



KARL VAN ROY

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

For Immediate Release
Contact: Rep. Karl Van Roy

June 7, 2006
1-888-534-0090

Van Roy's Views: Looking on the Bright Side

MADISON – As a 30 year member of the Optimist Club, I believe in looking on the bright side of life. Lately, there has been a lot of talk about the divisions that exist in modern politics. Conservative versus liberal. Red state versus blue state. Even right versus wrong. With attention so focused on differences, we not only forget our optimism, we forget to have perspective on politics.

And we forget to look on the bright side.

Some people say this session was particularly divisive. With a media that covers conflict and controversy instead of camaraderie, I can see why you may be left with the feeling that we did nothing this session but bicker. The truth is that a handful of controversial issues grabbed all the headlines overshadowing the fact that legislators tirelessly worked hundreds of thousands of hours on over 1,500 bills designed to make Wisconsin a better place. Even at a time when our parties seem far apart, when one looks at the numbers you will see a story of shared successes. It's time to put things in perspective.

This session we enacted 487 bills into law. That is the highest number of bills enacted in the last decade. Thirty Assembly Resolutions were adopted, the second highest number in a decade, and the Assembly agreed to 57 Senate Joint Resolutions, the highest number by far in the last decade. Of all the bills that passed, ninety percent had support from at least one member of both parties.

Some bills reflected a true bipartisan spirit. Assembly Bill 270, now Act 56, passed unanimously in the Senate and overwhelmingly in the Assembly. Authored by both Republicans and Democrats, the bill provides information to expectant mothers so that they may donate their umbilical cord blood, a substance that is vital to scientific research and lifesaving to certain medical patients. Assembly Bill 912, now Act 140, will protect you and your family against identity theft. It passed unanimously and also had sponsors from both parties. A proposal to increase funding for SeniorCare, Wisconsin's prescription drug program to help more than 90,000 seniors obtain medications, also passed both chambers unanimously. Still other votes, on topics such as ethanol, reflected legislators' commitment to doing right by their districts, another force that regularly triumphs over partisanship.

Of course, optimism shouldn't blind us to reality. There will always be some issues on which it is more difficult to find common ground. But simply remembering that we can and do work together on a daily basis, even though bickering makes a better headline, is important. It is from that working together that we will establish the framework for solving more controversial problems in the future.

So, at the end of the day, why should we take time to remember the good we accomplished together this session? Because it reminds us that we all want the same things: healthy families, the freedom to live the lives we each imagine, the chance to help our neighbors, and the best possible Wisconsin. We might have different ideas about the means, but our ends meet in the same place more often than not. In those ways, we know we will always be more similar than different. And for that reason, we can all be optimistic about the future of our state.