Minnesota Legislative Civility Caucus Charter

To learn more about the Civility Caucus visit www.mn.gov/admin/government/ocdr/civility/

I. Background
Minnesota legislative leadership created the Civility Caucus following the National Institute for Civil Discourse Building Trust through Civil Discourse workshop at the One Minnesota conference for legislators in January 2017. Since that time, the Civility Caucus has hosted a wide variety of activities to build relationships, build skills, and foster collaboration.

II. Purpose
The purpose of the Civility Caucus is to foster effective policy making by promoting trust and understanding between political parties.

III. Activities
Civility Caucus leadership and members work together with the State of Minnesota’s Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution to identify activities that fulfill the purpose of the Caucus. Activities have included trainings on negotiation and collaboration, regular luncheons, service projects, structured activities to get to know each other on a personal level, opportunities for collaboration (such as co-authoring a bill), a legislator exchange program, the sharing of resources (resources are saved on the Civility Caucus webpage), and more.

IV. Roles and responsibilities

Members
Members complete a membership form in which they share their personal contact information and areas of interest with other Civility Caucus members, and commit to the following:

The Minnesota Legislators Civility Caucus members affirm the shared values that unite us in the common purpose of serving the people of Minnesota and upholding the Constitution of the State of Minnesota and the Constitution of the United States.

We hold that it is only by knowing and respecting each other and by listening to our fellow legislators that we can faithfully fulfill our duties to serve the people of Minnesota.

We recognize and value the contributions of all legislators and envision a legislative process which capitalizes on the talents of all legislators regardless of which party is in the majority and regardless of leadership status.
We hold that healthy disagreement is a productive aspect of a democracy that enables new and better ideas and solutions to emerge AND that collaborative working relationships, among legislators and with the public, are essential to effective policy making.

**Leadership**
The leadership of the Civility Caucus is made up of one Republican and one Democrat from each body of the legislature. These Chairs are volunteers that:
- ✓ provide short-term and long-term strategic direction to the Caucus
- ✓ continually improve the effectiveness of the Caucus in fulfilling its purpose through activities such as building partnerships, learning from other legislative models, identifying best practices, etc.
- ✓ meet regularly throughout session and the interim to identify and plan priority caucus activities
- ✓ mobilize resources including their own time and the time of their staff to plan Caucus activities
- ✓ serve as models of civility by building bi-partisan relationships, working with members of both parties, and striving to identify and model new ways of fostering civility and effective legislating
- ✓ promote the purpose of the Caucus and membership in the Caucus
- ✓ keep their party leadership informed of Caucus activities and work with their leadership to gain support for Caucus activities (such as setting aside time for Caucus activities, encouraging membership and attendance, committing resources, etc.)

**OCDR staff**
The Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution at the Minnesota Department of Administration (OCDR) is charged in Minnesota Statute 179.90 with assisting the legislature in improving collaboration and dispute resolution. OCDR fulfill this charge in part by providing coordination, facilitation, and development of the Civility Caucus. OCDR works with Civility Caucus leadership and members to identify priority activities and directions for the caucus. OCDR also helps support leadership in executing on those activities and directions and in fulfilling the purpose of the Caucus.