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Proud to offer proof: This age-old American system gets the job done

By Senator Rachel Zenzinger



The system works.

Granted, it's not perfect. It doesn't satisfy 100 percent of the people all the time. But it works.

I'm talking, of course, about our political system, offering as example the recent, highly contentious Transportation Bill (SB 18-001).

Going door-to-door, talking to voters, I have heard all the common criticism from all the cynics who complain regularly about politicians who "refuse to work together," who "care more about their next election than they do about the good of the community," and so on and so on.

I ask those people to go back and read the recent headlines out of the Colorado General Assembly, and read the stories carefully. I point specifically to the transportation solutions in SB 001 that my colleagues and I just delivered to the Governor's desk; and I ask you to note that this was NOT a hold-your-nose, arm-twister of a law that some party in power ramrodded through committees without regard for opposing views. This is a \$3 billion solution to years of transportation woes; and it passed the Senate (18 Republicans, 16 Democrats, one Independent) unanimously!

So I don't really want to hear that politicians CAN'T collaborate. Yes, we have differences. No, we're not perfect. But we can collaborate, and we do, when Coloradans need us the most. Still not convinced? When the transportation bill left the Senate with that unanimous vote, it went to the House of Representatives for amendments, and it came back to us in a slightly different form. Essentially, it meant NOBODY was getting a transportation solution that was entirely suitable for any one legislator. Everybody, including me, had objections.

So what happened? We collaborated AGAIN, and we came to ANOTHER unanimous agreement. We explored options and we discussed all the points where we disagreed on issues. We put aside our differences; we met early in the morning and late at night. It was hard work, and I commend my

colleagues for their willingness to keep their eye on the ball, with the realization that millions of Coloradans were counting on us.

When Senate Republicans first announced their version of the Transportation Bill in January, the first speculation among most observers was that it would die quickly in the Democrat-controlled House. This is NOT the kind of fatalistic attitude we adopt in my office or in other Senatorial offices, as our unanimous vote proved. If it sounds like I am bragging, maybe I am. I'm proud that my constituents handed me this responsibility, and that I am responding the way I think they expect me to – and that I am helping to put the kibosh on all that unfounded criticism of “do-nothing” politicians. By the way, we also passed a few other bills in this session, all of which required bipartisan agreement along the way. How many? More than 200 through the two Chambers!

So the next time you DON'T hit a pothole on Wadsworth Boulevard and you DON'T have to pay \$300 for an alignment and new wheel, I hope you will think about the legislators who are at their jobs, trying to make the system work. You gotta believe.

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ABOUT SEN. ZENZINGER: An Arvada resident with a deep background in education and public school advocacy, Rachel Zenzinger was elected to the State Senate in 2016. Before coming to the State Senate, Rachel was elected twice to serve on the Arvada City Council, where she also filled the role of Mayor Pro Tem. Rachel had previously represented the district when she was appointed to serve in the State Senate for the 2014 legislative session. She currently serves on the Senate Education, Transportation, and Statutory Revision Committees. Sen. Zenzinger is also a member of the School Finance Interim Committee and the CDOT Efficiency and Accountability Committee.