That remains a question on the table.

Now here in District 11, long distance driving is daily life. From a commute to work, school, or daily needs. A Minnesota state senator cannot control world oil prices, but the Legislature can respond locally. Lawmakers could consider temporary school-bus fuel assistance, emergency transportation relief for qualifying farmers and small businesses, stronger disclosure of fuel surcharges, and increased state purchasing from Minnesota producers.

Any relief program should be temporary, transparent and reviewed for its cost and effectiveness. Rural residents should not be an afterthought.







THE RACE TO AI, THE HIDDEN COST

At the same time, the U.S. Department of Education announced a major workforce reduction in March 2025. The administration's fiscal-year 2026 budget request also proposed reducing or eliminating several education programs. That budget request was a proposal not a final congressional appropriation but it reflected the administration's stated priorities. (Department of Education, FY2026 budget request)

This raises a central question: How can America lead the world in artificial intelligence without making a comparable commitment to the students, educators, researchers and workers who must understand and lead that technology?

Data centers cannot replace properly funded classrooms, teachers, special-education services, career training or affordable higher education. Investment in artificial intelligence must be accompanied by investment in human intelligence.

The Hidden Cost of AI

The Department of Energy reported that data centers consumed approximately 4.4% of all U.S. electricity in 2023. The agency estimated that their share could rise to between 6.7% and 12% by 2028. Some data-center cooling systems also use water, although the amount varies by facility and cooling technology. (U.S. Department of Energy, DOE water guidance)

National estimates cannot tell us exactly how a proposed Minnesota facility would affect a particular community. Independent, project -specific studies are needed to answer:

How much water and electricity will it use and the increased costs households could face?

Who will pay for new substations, transmission lines, roads, water systems and cleanup, even if facility closes?

How many permanent jobs will remain after construction and worker protections?

What tax exemptions or public incentives will the developer receive, who would compensate homeowners for property depreciation?

How will wells, wetlands, wild-rice waters and Tribal resources be protected?

My Five-Year Proposal

I propose a five-year statewide moratorium on new large-scale and hyperscale approvals while Minnesota independently evaluates water use, grid capacity, utility costs, public subsidies, environmental effects, Tribal concerns, permanent jobs and cleanup responsibilities.

This would not close existing facilities, prevent AI use or end research. If Minnesota completes the studies and adopts enforceable protections sooner, lawmakers could reconsider the moratorium.

Candidates should explain their positions and commit to action before November. Current elected officials should use their authority now. Because local moratoriums are temporary, the next group of elected leaders must be prepared to continue this work when they take office.

Continued from Page 1

MOST ADVANCED CIVILIZATION RIGHT HERE

By Steve Christensen

Recent research shows that the Old Copper Culture started here in the Great Lakes region earlier than previously thought. It is now believed that the most advanced prehistoric civilization began here 9500 years ago. This is where metal tools were first developed and used well before anywhere else on earth.

Indigenous peoples were in North America possibly 50,000 years ago, but the area where we now live was covered in glaciers. As the planet warmed and the ice retreated the first peoples were able to enter and explore this exposed land. Ice more than 2 miles high still covered the area to the east, the melting waters formed Glacial Lake Duluth over northern Minnesota. With no other place to go the water had to be carried to the south, forming what is now the St Croix River. The torrential waters were released carving and changing our area forever.

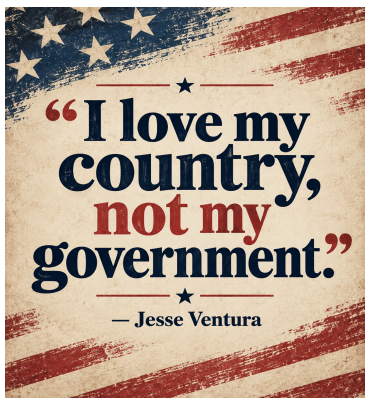
Animals came into our area following the rivers and the first peoples followed that source of food and resources. This strange new land just to our north also exposed ground copper that was incredibly pure. So pure that it could be cold-pounded with stone and shaped into the first metal tools on earth.

No smelting was needed. At first no mining was even needed. They made knives, awls, axes, scrapers and many other tools. So it now believed that indigenous peoples were surviving in this harsh environment some 9500 years ago by using metal tools.

So it is now believed that indigenous peoples were surviving in this harsh environment some 9500 years ago by using metal tools. This was 4000 years before anyone else on this planet discovered smelting and started developing metal tools. And it all happened right here in our area and in western Wisconsin. Over time these early peoples created amazing trade routes and Great Lakes copper has ended up being found all over the continent.









WHY INDEPENDENT?

Most are aware working families cannot pay their bills with party loyalty. They need leadership that delivers.

As the first Black person elected to the Kettle River City Council, futhermore in Carlton County and lastly in the Northland outside of Duluth, MN. I understand what it means to step into a space where change is overdue. My experience in local government, public health, social services and disability advocacy has brought me face-to-face with people whose needs too often go unanswered.

I have worked with families facing housing instability and people struggling to navigate government systems. I have witnessed the distance between what leadership promises and what residents actually receive. I am tired of watching taxpayers carry the burden while elected officials offer excuses.

That is why I am running as an independent. I want the freedom to stand up for every resident, work across party lines and challenge either party when its decisions hurt our communities.

These are the priorities I will bring to the Capitol:

Tax relief and accountability: Fight to lower the tax burden on working households, stop shifting unfunded state requirements onto local property taxpayers and demand measurable results for public spending. More money needs to stay in the homes of District 11.

Infrastructure and stable jobs: Push for lasting investments in roads, bridges, broadband and rail that connect communities, support local businesses and create dependable employment.

Free childcare pilot: Author legislation for a voluntary pilot offering free childcare and before- and after-school care, with reliable provider reimbursement and a funding plan that protects local property taxpayers.

Gun rights and public safety: Protect the constitutional rights of law-abiding gun owners while supporting responsible safety measures and due process. Keeping responsible citizens of their rights. What I want you to understand not

Mental-health services: Fight for a major increase in funding, providers and timely access for residents of every age. Children, adults, veterans, farmers and first responders deserve affordable care close to home, before a crisis becomes an emergency.

Farmers and rural communities: Make agricultural needs a priority in state budgeting, including rural infrastructure and support that helps farms remain viable.

Equal rights: Protect LGBTQ residents from discrimination and attempts to roll back their rights when political control changes. Everyone deserves dignity, safety and equal protection.

Fire departments and EMS: Demand dependable funding for staffing, equipment and training so those answering our emergency calls have the resources to respond.

Political tension reaches into our homes, workplaces and children's lives. Families should not have to wait for the next election, the next budget battle or the next party agreement before their needs matter.

I will work with anyone prepared to move these priorities forward. I will also speak up when leadership fails us, regardless of the letter beside someone's name.

I am going to the Capitol to demand that District 11 receives its fair share and to do the legislative work required to deliver it. That means authoring bills, building support, fighting for funding and reporting back to you.

My independence is a commitment: your needs will guide my decisions. No party will decide which residents I stand beside or which problems I am allowed to address.

I am stepping up because taxpayers deserve leadership that works as hard as they do.

People over party. Action over excuses.

only what I propose, but my education, professional experience and community service behind those proposals.

I hold a bachelor's degree in public health from the University of the Cumberlands and a master's degree in biology from Bemidji State University. I also spent four years pursuing a medical education in the Caribbean. Because of the cost, I had to place that path on hold and redirect my education toward public health and epidemiology. I am now completing my doctoral studies in public health at Walden University, with a focus on epidemiology. Although my educational path changed, the medical knowledge and experience I gained continue to shape how I approach health care, prevention and the needs of rural communities.

My community involvement has included service as an American Red Cross duty officer, a member of the Minnesota Statewide Independent Living Council, a participant on the National Council on Independent Living's Emergency Preparedness Committee and a University of Minnesota Extension Master Gardener volunteer in Carlton County. I have also served through the NAACP's health and environmental work and currently participate on Minnesota's African American Child and Family Well-Being Advisory Council.

Professionally, I have worked in public-health analysis and social services. Most recently, I worked with Fond du Lac Human Services as an adult-services social worker assisting people experiencing homelessness and housing instability. I have also worked as a notary and loan-signing agent. Substitute Teacher, and Public Health Analysis.

These experiences have brought me into contact with families, seniors, people with disabilities, Tribal communities,nonprofit organizations and residents facing housing or financial emergencies. I do not claim to have lived every person's experience. I know how to listen, locate knowledgeable people and bring different voices together.

Accountability is also important to me. Suspected fraud or misuse of public funds should be investigated by the appropriate authorities, regardless of a person's position or political affiliation. Anyone found responsible should be held accountable under the law and through proper due process and jail if found guilty.

So if you have made it this far, I am always outside in the various communities. Trying to lend a helping hand, just because it's the right thing to do. I want the youth to learn from this motto as well. November is approaching and I hope you can consider voting for independent here in district 11. Thankn you to those in advance that want to move this district Forward.

ALSO COMING IN OCTOBER

What are rising gasoline and fuel costs doing to families, farmers, schools and small businesses across District 11? What could possible supply disruptions mean for rural communities that must travel farther for work, health care and essential services?

We will also examine election-related stress how constant political conflict can affect our well-being and practical ways to protect our mental health while remaining informed and involved.

Plus:

Rural Healthcare, changes in 2027, along with what advancements I witnessed at the World Health Expo this year.

AI, At-Will Employment and the Future of Minnesota Workers

Now I want to thank the following supports.

My mom, sisters, brother, aunts and uncles, okay my family. Forgot my sons, chickens and cat. On a serious note, the communities, my neighbors, former coworkers, all the random people I have walked up to have a conversation. Ultimately, myself, for will courage to stand-up and speak-up. Thank you!

HAVE A LITTLE FARM FUN

MINNESOTA FARM LIFE WORD SEARCH

Find the 12 hidden farm words.
Words may run in any direction.

O	N	N	G	E	F	W	R	H	N	W
J	E	I	G	W	R	U	A	R	O	I
T	Y	V	F	E	O	O	U	P	R	A
S	R	A	M	M	T	L	G	E	C	T
G	I	R	J	B	C	I	P	T	O	S
E	A	C	U	P	A	S	T	U	R	E
F	D	R	U	O	R	R	O	E	N	V
A	E	D	D	J	T	S	N	C	C	R
S	B	N	D	E	D	C	B	E	P	A
A	G	B	C	R	N	N	T	W	B	H
T	B	D	L	E	I	F	A	A	I	R

FIND THESE WORDS

BARN
CORN
DAIRY
FARMER
FENCE
FIELD
GARDEN
HARVEST
PASTURE
PLOW
SILO
TRACTOR

How many can you find?

SUDOKU CHALLENGE

MEDIUM TO CHALLENGING

PUZZLE 1 - MEDIUM

			2	6		7		1
6	8			7			9	
1	9				4	5		
8	2		1				4	
		4	6		2	9		
	5				3		2	8
		9	3				7	4
	4			5			3	6
7		3		1	8			

PUZZLE 2 - CHALLENGING

						9		7
			4	2		1	8	
			7		5		2	6
1			9		4			
	5						4	
			5		7			9
9	2		1		8			
	3	4		5	9			
5		7						

Fill every row, column and 3 x 3 box with 1-9.
No guessing needed - each puzzle has one solution.

Good luck!

AFTER THE ELECTION WHAT CONCERNS YOU MOST?

What changes do you want Minnesota lawmakers to make?

What should the next state senator address first?

What would make a real difference in your life not another empty promise?

Write your thoughts below, then take a photograph and email or text it to me. You may also mail your response.

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SCHOOLS IN TRANSITION

By Monique Doward

If Republicans and Democrats can work together to fund school consolidation, why can't they bring that same urgency to protecting local school jobs and keeping students learning in their home communities?

That is a question both parties should answer.

Minnesota law provides consolidation transition aid of $424 per resident pupil unit in the consolidation year and $212 the following year, with a cap of 1,500 pupil units. The state recognizes that merging districts takes financial support. **Minnesota Statutes § 123A.485**

Where is that same determination before a small school reaches a financial breaking point?

A rural school is more than a line in a state budget. It is a workplace, a gathering place, and a reason families put down roots. Decisions about its future reach far beyond the classroom.

Both parties talk about supporting rural Minnesota. They should be judged by whether their budgets give rural communities meaningful options for keeping their schools strong.

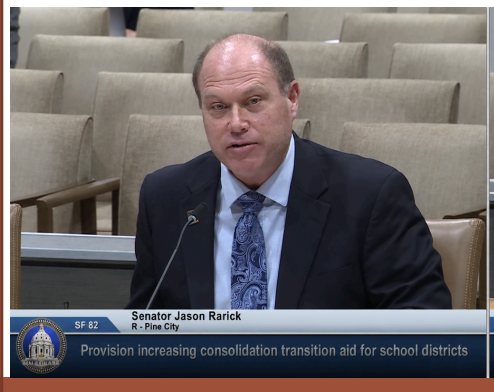
As a candidate for Minnesota Senate District 11, I would propose a Rural School Preservation and Workforce Support initiative that delivers help before financial distress forces painful choices.

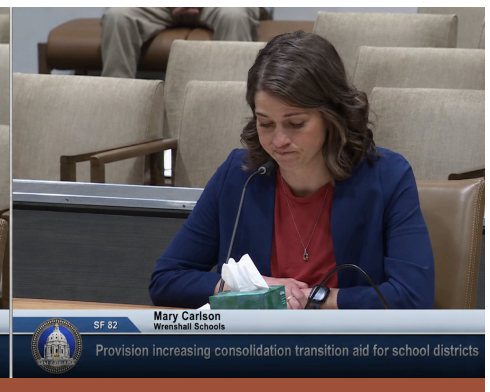
My proposal would provide targeted operating assistance to qualifying rural districts, protect classroom programs, and help retain school employees. It would include state assistance for school bus fuel costs, including propane, so transportation expenses do not consume dollars needed for instruction.

I would also pursue dedicated, ongoing state funding for teacher and paraprofessional wage increases. Asking schools to raise wages without providing the money leaves districts choosing between better pay and fewer positions. The state must fund the commitment it makes.

I encourage residents to examine this proposal alongside the positions of every candidate before voting this November.

Photo: SF 82 hearing on increasing school consolidation transition aid. Rural communities deserve the same urgency for funding school preservation. *Continued on Page 1*





JOIN THE CONVERSATION

Bring Your Coffee, Tea & Questions!

Save the gas money let's meet on Zoom! Join Monique Doward, independent candidate for Minnesota Senate District 11, for a relaxed conversation about what matters to you.

Sunday, September 27, 2026
2–2:45 p.m. CT

Let's connect, before kickoff! Go Vikings!
Everyone is welcome!

