

Senate minority leader to step down

Madden says family, business priorities prompt his exit

By Margie Hyslop
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Maryland Senate Minority Leader Martin G. Madden announced yesterday that he would resign from his seat at the end of the year.

His decision to leave the General Assembly before the 2002 election means Republican senators will have to choose a new leader for the session which begins in January.

It also means that Republican central committees of the two counties he represents will have to agree on a replacement to fill his seat or let Gov. Parris N. Glendening, a Democrat, choose between their nominees.

Mr. Madden said Senate Minority Whip J. Lowell Stoltzfus — a conservative Republican who represents Somerset, Worcester and part of Wicomico counties — is the leading candidate to succeed him. Mr. Stoltzfus is “universally respected and an excellent spokesman” for the party, Mr. Madden said.

Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr., — a Democrat who represents Calvert, Prince George’s, and Anne Arundel counties — praised Mr. Madden and Mr. Stoltzfus but said the Senate and its leadership would be a different place without a centrist Republican such as Mr. Madden leading the minority.

“We’re going to miss him. He’s the type of person who made policy because he could reach across the aisle and forge consensus. That’s why I put him in charge of welfare reform — he created a balanced approach,” Mr. Miller said.

Mr. Miller added that “both of our worlds have been kind of turned upside down since the loss of Jack Cade, Vernon Boozer and Jack Derr” — three centrist Republicans who have left Senate leadership over five years.

Mr. Boozer became Senate minority leader after Mr. Cade died in 1996. In 1998 conservative factions of the party ousted Mr. Boozer and Mr. Derr, former minority whip, in the Republican primary.

Although Republicans managed to hold onto 15 Maryland Senate seats in the 1998 election, Mr. Miller recruited one Republican senator in 1999 and another in 2000 to join him in the Democratic Party.

Such developments heightened political tensions between the Democratic and Republican Senate leaders despite their often shared centrist views.

“I think he has become less happy in his position because his moderate base has become totally eroded,” Mr. Miller said. “He was a minority in his own minority caucus.”

Mr. Madden said his decision was driven by family priorities, an opportunity to develop and expand his insurance agency into a prototype insurer for car dealers and a desire to make sure his constituents and Senate Republicans have a fully engaged leader.

Although Republicans had expected the Democrats — who control the redrawing of districts before the next election — to force Mr. Madden to run against fellow Howard County resident Sen. Christopher J. McCabe, a Republican, Mr. Madden said redistricting was not a factor in his decision.

Mr. Stoltzfus characterized Mr. Madden’s decision as a thoughtful one that gives other Republicans “a chance to see where [Democrats] will draw the lines.”

In confirming that he will seek his colleagues’ support to lead the Republican Senate caucus, Mr. Stoltzfus noted that he shares Mr. Madden’s opposition to big government, big spending and abortion, as well as his concern for the environment.

Mr. Stoltzfus added that he benefited from the example Mr. Madden set.

“Unlike his predecessors, he brought everybody in and kept reminding everybody that they had to play by the book,” Mr. Stoltzfus said. “I don’t want to alienate moderates. It’s our Democratic governor who has pushed way to the left and is out of the mainstream.”

Republican leaders have said it’s too early to determine if there’s a favored candidate for appointment to Mr. Madden’s seat.