

PEOPLE

Third time's a charm

Remembering a lesson led to House seat

By CRAIG GREEN

When Rep. David Bly (DFL-Northfield) began his first run for the House in 2002, he believed that he needed to educate people about values and compassion for others. He lost by 46 votes. When he lost his second run in 2004 by 586 votes, a friend told Bly that what was important was that the voters knew he valued their concerns and needs.



Rep. David Bly

Bly, an educator, never forgot the lesson. On his third try, he won.

Born and raised in Northfield, Bly said that he was inspired to enter politics "by people like [former U.S. Senator] Paul Wellstone, who said you should act on your convictions, rather than be an observer, but a participant."

"We're all in this together, and when we all prosper, we all prosper," Bly said. "I really think that we're a better country when we take care of each other and we provide for each other."

His tenure as a representative follows years of working with district residents: as a teacher at the Northfield Alternative Learning Center and Faribault Public Schools; an actor and director at the Northfield Arts Guild; part of a negotiating team for Northfield teachers; and a board member on several civic and youth organizations.

One of Bly's first priorities in the House is to work on public education funding reform. Bly thinks that funding needs "to be fair across the state, and not so dependent on property taxes." Among his committee assignments is vice chair of the Early Childhood Learning Finance Division of the House Finance Committee.

DISTRICT 25B

2002 population: 36,590

Largest city: Northfield

Counties: Rice, Scott

Top concerns: Education funding, health care, renewable energy

A strong proponent of access to affordable health care, Bly would also like to work on renewable energy standards and the development of local energy resources. There are currently two wind turbines in Northfield, one at Carleton College and one at St. Olaf College.

Another concern in Bly's district is the expansion of Highway 169 through Belle Plaine and how it will affect commercial growth in the area.

Sitting in his office in the State Office Building, Bly said, "I'm motivated by a desire to serve the people in my community and in my district. It's what brings people to [the House]. To make Minnesota a better place."