

# Bromwell tells officials he's leaving state Senate

## Finance chairman taking executive post at Injured Workers Insurance Fund

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Thomas L. Bromwell, chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, has told his colleagues he plans to resign to assume a just-vacated \$200,000-a-year job as head of the state Injured Workers Insurance Fund.

The Baltimore County Democrat called several legislators yesterday to tell them that he had been offered the same job he had turned down more than a year ago — and that this time he decided to accept it.

The decision was made a little more than a month after the head of the agency was forced to resign by a board that includes several Bromwell allies. Preston D. Williams left the chief executive's job in mid-March.

Bromwell's disclosure marks the second time he decided to take the same job. The longtime legislator was set to become IWIF's top executive Dec. 1, 2000, but changed his mind at the last minute and returned to the Senate.

His surprise reversal led to the appointment of Williams, an insurance executive who had been hired away from the St. Paul Cos. to be IWIF's second-in-command. Williams has declined to comment on why he resigned.

Several sources say the termination followed a meeting last month between Bromwell and Williams in which the executive expressed displeasure with IWIF board members.

Bromwell did not respond to requests for comment yesterday.

Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller said yesterday that Bromwell "has been told the position is available and he and his family are considering it."

"He's a very valued member of the Senate," Miller said, adding

that he and his colleagues would prefer that Bromwell remain as head of the finance panel. But Bromwell has been telling legislators that he is taking the IWIF job for family reasons.

"If Senator Bromwell ultimately takes a job at IWIF, it will be an extraordinary coup for Marylanders," Gov. Parris N. Glendening said through a spokesman. "There is nobody in the state who has paid more attention to or knows more about IWIF than Senator Bromwell."

Bromwell, 52, has served in the legislature, as a delegate and then senator, since 1979. In 2000, he made a move to unseat Miller from the Senate presidency. He has been mentioned as a possible candidate for Baltimore County executive. His resignation for the IWIF job apparently will at least temporarily end his political career.

Bromwell's arrival at IWIF coincides with recent unrest in the agency, which provides workers' compensation insurance to about 23,000 Maryland businesses. Created by the legislature, IWIF is run by a board appointed by the governor.

Current and former IWIF employees say morale at the agency is at an all-time low.

"IWIF needs some kind of stability and consistency," said Del. Michael E. Busch, an Anne Arundel Democrat and chairman of the House Economic Matters Committee.

Busch noted "a lot of turmoil" at the agency and said he is optimistic Bromwell would provide the needed morale boost.

As chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, Bromwell has played a key role in crafting legislation governing IWIF's operations. Under a new law he helped draft, the agency is subject to financial reviews by the Maryland Insurance Administration. The same law exempts IWIF's board from the state's Open Meetings Act.

Bromwell is one of several key Senate members who might not return in January. Other possible departees include Barbara A. Hoffman, a Baltimore Democrat and chairwoman of the Budget and Taxation Committee, and Robert R. Neall, an Anne Arundel County Democrat. Both are possible candidates for the same private-sector job.

Miller said he would make no decisions on leadership until after the November election.