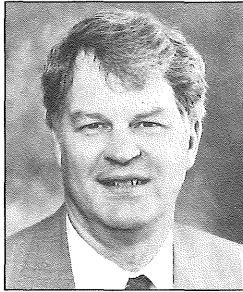


Native Texan Lindner wants to shrink government

Rep. Arlon Lindner (IR-Corcoran) knows the state's workers' compensation system from more angles than most. So when he says the system needs to be fixed, he hopes people listen.



Rep. Arlon Lindner

He lost parts of two fingers in a work-related accident as an employee of Schwegert Foods in Minneapolis. And as a businessman, he said he knows all too well what the Minnesota system costs.

Although he missed only five weeks of work, Lindner said he "could have been out much longer." The system, he said, doesn't favor a quick return to work, which contributes to Minnesota's high workers' compensation costs.

He said workers' compensation reform is of top concern among members of his district, which takes in the northwestern corner of the metro area.

If something isn't done to repair the system, Lindner said he fears businesses will flee to neighboring states where rates are cheaper and

the overall cost of doing business is less.

A native Texan schooled in economics and math at North Texas State University, Lindner worked in the oil and gas business until 1969, when he turned to the retail business. With his wife, Shirlee, Lindner has lived in Corcoran for the past six years.

Since 1960, Corcoran has more than quadrupled in size. While population growth across the district has meant new residential and commercial development, it's a double-edged sword, said Lindner.

In a district he describes as two-thirds urban and one-third rural, "it's harder to maintain a farm as the world becomes closer," he said. Newcomers "find the whiff of the manure on the fields" disagreeable. Balancing the interests of both parties is something Lindner hopes to accomplish.

But that doesn't mean passing new laws.

Lindner's campaign slogan was "bringing government back to reason," reflecting his belief that government — and the body of laws the Legislature continues to pass — has grown too big to be effective.

"It should be, 'We the people', not 'We the government,'" he said.

Lindner argues that the latter is now the case, with "the tail wagging the dog." A self-defined conservative, Lindner said he favors limiting the role of government to its essential functions.

But Lindner said he realizes that making those types of decisions won't be easy. Aware that there are two sides to every issue, Lindner said the task will be challenging.

"I'm just excited to have the opportunity."

— John Tschida

District 33A

Population: 32,967

Counties: Hennepin, Wright

Largest city: Maple Grove, (portion)

Largest employer: SCIMED Medical Supplies, 1,300 employees

Topography: A highly urbanized district, with 86.2 percent living inside an incorporated city.

1992 presidential election results:

Bush/Quayle: 37 percent

Clinton/Gore: 33 percent

Perot/Stockdale: 29.6 percent

other: 0.4 percent

Sekhon stresses education, environmental concerns

As a third- through eighth- grade teacher in Anoka County schools, educational equity is one of Rep. Kathleen Sekhon's (DFL-Burns Township) main concerns.



Rep. Kathleen Sekhon

Sekhon said all four of the school districts she represents suffer from inadequate funding, and two of them are among the lowest statewide in per pupil spending. Sekhon became convinced

that talking about equity just wasn't enough.

"I decided that if we were going to have the money we needed to work with, it was important for me to run for the Legislature and help get that done."

Sekhon (pronounced "SEE-kahn") grew up in Pipestone, the oldest of seven children, and now has three children of her own (two in college; one in high school). Her political life began in 1980, when she attended her first precinct caucus. She "spoke up" and eventually found herself a delegate to the state DFL convention. She then became involved in several feminist, environmental, and other "social change" organizations, all of which helped to

define her agenda for this legislative session.

But it was during her tenure as chair of the DFL Platform and Issues Commission (1984 to 1990) that she was introduced to a broad range of statewide policy issues, she said. As commission chair she also honed her skills of working with others toward a productive end.

"That was the experience that convinced me that I had the skills that I needed to work effectively in committees, and that's how you get things done."

During her campaign in District 50A just north of Minneapolis in Anoka County, Sekhon managed to knock on 10,000 doors. She plans to return to the houses she missed this summer.

Residents told her they were concerned about environmental issues, specifically two sites within the district that are on the federal government's Superfund cleanup list — the Oak Grove and East Bethel landfills. Citizens are frustrated with delays in the cleanup schedule, Sekhon said, and the resulting increased threat of groundwater contamination due to the area's relatively high water table.

Many are also troubled by development issues arising from population growth, and are concerned that area wetlands remain protected. From her positions on both the Environment and Natural Resource Committee and the separate environmental finance panel, Sekhon will

be a voice for her district on these issues.

Although not a member of the Education Committee, Sekhon said she hopes to persuade her colleagues of the need for school funding equity. She also will bring her educational expertise to issues before the Labor-Management Relations Committee, including workplace safety.

Helping small businesses that have limited resources should be a legislative priority, she said.

"We can do a lot as a government to help small employers come up with better ways of doing things."

— Adam Samaha

District 50A

Population: 32,806

Counties: Anoka

Largest city: Andover

Largest employer: Mate Punch & Die, 205 employees

Topography: all 32,806 residents live within an incorporated city

1992 presidential election results:

Bush/Quayle: 29.7 percent

Clinton/Gore: 38.3 percent

Perot/Stockdale: 31.3 percent

Other: 0.7 percent