

Delegates Taking Aim at Senate

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At least a half dozen members of the Maryland House of Delegates from Montgomery and Prince George's counties are setting their sights on the state Senate in 1994, an election year likely to send more Republicans and members of minority groups to that 47-member chamber.

Three incumbent senators from the two counties—all of them Democratic women—are stepping down, prompting delegates from their districts to run for the open seats.

In the Potomac area, Republican Del. Jean W. Roesser is challenging veteran Sen. Laurence A. Levitan (D), the chairman of the powerful Budget and Taxation Committee in Annapolis who has had tough reelection battles in his Republican-leaning district.

In announcing her candidacy this month, Roesser, 63, criticized Levitan's support of tax increases and vowed to "rein in state government spending." Levitan, meanwhile, has said he will fight to protect Montgomery County's public school funding in the 90-day legislative session that begins Jan. 12.

Democratic Sens. Mary H. Boergers, of Montgomery, and Beatrice P. Tignor, of Prince George's, are running for new jobs—Boergers for governor, Tignor for Prince George's County executive. Although both face formidable odds, they have crossed their political Rubicons by giving delegates the green light to run for their Senate seats.

In Boergers's Rockville-based district, Del. Jennie M. Forehand (D) has announced her Senate candidacy. And in Tignor's district, which includes Mitchellville and District Heights, two delegates—Michael Earl Arrington and Ulysses Currie—are among those fighting for the Democratic Senate nomination.

In Montgomery County, Sen. Idamae Garrott (D) is retiring in 1994, and Del. Leonard H. Teitelbaum is running for her post. Also, Del. Gene W. Counihan (D) is running for the state Senate from a newly drawn Montgomery County district that includes Montgomery Village and portions of the northern part of the county.

As for the entire Senate, redistricting and retirements may take away some of the more familiar and influential voices. Sen. Fred C. Malkus Jr. (D-Dorchester), a conservative 40-year veteran of the Senate, is retiring, as is Sen. Gerald W. Winegrad (D-Anne Arundel), who has championed environmental causes.

Redistricting may force veteran Sen. Julian L. Lapidus (D-Baltimore) to run against Sen. Barbara A. Hoffman (D-Baltimore), although Lapidus is said to be weighing other political options. Similarly, redistricting has put Democratic Sens. Paula C. Hollinger and Janice Piccinini into the same Baltimore County district.

Senate Republican Leader John A. Cade (Anne Arundel) is still contemplating a possible run for state comptroller against the popular incumbent Louis L. Goldstein (D). But Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. (D-Prince George's) is trying to persuade Cade to seek reelection to the Senate, where the Republican leader has played key roles in tax and spending decisions and sometimes has voted for tax increases that other Republicans rejected.

"I'm using every ounce of body strength I have to convince him he's an asset to the Maryland General Assembly and should run for reelection," Miller said.

Miller, normally a staunchly partisan Democrat, said he had no qualms about backing his Republican friend. "I'm nonpartisan when it comes to ability," he said. "Jack Cade has voted with the Democrats when it has come time to get things done on behalf of the state."

Miller said the political atmosphere will be thicker than usual when the 1994 legislative session opens eight months before the September primaries. "It's going to be a contentious year," he said, noting that at least two gubernatorial candidates—Boergers and Sen. American Joe Miedusiewski (D-Baltimore)—might use the Senate as a forum for their statewide campaigns.

As for the new General Assembly that will convene after the 1994 elections, Miller said: "I expect some Republican gains in the House and Senate. Hopefully they'll be modest. We will continue to see more gender [women] representation and more minority representation at the Senate and the House continue to become more reflective of society as a whole."