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Powerful Md. Senator Taken Off Ballot

Judge Says Democrat No Longer Lives in District He Represents

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Maryland Senate Majority Leader Clarence W. Blount was removed from the September primary ballot last night by a judge who ruled that the powerful Democrat no longer resides in the Baltimore district he represents.

Circuit Court Judge Michael E. Loney said that because Blount spends most of his nights in his suburban Pikesville condominium, he cannot legally represent Baltimore's District 41. "To permit otherwise would distort the integrity of the electoral process," he said.

The decision threatens an abrupt end to Blount's 28 years in the Senate, where he is the second-ranking Democrat and the chairman of the Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee.

Attorneys for Blount said he will file an emergency appeal, which the Maryland Court of Appeals

could hear as soon as Monday.

Blount's legal residency was challenged by his primary opponent, state Del. Frank D. Boston Jr., who filed suit in Anne Arundel County last month to have the incumbent's name struck from the ballot.

Blount, 77, was seeking his eighth term. Yesterday, he acknowledged in court that although he rents an apartment in his Baltimore district, he sleeps all but two or three nights a month at the Ruth Elder Lane condo in a gated community northwest of the city.

Defense attorneys argued that Blount meets several legal tests for residency in the city: He pays taxes and votes there; his car registration and bank accounts list it as his address; he has never named another primary residence. Lawyers noted that Blount and his wife water the plants and tend the lawn.

But Boston's attorney, Steven A. Allen, noted that Blount does not know his downstairs neighbors in

Baltimore; that he keeps no medicine and little food there; that he doesn't have air conditioning or subscribe to a newspaper. He accused Blount of mocking the political process "through the arrogance of power."

Some of the three-day courtroom debate focused on whether Boston filed his challenge soon enough to properly alter the Sept. 15 ballot.

Loney said he sympathized with city and state election boards but insisted that they could handle the task of reprogramming ballot machines and reprinting absentee ballots.