

Sen. Bernier: Will not seek re-election

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(Eau Claire).... Senator Kathy Bernier (R-Chippewa Falls) announced today that she will not seek re-election to the Wisconsin State Senate. She served 13 years as County Clerk and will have served 12 years in the legislature. She does not take for granted the honor and privilege it has been to serve the citizens of her district and her community over the past 25 years.

“The choice to retire was a difficult one to make, but I have been contemplating this decision for some time now and I decided ‘now is the time,’” Sen. Bernier added. “As I go,” she emphasized, “I want to make it perfectly clear that no one has forced me out and politics has not played a role in my decision.”

Bernier, who will be 66 in April, has worked and worked hard for her entire life and wants to spend the next years enjoying the things she didn’t have time for during her career. She plans on traveling, creating art, and most importantly spending more time with family, a true source of joy in her life. “My grandchildren are growing up so fast,” said Bernier, “I want to spend as much time as possible with them.” In addition, Bernier fully expects there will be other opportunities to serve her community, state or country in a part-time capacity.

Kathy has deep roots in Western Wisconsin and today lives just a few miles from where she grew up. As a mother of three, Kathy worked part-time jobs to make ends meet. At 37, when her kids began school, Kathy went back to school herself, enrolling as a non-traditional student at UW-Eau Claire. Balancing waitressing three nights a week with a full load of classes and shuttling kids to practices, Kathy received her diploma with her children by her side. Later on, learning about

problems in her local government, she made her concerns known publicly and decided the right thing to do would be to clean up the mess herself. She launched a campaign for Chippewa County Clerk and upon winning election to the office she reformed it and cut costs while also increasing services. The trust and support she earned from the residents of Chippewa County helped her in her bid for state office in 2010, when she campaigned for the Assembly as an independent voice and won multiple terms to the Assembly before election to the State Senate. She has been a constant leader on election reform, aging and healthcare systems, training and workforce development issues, individual and religious liberty, and education and children's issues.

Bernier hopes whoever takes her place continues her philosophy: Do the right thing because it is the right thing to do. Kathy believes when our elected representatives put good policy above politics, we are all better off. That is what she has always tried to do.