

# Invest in Minnesota

## Sample Letters to the Editor



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We all know that a balanced approach to solving Minnesota's fiscal crisis is about more than raising revenues; it's about minimizing real service cuts and real pain for real people and making the investments needed for our future. That's why your story is so critical in making the case against a cuts-only approach. The samples below are designed to be easily modified to your interests and local experiences while following tested, key Invest in Minnesota messages.

Always adhere to guidelines from your local paper, which usually requires sticking to 250 words or less.

### **Option One**

By now most of us know that Minnesota has a serious revenue shortfall to address in order to meet our state's needs during tough economic times. As I've been listening to our elected officials debate how to move forward, the reality of what's at stake is becoming crystal clear. It's more than a math problem, it's about whether or not we will continue to invest in education, health care, transportation, public safety and care for veterans, the elderly and people with disabilities.

Some members of the legislature are talking about a cuts-only approach that would jeopardize the future of our state. The reality is there will be cuts, but the problem is too big to solve through cuts alone. I work first-hand with people with disabilities, and I know that drastically reducing or eliminating services they rely on would mean a huge step backwards. Minnesota has a long history of providing services that give people with disabilities the freedom and dignity to live independently.

We can't afford to go backwards now. Fortunately, we have another choice. We can take a balanced approach that includes revenues instead of just cutting services. And at the same time we can make common-sense improvements to our tax system. That's the kind of solution Governor Dayton proposed in his budget, and it's the only way to avoid deep cuts that would hurt people with disabilities and all of us as a community.

### **Option Two**

In hard times, Minnesotans know how to stick together and weather a storm. That's why I'm so disappointed in what is happening at our state Capitol. So far some members of the legislature are insisting on cuts-only approach to deal with revenue shortfalls, an approach that would mean deep cuts to public services people rely on in hard times and the loss of thousands of jobs.

Not only is it not Minnesotan, it's the worst thing a state can do in response to a recession and its aftermath. If we cut investment in libraries and schools, make college unaffordable for working families, and fail to maintain our transportation systems, then we won't be positioned to benefit when prosperity does return.

The choice is clear. Instead of a cuts-only approach that leaves people out in the cold and puts our teachers, firefighters and nurses out of work, we need a balanced approach that includes revenues by making common-sense adjustments to our tax system. The Minnesota Department of Revenue says I pay more of my middle-class income in state and local taxes than people with

the highest incomes. That's not right and we can't afford to have anyone paying less than their fair share.

The legislature has a decision to make. I hope they choose to protect needed jobs and services. I hope they choose a balanced approach that includes revenues raised fairly, reflecting our values as a state.

### **Option Three**

Because of the national economic crisis, our state is facing a serious, \$5 billion revenue shortfall. That leaves elected officials with a couple options: a cuts-only approach, or a balanced approach that includes revenues instead of just relying on service cuts. As a person of faith, this decision is a matter of morality.

I believe we are called to work together with our neighbors to meet our mutual needs. As my community's faith leaders have said, "The resilience and life of a human community and the measure of our moral fiber as a people depends on the way we treat those who are most vulnerable." We have seen deep cuts to our public services in recent years; I don't see how we can cut another 13 percent from our state's budget without serious harm to all of us, especially those struggling to make ends meet during this recession.

I've heard people say that churches can pick up the slack, but I know our church is already doing everything we can and it's simply not enough in these hard times. Thankfully, as we saw from Governor Dayton, we have another option. Right now our tax system isn't asking the wealthiest among us to pay their fair share—they pay less as a share of income than anyone else. We can fix this by taking a balanced approach that includes raising revenues based on ability to pay. In doing so, we can remain a resilient community that cares for our neighbors.

### **Make your letter part of a movement!**

Invest in Minnesota can provide feedback on draft letters and contact information to help get your story into a local paper. For support with your letter, contact Leah Gardner at 651-757-3063 or [leah@mncn.org](mailto:leah@mncn.org).

Together we can build a movement through multiple, unique stories—so please keep us in the loop as you move from a draft to a published work. Pending our review, we would encourage you to mention your involvement with the Invest in Minnesota coalition in your letter. Let us know when your story is published, and we will include it in the stories we're compiling from around the state to share with key decision-makers.

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*Invest in Minnesota is a coalition of faith, labor and nonprofit organizations united to invest in Minnesota's future. For more information, visit the Invest in Minnesota website at [www.investinmn.org](http://www.investinmn.org).*