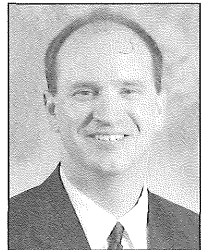


A new challenge

Cybart goes from the military to the State Capitol

By **MIKE COOK**

Excited, nervous and confident is how Rep. Lloyd Cybart (R-Apple Valley) described his feelings just before session began.



Rep. Lloyd Cybart

“It’s kind of like the military where you get a new assignment and you just pull through the main gate and you haven’t been to that base before. You’re excited about the new situation, but there’s nervousness at the same time wondering if you’re going to do the right thing and excel. I’ve done well in the past and I’ve done a lot of homework for this.” The Air Force veteran has had to purchase two new file cabinets for his office to hold all the literature he has received.

But it’s not like Cybart is starting from square one. After working behind the scenes on Chris Gerlach’s campaigns, Cybart jumped

at the opportunity when Gerlach, who had represented District 37A for three terms, was elected to the Senate in a July special election.

“I spent 20 years in the active military and all those decisions the politicians made affected me quite a bit,” Cybart said. “I always had an interest in it and thought about doing it later in life, but the opportunity presented itself so I thought now is the time.”

Cybart said that he and his wife, Heike, met with party leaders to discuss the opportunity that would keep him rooted in one place. “After she followed me around the military for all those years I kind of owe her.”

Cybart said that education and transportation are among his top priorities. His constituency includes parts of two suburban school districts, including the fourth largest in the state.

“I’ve met with many teachers, superintendents and principals and we cannot continue to hold funding flat,” he said, saying that he hopes for more than an inflationary increase.

DISTRICT 37A

2002 population: 36,915
Largest city: Burnsville
County: Dakota
Location: southern Twin Cities metropolitan area
Top concerns: Education and transportation

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— Rep. Lloyd Cybart

The Cedar Avenue rapid bus transit is among the top transportation priorities for the man who has run in three marathons. “Gerlach started some good things on that and I’m going to finish it up this year,” Cybart said.

Other priorities include accessible and affordable health care and prescriptions, keeping habitual sex offenders permanently away from children, no new taxes and the promotion of government spending accountability.

Health care advocate

Fritz brings lifelong compassion to St. Paul

By **MATT WETZEL**

Rep. Patti Fritz (DFL-Faribault) learned about politics from her father, Mike Casby, sitting with him and his friends, as they would debate issues at the kitchen table in Northfield.



Rep. Patti Fritz

news,” she said.

Fritz developed a decidedly populist bent to her politics, looking to help the cause of workers and those with low and moderate-incomes. She cut her teeth working with the late Paul Wellstone on those issues, who at the time was a professor at Carleton College in Northfield.

She eventually became a licensed practical nurse and went to work at St. Lucas Care Center, a nursing home in Faribault. There she helped organize the Service Employees International Union Local 113, and became an activist for the nursing home industry. “My passion is people and helping them have opportunities,” she said.

Fritz, a mother of five and grandmother of 17, initially ran for the House in 2002 against Rep. Lynda Boudreau. The local firefighters union had encouraged her to run. She lost in that election, but tried again in 2004, and won by 347 votes.

She sees jobs and health care as the key issues in her district. “I’ve worked with people who don’t have health care. They don’t qualify (because they don’t meet income guidelines) and they don’t want to go to the welfare department to ask for assistance because they’re afraid they’ll lose their dignity. I know people

DISTRICT 26B

Population: 36,496
Largest City: Faribault
Counties: Rice, Steele
Location: south-central Minnesota
Top Concern: Jobs and health care

“My passion is people and helping them have opportunities.”

— Rep. Patti Fritz

that are working for \$5.50 an hour. I know people who have those jobs without health care benefits,” she said.

She is determined to be an advocate for those people and others who can’t afford paid lobbyists. “Minimum wage gives you a minimum life. We see no opportunities, no affordable (college) education, no college scholarships.”

If she could have submitted the first bill of the session it would have been a proposal to expand the medium security state prison in Faribault, which is one of the region’s largest employers.