



# Al Franken

## U.S. Senator for Minnesota

### Record of Legislative Accomplishment, Working for Minnesotans

*U.S. Senator Al Franken has built a successful record of legislative accomplishment by standing up for Minnesota's interests and finding commonsense solutions that improve people's lives. He's traveled to communities across the state and turned Minnesota ideas into national policy.*

**Cutting Health Care Costs:** The **2010 health reform law** included Sen. Franken's provision to require insurance companies to spend at least 80 percent of premiums on actual health care – not administrative costs, marketing, CEO salaries, or profits. If insurers don't meet the requirement, they must rebate the difference. A study by an independent health research group found that the measure has already provided more than \$3 billion in rebates and other benefits to consumers in Minnesota and across the country, and it's cut insurance costs for families and businesses alike. Known as the **Medical Loss Ratio**, the idea came to Sen. Franken from the State of Minnesota. It is now a national health policy that will continue to save consumers money year after year.

The **health reform law** also includes a bipartisan provision based on Sen. Franken's bill to reduce the fast-growing number of preventable U.S. diabetes cases reported each year that now cost the nation billions of dollars to treat. The bipartisan provision, which Sen. Franken championed along with Republican Sen. Richard Lugar (Ind.), was based on a little-known, but very effective Minnesota prevention model. Now, as national policy, it will result in significant health care savings across the country.

**Reforming Wall Street:** In the wake of 2008's devastating financial meltdown that destroyed millions of jobs and stole trillions of dollars from Americans' savings and retirement plans, Sen. Franken's provision to **reform Wall Street credit rating agencies** became law with bipartisan support. It would help prevent future meltdowns by ending a dangerous conflict of interest that caused the credit rating agencies to give Triple-A safety ratings to investments they knew were "junk." Millions of unwitting investors and retirees who relied on those ratings were hurt. Co-sponsored by Republican Sen. Roger Wicker (Miss.), the measure has been hailed nationwide as one of the toughest Wall Street reforms.

**Meeting the Needs of MN Farmers, Ranchers, Rural Communities:** With one in five Minnesota jobs related to agriculture, Sen. Franken took an active role in helping to write **the 2014 Farm Bill**, which is critically important to creating jobs and keeping Minnesota's farm economy strong. Sen. Franken helped author the energy section of the bill, which expands use of renewable energies and will help farmers, and rural small businesses cut energy costs by investing in energy efficiency. The bill also includes Sen. Franken's provision to help new and beginning farmers and ranchers get their operations off the ground. During the Farm Bill debate, Sen. Franken also led the fight to preserve the sugar program, which supports thousands of Minnesota jobs. The Farm Bill not only reforms U.S. farm policy, but also cuts \$17 billion from the nation's deficit.

**Protecting Minnesota Women From Violence:** The bipartisan **Violence Against Women Act** enacted in 2013 includes two provisions Sen. Franken authored to help protect victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. The first would make it unlawful to evict a woman from federally supported housing just because she is a victim of domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking, and the second ensures that survivors of sexual assault are never forced to pay for their own rape kits.

To keep up to date with what Senator Franken is doing, sign up for his newsletter at [www.franken.senate.gov](http://www.franken.senate.gov)



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**Keeping the Nation's Medicine Safe:** In 2012, a Massachusetts drug compounding facility sent contaminated medications to 20 states, including Minnesota, causing hundreds of Americans to unknowingly received injections of drugs tainted with fungal meningitis. After 64 people died and hundreds more got sick from the tainted drugs, Sen. Franken helped lead a bipartisan effort with Republican Sen. Pat Roberts (Kans.) to update the nation's 25-year-old laws safeguarding the drug distribution supply chain. Sen. Franken's bill was signed into law in late 2013 and seen as a much-needed bipartisan effort to keep the nation's medicine safe.

### **Providing Excellent Constituent Services for Minnesotans**

Sen. Franken has traveled to all 87 counties, meeting with Minnesotans about issues important to them, and assisting them when they call on him for help. From going to bat for Minnesota veterans who didn't receive the medals they've earned, to clearing red tape for Minnesota families and businesses dealing with the federal bureaucracy, he and his staff have helped secure Social Security, Medicare, or Veterans benefits, assisted on issues like immigration, housing programs, student loans or applying for a passport or visa. In that time, he's:

- Answered more than 854,000 constituent letters
- Had his office work with more than 17,000 Minnesotans who asked for assistance with a problem
- Has visited all 87 counties and held almost 1,300 official Senate events across Minnesota

### **Going to Bat for Minnesotans:**

#### **Fighting to Save the Brown Family's GM Franchise**

When the recent economic downturn forced General Motors to cut hundreds of dealerships from its network, the Brown family dealership in Faribault was on the list, despite a 40-year record of successfully serving the region. After receiving the bad news, the Brown family couldn't find anyone at GM willing to listen to their appeals and to hear about the health of the franchise, and its importance to the community. The dealership employs 75 people, whose jobs were at stake.

After hearing about the Browns' long record of success, and GM's unresponsiveness to their appeals, Sen. Franken and his staff worked for months to bring GM and the dealership together. Through a series of contacts, GM became persuaded that the dealership deserved to keep its franchise. Mike Brown, the dealership's general manager, credits **Sen. Franken for being able to "break through the bureaucracy" and help the Browns retain their GM franchise** and continue to provide jobs and service to people in the community and throughout the region.

**Securing Seven Service Medals for Gail "Bud" Freeman** After returning to Duluth after World War II, Gail "Bud" Freeman worked for 65 years in private business and then for the Duluth School District. Mr. Freeman, a 90-year-old WWII Veteran, served in a unit that saw more than 500 days of combat in Italy and North Africa. Despite being wounded in battle, Mr. Freeman returned to Duluth without receiving the military service medals he had earned. Mr. Freeman's family told Sen. Franken about his honorable service. **Sen. Franken worked with the military on his behalf to secure seven service medals that he had earned.** He then had the honor of pinning those medals on Mr. Freeman in front of his family and friends.

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