

Welcome to the 2025 Challenge!




When threats to stewardship of the land, economic fairness, and democracy seem to be daily news headlines, it's hard to know how you can make a difference. Engaging in your local democratic and civic community is a great place to start. The bedrock of a strong community is the ability for the people who live there to have a say in the future they want to see through their townships, counties, and other forms of local government.







We've seen what happens when big money and corporate interests run roughshod over our towns — jobs are promised in the short run, but our soil is left bare, water is polluted and depleted, local businesses close, schools and clinics shuttered. This leaves people and our communities footing the bill.

One day a year we exercise our democratic right to vote for our elected leaders at various levels. But just casting your ballot isn't enough — these officials represent us all year and we need to hold them accountable for actions they take once they are voted into office. That's where you come in—Join the Local Democracy Challenge today!

LSP challenges you to take up to six actions from now through November 26 that will strengthen democracy in your community, plus offer you a chance to win prizes!



LSP Local Democracy Challenge

Date Completed <input type="text"/>	Challenge #1  Meet with a Local Elected Official Have coffee with a member of your city council, county commission, school board or other elected local officials. Get to know what they do!	Date Completed <input type="text"/>	Challenge #4  Complete an Action Alert or Petition Sign onto one of LSP's active action alerts or find one being sponsored by an organization you support. Let your elected officials know the topics that concern you!
Date Completed <input type="text"/>	Challenge #2  Write a Letter of Support Show your legislators you are paying attention and write a letter of support for a bill they voted yes on. Find their voting record online.	Date Completed <input type="text"/>	Challenge #5  Attend a Local Government Meeting Attend a local government meeting and learn what is discussed and how their actions affect you. Bonus points for speaking up during public comments!
Date Completed <input type="text"/>	Challenge #3  Learn how to read a MN legislative bill Take our tutorial on how to read a Minnesota legislature bill and take our quiz to see how much you retained!	Action Completed <input type="text"/>	Challenge #6  Extra Credit: Choose your action to support local democracy. Check out ideas on our website!

Prize Package: There will be a total 3 lucky winners as we give away 2-\$250 VISA gift cards and a Patagonia Black Hole Duffle with LSP Swag.

Your name will be entered into the drawing for each action you complete, including the extra credit action! More actions = more chances to win!



**LAND
STEWARDSHIP
PROJECT**

How to Participate



Have a Card?

To submit your card and enter the prize drawing*:

- Write the date you complete each action on your card.
- By November 26, send the postcard to LSP to be entered into a prize drawing. Cards must be postmarked by November 26 to be eligible.
- Your name will be entered into the drawing for each action you complete, including the extra credit action! More actions = more chances to win! *Only one winner per household.
- If you prefer to submit your card virtually, [you can do that here.](#)

Need a Card?

- You can submit your actions online using this form—no card required!
- You can request a physical card be sent to your address by filling out this form.
- You may also pick up a card at any of LSP's office:
 - Minneapolis: 821 East 35th Street #200
 - Lewiston: 180 East Main Street
 - Montevideo: 111 North First Street



LSP Local Democracy Challenge

Date Completed

Challenge #1



Meet with a Local Elected Official

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Challenge #2



Write a Letter of Support

Show your legislators you are paying attention and write a letter of support for a bill they voted yes on. Find their voting record online.

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Challenge #3



Learn how to read a MN legislative bill

Take our tutorial on how to read a Minnesota legislature bill and take our quiz to see how much you retained!

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Challenge #4



Complete an Action Alert or Petition

Sign onto one of LSP's active action alerts or find one being sponsored by an organization you support. Let your elected officials know the topics that concern you!

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Challenge #5



Attend a Local Government Meeting

Attend a local government meeting and learn what is discussed and how their actions affect you. Bonus points for speaking up during public comments!

Action Completed

Challenge #6



Extra Credit:

Choose your action to support local democracy. Check out ideas on our website!

Challenge #1 Resource

Finding Officials

Finding your local officials might take a little research but rest assured there are resources available to assist you.

Find Your Minnesota Legislators:

Finding which Minnesota legislators represent you at the state capitol is as easy as typing in your address. Use this website to find the contact information for your local senators and representatives. This same form will also put you in contact with U.S. House Representatives and U.S. Senators.

Find County Officials:

Elected officials at the county level include county commissioners, as well as the sheriff, auditor and judges. You can find the contact information for these officials on your county's website. The Association of Minnesota Counties has a handy directory of county websites here.

Find Your City Officials:

City government structures vary depending on the size of the municipality. One of the best resources for finding your city officials is the League of Minnesota Cities City Directory. This online resource will put you in touch with the right contacts for your location.



Challenge #2 Resource

Letter Writing

"It is not new. Keeping someone's attention requires showing respect. When you send a written follow-up after a personal meeting, your contact person will remember you. The effort to do this increases your confidence in continuing to work with a fellow human being."

-John "Sandy" Dugan, LSP member in Wrenshall, MN

Writing a letter of support to your legislator is a way to let them know in what areas they did a good job last session and helps set the stage for voting in the next session (which starts in February 2026). First, you need to know what bills they worked on last year. Thankfully, Minnesota's legislative websites make this easy.

Step One: Know Who Your Legislators Are

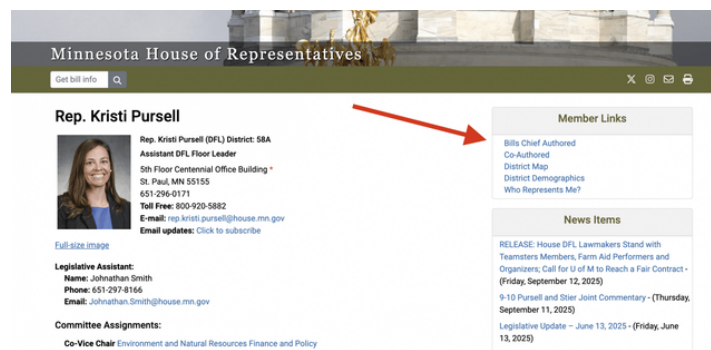
Don't know offhand? No worries. You can find out who they are here.

Step Two: Find their Home Pages on the Minnesota House & Senate Websites

The House page is found here. The Senate page is found here. The Representatives and Senators are default listed in alphabetical order but you may also toggle the tab for listing by district in numerical order.

Step Three: Find Their 2025 Bills

Each session, our Representatives and Senators will both chief author and co-author several bills alongside their peers. Some of these bills do not make it beyond committee and some of them go through the entire legislative process to become law. A record of each legislator's bills is hosted on their legislative homepage; it can be found in a menu on the upper right-hand side of the page:



Challenge #2 Resource

Letter Writing

Once you click on the link for “Bills Chief Authored or Co-Authored,” you will see a list that shows the bill number and short description of the bill, along with the full text and action taken on the bill. Take time to read through these lists to find bills that speak to issues that matter to you and your community. Once found, read the full text of the bill and find its outcome in the links provided. This will give you the context needed to write your letter.

An example of a bill you could write a letter of support on would HF1795/SF1559, which was the bill that expanded Farm to School funding during the 2025 legislative session

Search Results

26 Documents Found in Legislative Session 94 (2025-2026)
for Chief Authors of "Pursell"

[Help](#) [Advanced Search](#) [New Search](#) [Senate Search](#)

This is the bill number

This link will allow you to read full text of the bill

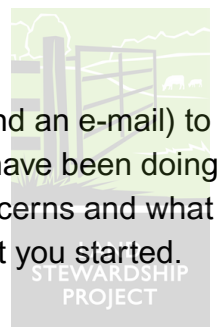
Read thru short descriptions for what they are about to find one that matters most to you

Body	Bill Number	Official Status	Last Action	Bill Law	Chief Author	Short Description
House	HF3339	1	05/18/2025		Pursell	Citizen membership reinstated for Pollution Control Agency.
House	HF3331	1	05/17/2025		Pursell	State goal for wetland restoration and protection set, and reports required.
House	HF3325	1	05/14/2025		Pursell	Data request and retention provisions modified, and fee waiver for certain data requests provided.
House	HF3258	5	05/09/2025		Pursell	Contracting restrictions on the legislature and executive branch based on vendor practices toward Israel eliminated.
House	HF2983	1	04/01/2025		Pursell	Requirements for products containing lead or cadmium modified, sale of menstrual products containing arsenic or chemicals of high concern prohibited, labeling and testing for menstrual products required, and rulemaking required.
House	HF2971	1	04/01/2025		Pursell	Nitrate private well mitigation funding provided, and money appropriated.
House	HF2921	2	04/21/2025		Pursell	Rural Cancer Institute grant funding provided, and money appropriated.

Last Action shows what happened to the bill-Did it become law?

Step Four: Write Your Letter!

Using what you learned about your legislator's record, take the time to write a letter (or send an e-mail) to them showing you recognize their work in this area of importance and support what they have been doing. Didn't find anything to support? That is okay too. You can let them know your areas of concerns and what you hope to see from them in the future. The next page shows a sample letter/e-mail to get you started.



Challenge #2 Resource

Letter Writing

Sample letter you can use to write your State Legislators

Month/Day/Year

RE: Thank you for supporting (put bill number here, and/or name of bill/program)

Dear (Representative/Senator Last name):

My name is (your first and last name) and I am a (community member, service provider/advocate/c) in your district. I want to say thank you for supporting (HF/SF XXX) during the 2025 legislative session.

I strongly support this bill because... (state why you support the bill or other issues related to it here.

Choose up to three of the strongest points that support your position and state them clearly.)

(Include a personal story. Tell your representative why the issue is important to you and how it affects you, your family members and your community.)

I appreciate your work and your support of this bill and hope to see your continued efforts on this issue.

Sincerely,

SIGN YOUR NAME

Print your name

Street address

City, State, Zip code



Challenge #3 Resource

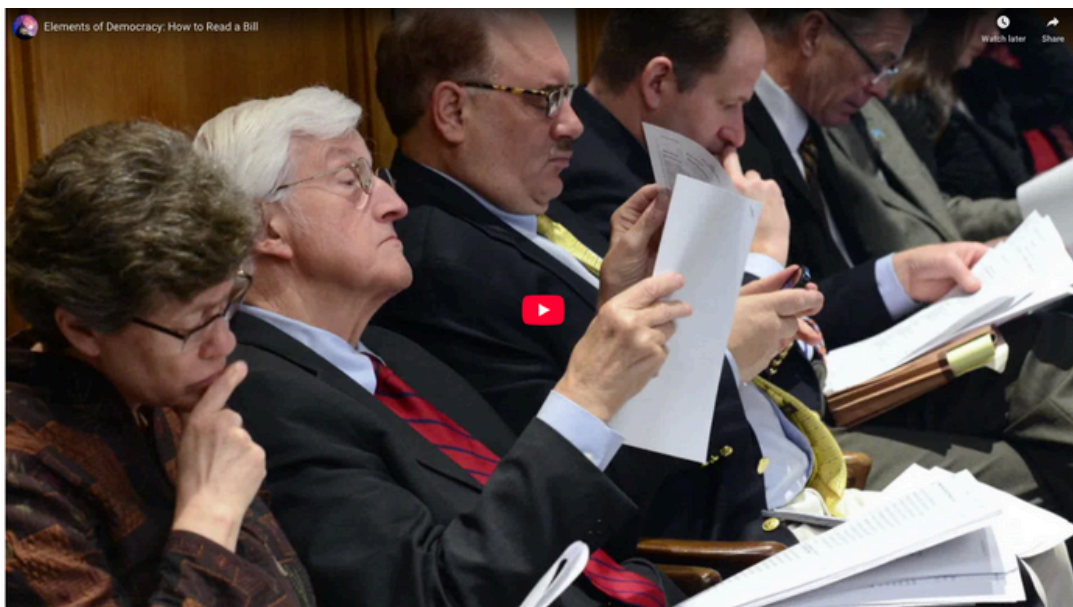
Reading A Bill

Legislative bills become laws that affect our day-to-day reality. They dictate how society works and, in particular, have major implications on how our food and farming systems function, so it's important for citizens to know how bills will affect us. By learning how to read bills as they are being debated, we gain the power to be informed and influence the process. However, the actual bill text is often difficult to read and understand because they often reference past bills and existing laws, the sentences don't always make sense, and they use terms that are defined elsewhere.

If you're new to the process, take the time to look at a bill's references and past iterations, and then lean on the people whose job it is to understand. It was helpful for me to reach out to LSP staff and contact bill authors to directly ask about specific meanings and intentions. These people are here to help you so don't forget to use them as a resource."

-Jake Kundert, LSP member and part of our Climate Steering committee in St. Paul, MN

Minnesota's legislative website offers extensive information on understanding the process by which a bill becomes a law in our state. Watch the video below and explore the resources found on their website [here](#).



Challenge #4 Resource

Action Alerts

"I live in St. Paul, but grew up in rural MN, and feel a sense of urgency in connecting folks in the metro to our farm and food system. There are so many people, just like me, who move into the cities after growing up in rural areas but hold care and concern for their hometowns. Online actions are a great way for myself and others to stay connected to this work and raise awareness about the critical moment we're in for agriculture and for our rural communities."

-Mary Voight, LSP member and part of our Animal Ag Steering Committee in St. Paul, MN

Power is the ability to influence decisions to achieve a desired outcome; power is our ability to make change. One way to build power is through large numbers of people making their voices heard and we can do this through online action alerts and petitions.

Having emails flood the inboxes of elected officials or delivering a long list of supporters to their office, shows them that this issue is important and that they need to pay attention. You can be a part of bringing about democratic action and change through completing an action alert or signing a petition, today!

Current LSP Action Alerts:

Federal Local Food Funding

Other Current Action Alerts:

Halt USDA Reorganization Plan—from National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition

Prohibit Buying Influence With Voters—from League of Women Voters Minnesota

Minnesota Attorney General Request for Ag Antitrust Violation Reports



Challenge #5 Resource

Finding Meetings

Attending local government meetings is a powerful way to learn more about your community and how decisions are made. You don't have to stand up and talk, but by showing up you can watch the process, hear what the elected officials are saying and how they're saying it, watch other citizens speak, and if you're able, stay after to connect with attendees or officials one on one.

It's fascinating to see how the officials take in and respond to what citizens share; it's truly democracy in action. Depending on where you live, it can be tough to find a meeting date, time, location, or agenda but county offices always have this information and are so helpful in making sure you have what you need to participate."

-Amy Cordry, LSP member in Winona, MN

Your county office can tell you who your county board member is, when the board meets, about other county boards and when they meet or if there are openings, and can give you more information about your township. County Office staff are very helpful and it is their role to assist constituents in getting this information, so don't hesitate to reach out!

[Follow this link](#) to access the full county directory on the Minnesota Secretary of State website.



Challenge #6 Resource

Additional Ideas

There are many ways you can participate in the democratic process outside election day. Beyond the first five challenges laid out by LSP, consider trying one of these additional challenges to make your voice heard and be a part of the process that creates the community, state and country that you want to live in.

Write a Letter to the Editor of your local or regional paper about the importance of local democracy and why you're doing this challenge

LSP has several resources to assist you with this:

[Fact Sheet: Letters to the Editor](#)

[How To Guide: Letters to the Editor](#)

Don't know which local papers serve your area? [Check out the newspaper directory](#) on the Minnesota Newspaper Association website.

Apply to be on a local advisory board (economic development, planning and zoning, arts, comprehensive plan, etc)

Every region of the state is home to several local advisory boards from the town-level to state-level boards. These boards are made of citizens who offer their "boots on the ground" perspective on everything from engaging in the local arts to planning and zoning for constructions.

The best way to find these boards to [check the locals newspaper](#) as calls for volunteers are often posted there and [ask your local officials](#) what opening exist.

Sign up to volunteer on a campaign

Supporting candidates in whom you believe goes way beyond the ballot box. Considering signing up as a volunteer on a campaign. Volunteers are always needed for a variety of tasks—from organizing and hosting meetings to passing out lawn signs. [Find candidates running for local and states offices here.](#)



LAND STEWARDSHIP PROJECT

Want to know more about the organization behind the Local Democracy Challenge?

The Land Stewardship Project (LSP) is a private nonprofit organization founded in 1982 to foster an ethic of stewardship for farmland, to promote sustainable agriculture, and to develop healthy communities. LSP is dedicated to creating transformational change in our food and farming system. LSP's work has a broad and deep impact, from new farmer training and local organizing, to federal policy and community based food systems development. At the core of all our work are the values of stewardship, justice, fairness, democracy, health and community.

Our Vision

LSP is committed to building vibrant rural communities that are places of belonging and opportunity for everyone. We envision a countryside where the soil, water, air, and the natural world are healthy, with more successful stewardship farmers raising both livestock and crops on the land and strong local economies where all can succeed.

Our Purpose

We are dedicated to creating transformational change in our food and farming system. We work within a broader movement that is fighting for justice and positive change. Some of our allies focus on issues such as healthcare and racial justice, while LSP works for change through the lens of farming, food and rural communities.

Our Values

LSP believes that by working together, culturally and racially diverse rural and urban people can take practical steps that result in greater stewardship of the land, more family farmers, healthy food for all and resilient, racially just communities. The following core values guide LSP's efforts to achieve our mission: Stewardship, Justice, Fairness, Democracy, Health, and Community.

Join the Movement!

Members of the Land Stewardship Project:

- Share our values of stewardship, justice, fairness, democracy, health and community.
- Work toward a more just and sustainable food and farming system.
- Invest financially in LSP's work by paying membership dues.

By becoming a member of LSP, you are putting your values into action and funding on-the-ground work to keep the land and people together.

You are joining with over 4,000 member households who are united together to advance positive change, as well as with a broader nationwide movement of organizations seeking to build healthy and vibrant communities for everyone and in right relationship with the land.

More at:
landstewardshipproject.org