

Conservatives At Law

E. Shore Attorneys Chair Judicial Committees

SENATOR WALTER M. BAKER

Democrat — District 36 — Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne's & Talbot Counties
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

General Assembly Service: Beginning third term in Senate. First elected to Senate in 1978.

Positions Held at 1986 Session: Senate Judicial Proceedings Comm. (Vice-Chairman); Jt. Comm. on Investigation (Senate Chairman); Senate Comm. on the Savings & Loan Industry (Member).



Other Political/Governmental Positions: Gov.'s Task Fc. to Review the Defense of Insanity

(Member); Gov.'s Task Fc. on Time-Sharing (Member); State's Attorney for Cecil Co. (1963-66); Gov.'s Task Fc. on Correctional Rehabilitation (Member); Task Fc. to Study the MD Tax Court (Member); MD Court of Appeals (Standing Comm. on Rules of Practice & Procedure, Member 1986-present); MD Sentencing Guidelines Board (Member 1 yr.).

Other Biographical Notes: Baker served in the U.S. Army for two years as a Staff Sergeant in Europe.

Voting Ratings: MD Business for Responsible Govt. — 100% (83-86); MD League of Conservation Voters — 18% (83-86), 43% (79-82); MD Conservative Union — 86% (86), 88% (85), 72% (Avg since 80); Family Protection Lobby — 77% (83-86); Natl. Fedtn. Independent Business — 100% (83-86).

1986 Campaign Notes: Baker headed-up an incumbent's ticket with Delegates Jack Ashley, Ron Guns and Clayton Mitchell. Baker's campaign treasurer was Philip S. Bathon. As of shortly before the primary,

Baker had raised just over \$12,000 for his campaign.

The contest for Baker's Senate seat was one of the few sharply contested races on the Shore, with Baker facing three challengers in the Democratic primary. Alan Goldstein, age 39, a realtor from Queen Anne's county and nephew of MD Comptroller Louis Goldstein. Goldstein was considered the most liberal of the candidates and finished second in the race. Another major candidate was Dennis Clower, a 41-year-old lawyer. In multi-county Eastern Shore legislative districts, candidates must generally run strong in their home counties in able to win, but Baker won despite Clower's splitting the Cecil Co. vote with him. Donald Grove was a third minor candidate affiliated with the Lyndon LaRouche campaign organization.

In 1986, Baker was one of three Senators who negotiated a compromise with the House, breaking a deadlock over insurance liability reform.

Baker's Republican opponent was Bernard Hopkins, an insurance salesman who termed himself a Reagan Republican and said his political views were to the right of Baker, who is one of the Senate's most unapologetically conservative members already. Hopkins criticized Baker's record on environmental issues and his opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. Baker won with 58% of the vote, although Hopkins

won in the Queen Anne's and Talbot portions of the district by slim margins.

Baker was endorsed in the primary by Maryland PAC, a PAC sponsored by large MD businesses which named Baker as one of 14 incumbents they especially wanted to protect. Other primary endorsements came from the National Rifle Assoc.; the MD & DC Rifle and Pistol Assoc.; the Natl. Federation of Independent Business; and the Homebuilders Assoc. of MD. *The Baltimore Sunpapers*, *the Kent Co. News*, the Sierra Club, the MD League of Conservation Voters, the AFL-CIO and the MD Classified Employees Assoc. all bypassed Baker, backing challenger Alan Goldstein instead.

Issues & Style: In campaign remarks, Baker said his main concern was to limit the growth of government bureaucracy and taxes and to push for cuts in State spending. His other key issue is the insurance liability crisis. In 1986, Baker was one of three Senators who negotiated a compromise with the House, breaking a deadlock over insurance liability reform. The compromise fixed \$350,000 as a cap for "pain and suffering" awards to accident victims, and was acclaimed as a national model by some experts.

Baker also cited his sponsorship of successful bills to eliminate the sales tax on home utilities and machinery used by farmers, provide State support for volunteer fire companies and defense highway funds for rural areas. On local issues, he helped restore funding to the SHARE community rehabilitation mental health program in Cecil Co., obtained funding for Eastern Shore waterway dredging projects, supported new District Court centers in Cecil and Queen Anne's counties and upgraded community college funding in both counties as well. While campaigning, Baker said he supported certain aspects of the Chesapeake Bay Critical Areas law, but said limiting development to one house per 20 acres was too restrictive.

During the general campaign, Baker came out for a halt to dredging of the Chesapeake & Delaware canal until its environmental impacts had been more fully studied.

Baker said rockfish spawning and Bay grasses were of risk by the dredging.

Baker is widely perceived as one of the Senate's most conservative members. In 1986 he tied with Senator Charles Smeiser for the highest rating by the MD Conservative Union. He has been an outspoken opponent of bills like the Bay critical areas law, a statewide housing code and a State boycott of California grapes to benefit union workers there.

During the campaign Baker said he expected to become Chairman of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee when its prior Chairman, Mike Miller, moved up to become Senate President. Baker later received that chairmanship as he had predicted. The move placed both of the General Assembly's judicial committees under Eastern Shore chairmen when Delegate Bill Horne was later appointed to chair the House Judicial Committee.

District Address: 153 E. Main St., Elkton, MD 21921. Tele. 398-0980.

Annapolis Address: Sen Offc Bldg, Annapolis, MD 21401. 841-3639.

Born: Sept. 23, 1927 in Port Deposit, MD.

Spouse: Jean C.

Religion: Methodist

Children: Two (Stephen — 31; Nancy — 28).

Occupation: Self-employed attorney with firm of Baker & Thomey, P.A.

Education: Univ. MD Law School, LL.B. 1960; Washington College, B.A. 1960; Perryville High School, 1944.

Business & Financial Interests: (as per 3/4/86 financial disclosure) Owns family home jointly with wife. Owns interests in ten other properties. Part-owner Baker & Thomey, P.A. law practice. Owns investment stocks in two companies. Receives income from Baker & Thomey, P.A., Eastern Shore Sand & Gravel and from other self-employment.

Association Memberships: MD Bar Assoc.; Cecil Co. Bar Assoc. (Past President); Young Democrats Club of Washington College (Past President); Young Democrats of Cecil Co. (Past President); Elkton Rotary Club (Past President); American Legion.