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Correction Appended

**DAYTON JOINS PACK OF CHALLENGERS TO GRAMS;
EX-STATE AUDITOR;
HEIR;
BUSINESSMAN ENTERS SENATE RACE**

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Mark Dayton, a former state auditor and millionaire department store heir, is joining the crowded field of candidates seeking the Democratic-Farmer-Labor nomination to challenge Republican U.S. Sen. Rod Grams.

Dayton, 53, announced Monday that he has formed an exploratory committee to launch a campaign and expects to formally declare his candidacy within a few weeks.

"I believe that of all the candidates, I can best serve the people of Minnesota because I have far more experience in government and public service statewide throughout Minnesota for the last 25 years," he said. "I've devoted my whole career to public service. None of the other (DFL candidates) has ever held a statewide office."

Dayton was state auditor from 1990 to 1994. Currently the president of Vermilion Investment Co. of Minneapolis, he served as state commissioner of both energy and economic development under Gov. Rudy Perpich, and he was an aide to U.S. Sen. Walter Mondale and Perpich in the 1970s.

He also is an experienced campaigner, if not always a successful one. In 1992, he ran for the Senate and lost to Republican incumbent Dave Durenberger. Two years ago, he finished fourth, with 18 percent of the vote, in a five-way DFL primary for governor.

This year, he is a late entry in a race that already has eight other DFL candidates. As a result, he said, he will bypass the DFL endorsing convention in June and jump directly into the Sept. 12 primary.

Recently divorced for a second time, Dayton said he delayed getting into the Senate race because he was preoccupied with personal matters. "Up until the middle of January, my main priority had been to try to save my marriage," he said. "Unfortunately, that didn't work out, and that also opened the possibility of undertaking this campaign."

Dayton is the great-grandson of George Dayton, the founder of the department store that became the Dayton Hudson Corp. (recently renamed Target Corp.), with hundreds of retail stores nationwide.

The younger Dayton spent lavishly from his own fortune on his previous statewide campaigns. He said he expects to pay for this one largely out of his own pocket, although he didn't say how much he is willing to spend. He spent about

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\$7 million on his 1992 Senate campaign and \$1.8 million on his 1998 gubernatorial race.

State DFL Party Chairman Mike Erlandson said Dayton's announcement "complicates the primary field and changes the dynamics a little bit." It means the party is likely to have at least a four-way primary with an endorsed candidate running against Dayton and two other candidates who plan to run if they are not endorsed, Minneapolis attorney Mike Ciresi and Minneapolis business executive Rebecca Yanisch. Two frequent candidates, former Minneapolis alderman Dick Franson and Ole Savior, also plan to run in the primary.

Candidates who have agreed to abide by the DFL's endorsement are state Sens. Jerry Janezich of Chisholm and Steve Kelley of Hopkins, former U.S. Attorney David Lillehaug and University of Minnesota physician Steve Miles.

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CORRECTION: Mark Dayton, who plans to run for the U.S. Senate this fall in Minnesota, previously ran for the U.S. Senate in 1982. The year reported in a story Tuesday was incorrect.

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