

Mariani carries out campaign housing pledge

During the 1990 campaign, Carlos Mariani said one of his top priorities as a state lawmaker would be finding affordable housing for low- and moderate-income Minnesotans.

Less than five months after his election to the House, the DFLer is chairing a House subcommittee on community revitalization issues, which held its first hearings this week.

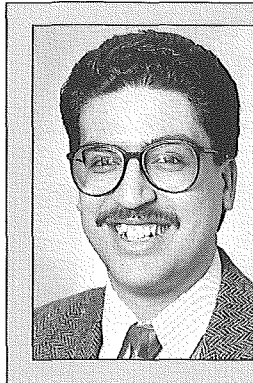
Mariani says he intends to capitalize on the assignment by keeping "people issues" in the public eye during a political season when the state's fiscal problems have monopolized headlines.

Mariani and other subcommittee members are examining how to use existing state programs and funds to re-energize older neighborhoods. He says the state can better target its resources in those areas to help rebuild crumbling homes and small businesses, and provide the social programs designed to keep residents in the neighborhoods.

"It combines the physical element with the human element," Mariani says of the revitalization subcommittee.

He cites community action groups in north Minneapolis and in his home district in St. Paul that show how neighbors can band together to tackle tough issues such as crime, drugs, racism, and improving sub-standard housing.

While the state provides some of the



Carlos Mariani

District 65B

Age: 33

Home: St. Paul

Occupation: Social issues program developer

District traits: The working class district in west St. Paul is home to Minnesota's largest Hispanic community. The heavily DFL district voted for Paul Wellstone over Rudy Boschwitz in the 1990 U.S. Senate election by a 69.9-to-30 percent margin.

initial resources to get the programs off the ground, Mariani says it's the neighborhood residents who keep them moving ahead.

"It's the same process that comes up with the social services," he says. "The push behind it comes from the people."

Mariani has long been active in neighborhood causes. The Chicago native moved to Minnesota 16 years ago and quickly became involved with the Twin Cities' Spanish-speaking community, most recently serving as director of Hispanic Ministries for the Minnesota Council of Churches.

As one of two Hispanics now serving in the Legislature (Rep. Edwina Garcia is the other), Mariani says his election symbolizes the trend of Spanish-speaking Minnesotans moving into mainstream politics.

"It's important for many Hispanics just to know someone from their community is there," he says. "It's a feeling of empowerment. They now have expectations they can have an advocate, a voice in the Legislature."

But he is quick to point out that he is not at the state Capitol only to represent selected interests from his district, which covers a large part of the West Seventh Street neighborhood and portions of downtown and Crocus Hill. Although Hispanics comprise a sizable portion of the District 65B population, they are not a majority.

"There is a responsibility for people of color to assume more leadership roles for all communities," he says. "There's no one way to do that. All you can do is keep plugging away, challenging preconceptions."

Committee, Floor & Final Action . . . March 14-21

Key to Committee/Division Abbreviations

AG	AGRICULTURE
AGR	AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT
AP	APPROPRIATIONS
AP/ecir	Economic Development, Infrastructure & Regulation Div.
AP/ed	Education Division
AP/enr	Environment & Natural Resources Division
AP/hr	Human Resources Division
AP/sg	State Government Division
CO	COMMERCE
EC	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
EC/itt	International Trade & Technology Division
ED	EDUCATION
ED/edfin	Education Finance Division
ED/high	Higher Education Division
ED/ef	Education Funding Division
EE	ELECTIONS & ETHICS

EG	ENERGY
EH	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING
EM	EMPLOYMENT
EN	ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES
EP	ENERGY & PUBLIC UTILITIES
ET	ETHICS
FI	FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS & INSURANCE
FI/bk	Banking Division
FN	FINANCE
GL	GENERAL LEGISLATION, VETERANS AFFAIRS & GAMING
GL/elec	Elections Division
GL/vet	Veterans Affairs Division
GO	GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS
GO/gs	Government Structures Division
GR	GAMING REGULATION
HH	HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

HO	HOUSING
JU	JUDICIARY
JU/crjus	Criminal Justice Division
LA	LABOR-MANAGEMENT RELATIONS
LG	LOCAL GOVERNMENT & METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS
LO	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
MA	METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS
RA	RULES AND ADMINISTRATION
RE	REDISTRICTING
RI	REGULATED INDUSTRIES
RU	RULES & LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION
TA	TAXES
TR	TRANSPORTATION
TT	TAXES & TAX LAWS
VG	VETERANS & GENERAL LEGISLATION
WM	WAYS & MEANS