

Two Howard senators stepping down today

GOP committee ready to name replacements for McCabe, Madden

Impact on party unclear

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Howard County will lose two of its three state senators today but it's only a temporary condition.

Both Republican state senators, Martin G. Madden and Christopher J. McCabe officially leave their posts today, but the vacant seats should be filled within two weeks, if not sooner, officials said. Until they are, Columbia Democrat Edward J. Kasemeyer is the county's only senator.

If Gov. Parris N. Glendening acts quickly, Sandra Schrader, Madden's legislative aide for 11 years, could be sworn in as the senator's replacement before the General Assembly convenes for its 90-day session Wednesday.

Del. Robert H. Kittleman shouldn't be far behind in taking McCabe's Senate seat. Naming a replacement for Kittleman in the House of Delegates might take a bit longer, according to county Republican Party Chairman Louis M. Pope.

"It's just formality," Kittleman said of Glendening's official selection of him to fill the vacant seat. Referring to friction between the Democratic governor and himself in his former role as Republican leader in the House of Delegates, he added, "He'll probably just hold his breath and do it."

Madden is resigning his post to return to work in his insurance business. "I'm very much at ease, very much at peace with my decision," he said.

For her part, Schrader admits to feeling nervous at the prospect of filling Madden's shoes.

"It is a little strange being there [in Madden's Annapolis office] trying to help Marty finish up and make the transition," she said.

McCabe resigned to take a position in the Bush administration.

After spending last week in his

new intergovernmental liaison job in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, McCabe said he's "tremendously excited" about his new duties.

"My days have just been filled with meetings," he said, adding that he'll miss the personal connection to local residents.

Losing two popular incumbents might be considered a blow to the Republican Party in Howard, but not in Pope's eyes.

"It does give us an opportunity to put additional people on the front line in Annapolis, and it gives us a very competitive candidate for the future," he said, referring to Schrader. Kittleman is already known in his district, which is considered solidly Republican.

Wendy Fiedler, chairwoman of Howard's Democratic Party, doesn't see it that way.

"Whoever comes to take [Madden's and McCabe's] places won't have the same benefit of a long-term incumbency. It does help. It gives us an advantage," she said.

Fiedler acknowledged that Kittleman's five terms in the House might be hard to beat. But Democrats have high hopes of capturing Madden's 13th District seat. Howard County Councilman C. Vernon Gray is expected to seek it.

Pope said the GOP central committees in Howard and Prince George's counties were expected to formalize a recent 9-0 straw vote recommending Schrader for Madden's seat today. The Prince George's committee must vote on the matter because Madden's district covers part of that county.

Formal letters recommending Schrader should get to Glendening tomorrow, Pope said. If the governor moves swiftly to officially appoint her, Schrader could be sworn in the next day. Glendening, who is required to accept the recommendation, has 15 days in which to act.

Kittleman is expected to be confirmed as the party's choice for McCabe's District 14 seat at a regular central committee meeting Wednesday night, Pope said. That choice is expected to be confirmed by a Montgomery County committee (part of the district lies in that jurisdiction) this week.

Choosing the replacement for Kittleman's House seat might take another week or two, Pope said.

Darrel E. Drown, a former county councilman, has dropped out of the race. Kittleman's wife, longtime GOP activist Trent Kittleman, has entered the contest.

A lawyer who worked until recently for Marriott Corp., she ran for county council in 1978 before her marriage to Robert Kittleman in 1985. She has worked in Republican campaigns for gubernatorial candidate Ellen R. Sauerbrey and President Bush.

Also seeking the job are Gail Bates, an aide to Del. Donald E. Murphy, and Anthony Wisniewski, a Baltimore lawyer.