

Iron Rangers:

You entrusted me with a cherished honor, repeatedly electing me as your state representative with a duty to protect the Iron Range. It is your right and your responsibility to select a person every two years to do what is best for the Range and its residents. In my years of public service, I have always kept that in mind even as I've recognized that this role was not a lifetime career.

So it is with a heavy heart that I have decided not to seek re-election this fall. This is a very hard decision for me because fighting for the Range is at the core of who I am, and what I have done the past 20 years of my life. There is a cost to giving so much of your life to something that you are passionate about. When faced with decisions that impact the people you love the most, one's priorities must be directed to where needed most. At this point in my life my priority needs to be my family. They have sacrificed so much to allow me the honor of fighting for the people of the Iron Range, the place we all call home. They need my full attention and dedication--I know each of you would make the same choice.

I am proud of what we have accomplished together for our area. Your next representative, I hope, will continue to fight for the major issues I advocated: first, mining and the good union jobs it means for our people; second, keeping our taconite taxes working for the core Iron Range that produces the wealth; third, fighting against the Big Pharmaceutical and drug companies so more of our health care dollars stay local and support our hospitals, clinics and the nurses, doctors, and staff who take care of us; fourth, investing in our communities, outdoor recreation, and finally, protecting our fundamental rights such as the second amendment rights and right for individuals to make their own health care decisions.

As a Steelworker union member who lost a job and career at LTV mining, I know first-hand how tough life can be for a family without work. When people have a good job, a lot of problems drift away. That is why I dedicated myself as a community organizer to fight for jobs at PolyMet and copper nickel mining even before I ran for the Legislature. As your representative, I fought for and achieved permitting reform for mining, and made sure HibTac would win mining leases from the state to prevent them from running out of ore and shutting down, thus saving union jobs.

Importantly, this session my legislation passed that provides for a \$515 per year, every year, property tax credit for over 35,000 homeowners on the core Iron Range. This is the first time in 26 years that the taconite tax property tax credit was increased. You live here, mine the ore here, and you deserve part of the benefit from taconite taxes. That's why I advocated for this money to reduce your property taxes. Additionally, my legislation will provide over \$80 million of investments in the core Iron Range, from helping with infrastructure, housing, and development in towns such as Mt. Iron, Virginia, Chisholm, Biwabik, Cherry Township, Buhl, Eveleth, and many others in addition to building our outdoor recreation with grants to snowmobile and ATV clubs. I am very proud we were able to grant \$3.3 million to renovate our critical emergency room facilities in Virginia and to create the region's first behavioral mental health emergency center. And my reform of the 340B drug program will mean over \$25 million each year invested in our health care hospitals and clinics in Northeast Minnesota.

A priority of mine was to assist those with special needs. That is why my bill granted \$340,000 for the East Range Day Activity Center in Eveleth for our special needs citizens and we are dedicating money to build a new Northland Learning Center and Alternative Learning Center for kids who deserve the best education.

As you can see, I am proud of my record. You sent me to do a job and I tried to do my best. I found I did my best when I listened to you and our leaders from cities, towns, and community organizations. I listened no matter if you were a Republican, Democrat, or Independent. I think you would agree that being selected as the Legislature's most Bi-Partisan representative last year was good for our area.

When you select your next representative, I hope you keep these issues in mind. As for me, I want to send a sincere thank you to the citizens of the Iron Range for granting me the honor to serve as state representative. I appreciate all the volunteers who helped in my campaigns, my neighbors, and friends. In my transition from public to private life, I will continue to make my home in Aurora and to advocate for the truth and Iron Range First!

Dave Lislegard
State Representative