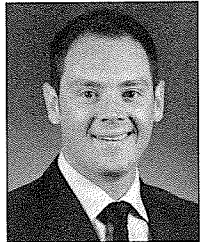


Honored to serve

Sanders focuses on kitchen-table issues

By **Kris Berggren**

Rep. Tim Sanders (R-Blaine) recently described growing up on the Wright Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio, one of several Midwestern bases where his Air Force father was stationed. The “strong” military community offered a positive sense of identity, plus tangible thrills. “You’re out there playing Little League and there are fighter jets going over. It’s a childhood I’m so glad I had,” he said.



Rep. Tim Sanders

He clearly admires his father, who retired with the rank of major, then went to medical school, and also his brother, an Air Force pilot “qualified for any mission the Air Force can fly.” One of Sanders’ “prized possessions” is the framed Minnesota flag on his office wall,

a gift from his brother upon Sanders’s election to the Blaine seat, intended as “an emblem of my service to the state.” He’s proud to bring his personal background to his assignment on the House Veterans Affairs Division.

But the economy — especially kitchen-table issues such as job security, health insurance and good schools — is of primary concern to the young families and retirees in his district. Sanders, who has taken a leave from his job in the insurance industry for the session, is among those young families; he and his wife, a nurse, have a 10-month-old son.

“That’s the top concern I’m hearing every day: what are we going to do about the budget? My entire campaign was focused on the economy,” he said.

Sanders also hopes to reform voting and election laws in Minnesota, and is pleased to sit on the House State and Local Government

DISTRICT 51A

Population: (2007 est.) 46,270
Largest City: Blaine
County: Anoka
Top Concern: Fixing the economy

Operations Reform, Technology and Elections Committee.

“Obviously, we look at the situation with Coleman and Franken,” he said. “Whatever side you’re on, people feel it’s a compromise. You shouldn’t see that inside a democracy.”

Sanders, who majored in political science at the University of Minnesota, learned the “non-glamorous” side of public life, including the long days, as an intern in former U.S. Rep. Jim Ramstad’s Minnetonka office. He admired Ramstad’s ability to work across the aisle and “stay close to his party while representing his constituents. Working with Jim got me to the point of ‘I love this.’”