

Do right by the people

DeLaForest thankful for the 'awesome responsibility' of serving

Editor's note: As the 2008 session goes into the home stretch, several members have announced their intentions to leave the Minnesota House of Representatives for new adventures, and, for many, to also spend more time with their families. They leave a legacy of service that will remain part of legislative history.

By BRIAN HOGENSON

Rep. Chris DeLaForest (R-Andover), a proponent for civility and professionalism in the House, is stepping away at the end of this session to embark on life after politics.

"Six years, I thought, was a good amount of time, and it was just time to pursue other opportunities, return to private life and spend time with my family," said DeLaForest.

If DeLaForest could pass something on to the person filling his seat during the next session it would be to never forget the awesome responsibility that they carry and to always do their work in a professional and civil way.

"Perhaps the area where any political body

could do some work is disagreeing amicably," DeLaForest said. "It's a good thing to disagree but a bad thing to disagree in an uncivil manner."

First elected to the House in 2002, he easily won re-election in 2004 and 2006, netting at least 60 percent of the popular vote in each election. His legislative district is composed of the quickly expanding suburbs of Andover and Ham Lake.

DeLaForest's committee membership includes Commerce and Labor, Crime Victims Subcommittee, Data Practices Subcommittee, Public Safety and Civil Justice, State Government Finance Division and Taxes.

An honorably discharged veteran who served on active duty as an army officer from 1992-96, when the House is not in session, DeLaForest works for a manufacturing company that builds testing devices for semiconductors, according to his Web site.

One of the most interesting things about the legislative process during his time in the House has been how little things have changed.

"The more things change, the more they stay the same," DeLaForest said. "I've been part of a large majority, a thin majority and a thin minority. I've experienced successes and failures in all three."

Choosing not to focus on his individual legislative achievements, DeLaForest leaves that for others to examine. He said he has always considered serving in the Legislature to be part of a broader effort, "an effort of 201 legislators to do what's right for the people of Minnesota."

The most recent successfully passed bill sponsored by DeLaForest was legislation in 2007 that again made ticket scalping legal in Minnesota. He said the law was necessary in order to put Minnesota's ticket market on the same playing field as other areas of the economy, and use competition to bring down ticket prices for consumers.

"You have a legal contract where A and B agree," DeLaForest said during debate on the bill. "Why would the government step in?"

DeLaForest remembers one of the non-controversial revisor's bills to be the first bill that he introduced as a newly minted freshman legislator.

"It was somewhat intimidating in that I had heard the bill subjected the author to the hazing ritual on the floor, so I was intimidated that some of the more senior members of the body would pepper me with all sorts of questions about the bill that I was unprepared for." ❀



PHOTO BY TOM OLMSCHIED

Rep. Chris DeLaForest is joined at his Chamber desk by his son, Will, as the House meets in floor session.

STEPPING DOWN

Rep. Chris DeLaForest
Republican
District: 49A — Andover
Terms: 3 (elected 2002)
Advice to successor: "Never forget the awesome responsibility that they carry and to always do their best to carry out their work in a professional and civil way."