

From daycare mom to legislator

Franson commits to practicing kindness, likes to see others follow

By **PATTY OSTBERG**

Rep. Mary Franson's (R-Alexandria) office decor reflects her daycare background and passion for children. The wall behind her desk is top to bottom Transformer decals; soon Batman and Spiderman will follow the Star Wars decals on the wall exiting her office, she said.



Rep. Mary Franson

Franson hopes legislators will practice when debating issues on the House floor. "We all need to be role models to our children, and how can we tell them not to bully and be kind to one another if you can't even discuss these issues without being kind. You may not like their idea, but at least respect their opinion."

Franson had thought about running for office as early as high school, but never had

time. Her strong opinions eventually led her to help form the Seventh District Young Republicans where she became secretary. She was also state coordinator for Mike Huckabee's 2010 presidential campaign. During these activities someone asked her if she'd be interested in running for state representative.

She ran with the message, "Our government was getting too big, and our rights were being taken away from us ... I was concerned about our children's future," she said.

A joke on the campaign trail was she could always put politicians in a time out if they misbehave. "I wish it was that easy," she said. "If you put adults in a time out, it just gives them more time to think about what they can do."

Her top concern is creating jobs. She said when families in her community growing up faced unemployment challenges, people came together to help support them with groceries or pitching in. "Now, it's so

DISTRICT 11B

Population (2009 est.): 35,924

Largest City: Alexandria

Counties: Douglas, Todd

Top Concern: Job creation

common to know who's unemployed ... you can't help everybody out that you know," she said.

Other issues important to her district include reducing the size of government, being pro-life and defining marriage between a man and a woman. "A lot of them at the door, they didn't even care about your message they just wanted to know if you were pro-life," Franson said.

Most importantly, she said, it all comes down to her children. "I want them to have a better future than what we are looking at today."