

## **ATTORNEY GENERAL MIKE HATCH PLANS MODEST REELECTION CAMPAIGN**

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Attorney General Mike Hatch plans a modest reelection campaign, saying it's unbecoming the office to campaign full-throttle.

"I'm not going to be out there using slogans and trying to persuade people," said Hatch, a Democrat seeking a second, four-year term as attorney general.

"You can help people in this job. And I like to think we've done that over the past four years," said Hatch.

Let voters judge him on his record, he said.

Hatch, 53, of Burnsville, cites enforcing corporate ethics in nonprofits, chipping away at the high cost of prescription drugs, protections for vulnerable adults, improved law enforcement communication, as some of the accomplishments out of his office.

To a degree, the office has met with success in the Legislature with its initiatives, said Hatch. For instance, penalties for rape and child murder have been toughened, he said.

But Hatch (in the case of proposed privacy and healthcare legislation, pointing to Republican opposition) said other initiatives have met with

### **Dysfunctional process**

In part, he blames a "dysfunctional" legislative process, thrown into disarray by Gov. Jesse Ventura. Still, Hatch said he awakes every morning with couple of new initiatives that his office might address.

Hatch has been criticized by his Republican opponent, attorney Tom Kelly, for being obsessed with headlines and lawsuits.

Kelly recently likened Hatch's audit of Allina and the subsequent splitting of the healthcare giant to a hostile corporate takeover.

But Hatch, in turn, faults Kelly for vague criticisms of his office.

What specific actions by his office does Kelly object to, Hatch asked. And if what they've done is wrong, how would Kelly handle the situation, he asked.

"It's not enough to say, I would do it differently," said Hatch.

Far from being a press release mill, his office turns out about 15 to 20 releases a year, said Hatch. That's a tenth sent out by the previous administration, he said.

Hatch -- saying his office was engaged in the battle for corporate responsibility long before it became political popular -- characterized the aftermath of the Allina audit by his office as good for the business and its customers.

### **Fraud and mismanagement**

"Fraud and mismanagement was so rampant that a new board (of directors) had to be installed," said Hatch. "It's not like we canned them -- we don't have the right to do that," he said.

Good management **is** critical to the wellbeing of a company, said Hatch.

Proof that Allina and Medica are better managed can already be seen, he said. Allina is looking to show a \$60 million profit, he said.

"That is stunning," he said. That hasn't happened before, said Hatch.

One reason Hatch is eager for another term is that audits are currently be conducted of other HMOs. These are huge undertakings, he said.

He does not view his office's audit of Allina, nor other consumer protection actions, such as action against telemarketers or auto dealers, as being anti-business.

"I think it's good business," said Hatch, adding had the watchdogs of commerce -- analysts, accountants -- been at their posts, the economy would not be suffering from the lack of confidence felt by investors.

Discussing prescription drug prices, Hatch said his office filed suit against one drug manufacturer and anticipates others will follow.

If the cost of prescription drugs is going to be curbed, state attorney generals across the United States must step in, Hatch said.

Washington is useless on the issue, Hatch opined. The pharmaceutical industry and its swarm of lobbyists have paralyzed Congress, said Hatch.

"The leadership is going to come from the states. And the attorney generals are going to play a part," he said.

### **Commerce background**

In addition to serving as commerce commissioner under Gov. Rudy Perpich, Hatch had a private practice, in part representing clients denied cancer treatments from insurance companies.

Growing up in Duluth, Hatch quit college for several semesters and joined the merchant marine, working on the Great Lakes.

He didn't believe he had had a political thought before shipping out, said Hatch. But he repeatedly found himself in cities along the lakes -- Chicago, Detroit -- witnessing the riots, despair, and disenchantment of the late 1960s.

"From that I became a Democrat," Hatch said. Hatch and his wife Patti have three daughters.

