

Greiling aims to deliver service-oriented education

While Rep. Mindy Greiling (DFL-Roseville) might be in her first term as a House member, she is no newcomer to public service. She's been



Rep. Mindy Greiling for her.

Greiling (pronounced GRY-ling) was heading Sen. John Marty's re-election campaign when the suggestions started coming.

"People — particularly John Marty" — encouraged me to run for the seat, she said. And she credits the League of Women Voters for her developing interest in the political process.

"I joined the League because I was home with my kids and I thought it was a way to plug into issues" of importance, Greiling explained. "The League was the only group I knew of where people discussed issues."

Her experiences with both the League and political campaigns sparked a dedication to campaign finance reform, an issue she's already tackling this session. Greiling is a co-sponsor of

HF163, the reform package crafted with the assistance of Common Cause, a political watchdog, good government group.

"I like the playing field to be level," she said, "and it doesn't seem like the playing field is level." HF163 would, in part, curb the financial advantages incumbents now hold over their challengers.

Issues of the highest priority for Greiling are educational fairness and property tax equity — two big concerns in Greiling's district, which covers portions of Little Canada, Maplewood, and Roseville.

Specifically, Greiling wants to bring her teaching experience to the area of educational reform. In the short term, she hopes the current funding tensions between rural, suburban, and inner city schools can be resolved. But moving to reform the relationship between schools, administrations, and other levels of government is her long-term goal.

Critical of "top-down management," Greiling explained that "school districts should be more service-oriented." She suggested that the state Department of Education, for example, be a resource for schools when they need guidance, and not simply "tell [schools] exactly what to do."

"I really want school districts to be able to do things in a smarter way. We have to free up the

school districts more, and give them goals that we want them to accomplish, and . . . financial incentives to work smarter, and in the long term that will save money."

Although Greiling's expertise lies in the area of education, she describes herself as a "real generalist." She does serve on the Education Committee, but says she could have been put on "half the other committees and been just as happy."

"I'm just having the best time of my life," Greiling said. "I keep thinking some day this will seem like work. . . . I like people so much . . . and I like to study issues, and this seems to put it all together."

—Marnie Sadlowsky

District 53B

Population: 32,639
Distribution: 98.5 percent urban, 1.5 percent rural
County: Ramsey
Largest city: Maplewood (portion)
Location: northern Metro
1992 presidential election results:
Clinton/Gore: 40.5 percent
Bush/Quayle: 35.3 percent
Perot/Stockdale: 23.7 percent
Other: 0.5 percent

Health care marks Asch's journey to the House

Ask Rep. Marc Asch (DFL-North Oaks) how he got to the Minnesota Legislature and you'll hear a long list of professional accomplishments, most of which involve health policy and education.



Rep. Marc Asch

"I think problems are susceptible to study," Asch said. "You can gather information, review it, analyze it, talk about it, and make better decisions."

Asch, who brought his own computer to the Capitol and who has a self-professed love for number-crunching, is aiming to bring a passion for analysis to the Capitol.

It was in the early 1970s that Asch was exposed to the growing problem of health care costs while working at the Michigan Department of Social Services.

A major study on health costs piqued his interest in the issue, and Asch got an administrative job at a hospital where he worked to improve efficiency through "short interval work sequencing."

At the same time, Asch said his wife "ran into gross, overt [gender] discrimination" while applying to medical schools. Eventually, she was

accepted by Case Western Reserve University, so the couple moved to Ohio. Asch landed an administrative position quite close to his wife — in the dean's office of Case Western's medical school.

Four years later, Asch got a call from the office of U.S. Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), who was looking for a "special assistant" on health care issues. So, Asch and his family were off to the Washington, D.C. area, where he spent two years on the senator's staff and another two years at the National Institute of Health as a legislative liaison.

They moved to Maine and back to Ohio before settling in Minnesota in 1987, when his wife, Susan, was asked to head a pediatric emergency room in the Twin Cities. She is currently in private practice in Stillwater.

Now representing St. Paul's northern suburbs, Asch describes his legislative priorities with the slogan, "fairness for the suburbs."

"I want to make sure that taxes are collected and distributed equitably," he said.

Asch said that his district, although relatively wealthy, was being hurt by state tax policies. "We were being done over. Our schools were on hard times. . . . the assumption is made that if you have a high-valued home that your income is also high. That's not necessarily true." This

practice unfairly taxes suburban home owners, he said.

Asch heard that frustration while on the campaign trail. "It wasn't the amount of taxes that people were paying that upset them," Asch said, "It was the feeling that taxes weren't being distributed fairly."

Asch also hopes to help shape the state's health care decisions. Noting that he has been involved in health policy from just about every possible perspective, "I intend to be an active participant," he said.

And those who drop by his office should not be surprised to see Asch and his staff crunching numbers and tossing around ideas in search of solutions.

—Adam Samaha

District 54B

Population: 32,583
Distribution: 100 percent live in urbanized areas
County: Ramsey
Largest city: Roseville
Location: northeastern Metro
1992 presidential election results:
Clinton/Gore: 46.8 percent
Bush/Quayle: 31.0 percent
Perot/Stockdale: 21.6 percent
Other: 0.6 percent