Bob Douglass says he's out of caucus chairman contest

By Perlia K. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

ANNAPOLIS - With the Maryland Black Caucus chairmanship election less than a week away, a surprising switch in the candidates vying for the post has taken place.

Sen. Robert Douglass, D-45th, current chairman of the 20-member group who has been a strong contender for the post has dropped out of the race.

The caucus, during the first few weeks of the session which began in January voted to change its rules to allow Douglass to seek a consecutive term. The chairmanship usually rotates from House to Senate members.

But Douglass this week pulled out of the race stating, "I feel that I have not had 100 percent support from all of the caucus.

"There have been personality clashes with certain people and I think they should find someone else."

Then he added, "Only under trying circumstances will I ever serve as chairman again."

Also bowing out of the election is Larry Young, 38th District delegate who has been appointed to serve as executive secretary for the National Caucus of Black State Legislators.

Young was appointed to the one-year post by Clarence Mitchell, Baltimore city senator who was elected chairman of the three-year old national group six months ago.

Frank Conaway

Larry Young

"I committed myself to this six weeks ago," said Young. "But that was before I knew Bob was going to drop out. If it were between Nat (Del. Nathaniel Exum) and I, I think I would have won."

Nathaniel Exum, D-Prince George's County, another contender in the race stated that he was still undecided as to whether he would seek the chairmanship and that he would make a decision by the first of next week.

Delegates Frank Conaway and Troy Brailey, both of the 40th District in Baltimore, are the new candidates throwing their hats in the race.

Brailey, veteran legislator who has served in Annapolis since 1967 and is vice-chairman of the caucus, says one of his reasons for running is because Young dropped out.

However, Conaway states that neither the withdrawal of Young nor Douglass has had anything to do with his decision which he reports he made two weeks ago. "I think the caucus needs strong leadership. There are clear issues that the caucus should be dealing with.

"We need to have a cohesive and viable group that is dealing with all the issues affecting the black community with well laid out and coordinated plans."

Previously the caucus held its election the first week of the General Assembly but the voting was first stalled when the group voted to change the bylaws. Then the bylaws committee was unable to meet to rewrite its rules.

Robert Douglass

Recommendations made by several caucus members suggested that the elections be held off until the last week of the 90-day session. This would allow the chairman to take office when the fiscal year begins and serve until the following June. This would also give the chairman at least eight months to prepare an agenda before each session.

—12 million for jobs

(Continued from page 1)

Other area politicians expressed views similar to Congressman Mitchell. Sen. Clarence Blount said "I think the figure is ridiculously low for the city and for the number of black kids who need to work to supplement their family income.

"When you have that many jobless youths, you may run into all kinds of problems. With kids idle and no way for them to earn money, they may get into trouble.

"The Carter administration has to restore some funds between now and July. We need more money funneled into cities where there are large numbers of unemployed youths."

Del. Hattie Harrison told the AFRO, "I feel that the figure is low considering the number of years I've been involved with summer programs for youth.

"Baltimore City's $6.7 million for this summer combined with other CETA programs will enable 16,000 youths to be employed this summer, said Steve Kaiser, public information officer of Mayor's Office of Manpower Resources.

"We don't know the number of unemployed youth in the city.... $6.7 million won't come close to allowing us to provide jobs for every eligible Youth in the city.

"The jobs that we have are good and we are very excited about them because the emphasis will be on permanent and visible improvements to the city.

"There will be renovations on part of City Hospital, park benches, developmental nature trails, clean out stream beds, establish food co-ops, and toy hospital," he further explained.

Applications for the summer jobs are available at counselors, [illegible] centers, City housing projects, Department of Social Services, and community groups that are participating as work sites.

In addition to the summer employment there are still openings in the year-round Youth Entitlement and Jobs Corps programs or more information call the Youth Hotline 396-3692.

—Abortion

(Continued from page 1)

Sources Although the committee has not yet been appointed, sources report that Delegates Timothy Maloney, Lorraine Sheehan and Torrey Brown may be selected by House Speaker Benjamin Cardin and that Senate President James Clark may select Rosalie Abrams, Edward Mason and Laurence Levitan.

However, if the budget is not approved by the 83rd day of the session which is March 31, the governor must extend the 90-day session.

A similar scene was staged during the 1979 session when both houses battled over whether to heavily restrict state funded abortions. The result was that the legislature approved funds for abortions when the mother's physical or mental health was in jeopardy.

It is expected that a similar route will be followed this year with last year's language being resorted in the budget.

Dr. William Hall to lecture on changes in adult sexuality

"There's More to Sex Than Sex," an analysis of the changes in adult sexuality during the past decade, will be presented by Dr. William Hall at "The Medicine Show," Sunday, April 20.

An attending obstetrician and gynecologist at Sinai Hospital, Dr. Hall will be a featured speaker at the Sinai Auxiliary's bi-annual health fair.

Scheduled from noon to 4 p.m. at Pikesville Senior High School, the show will feature recognized authorities speaking on contemporary issues of physical and emotional health. Admission is free.

Dr. William Hall

Visitors will have a choice of 13 healthy-related lectures to attend during three consecutive sessions. Included are scheduled events, demonstrations, films, exhibits and continuing activities for adults and children.

For those people interested in learning how to handle stress, bio-feedback will be demonstrated in "Mind Over Matter" by Dr. Thomas Weiss, chief of psychological services in Sinai's department of rehabilitation medicine.

Remarkable changes in physical appearance through reconstructive cosmetic surgery will be described by Dr. Lawrence D. Pinkner, attending plastic surgeon at Sinai.

How adult sisters relate will be explored by Patricia Johnston, LCSW, of the counseling and psychiatric services at Johns Hopkins University and family planning. "By Choice or By Chance", will be outlined by Dr. Stephen P. Cohen, chief of Sinai's department of urology and Dr. Marc Lowen, attending physician in the hospital's department of obstetrics and gynecology.

Limits on state spending prompts Annapolis fight

ANNAPOLIS - Bills to limit state spending and hiring which are already in trouble on the House floor may have been further damaged by amendments aimed at appeasing opponents of the legislation.

One of the amendments attached to the bills Wednesday would permit the governor to exceed the spending limit in emergencies. [illegible] the other would [illegible] that aid to local governments is not [illegible] enough to stay within the limit.

Opponents said the emergency [illegible] amendment [illegible] meant the [illegible] could [illegible] limit the [illegible] might [illegible] to localities [illegible] would defeat the [illegible] purpose of spending limitations.

Among the expenses [illegible] are the [illegible]

Delegate Thomas Kernan, D-Baltimore County, presented to the full House [illegible] of the first [illegible] Wednesday [illegible] the package of bills that [illegible] the work of a special joint study committee be loaded.

The bills would limit the growth of state spending and the number of new employees. The state [illegible] each [illegible] would [illegible] would [illegible] for [illegible]

[illegible]

Commissioner Birrane blasted for insurance backlog

State Insurance Commissioner Edward J. Birrane's office is plagued by administrative problems that have caused a serious backlog in work, a report by Maryland's legislative auditor concludes.

The auditor said delays in processing applications from firms that want to do business in the state have discouraged them from selling insurance in Maryland and thus undercut competition.

It also said the office is regularly late in examining financial records of insurance firms. The auditor found 10 cases in which examinations were one to five years late and seven instances in which they were six months to a year late.

John Corbley, secretary of licensing and regulation, said the audit confirms the findings of a report issued before the previous secretary, Ejner Johnson, became Gov. Harry Hughes' chief of staff.

That report blasted Birrane's office for serious administrative problems and other shortcomings.

But, Delegate Frank Conaway, head of an insurance firm and sponsor of several insurance related legislation, stated that he feels the problems cannot be attributed to Birrane.

"He doesn't have the kind of budget to do all the work that is required of him. He is understaffed and needs more people.

"Birrane is a very, very competent insurance commissioner. There are problems between him and the governor and they're going to just let him suffer until his term expires. I'm sure the governor would like to appoint his own person."

Hughes' press aide Gene Oishi said the Governor had awaited the second report in hopes it would strengthen his hand if he asked the General Assembly for power to replace and appoint the insurance commissioner.

He said if such a bill received approval, "I think you could assume that the governor would be looking for another insurance commissioner."

Currently, the governor has no power to replace Birrane, whose term runs until July 1982.

Oishi said legislation was prepared for this session to give Hughes the power to fire Birrane but was not introduced because the governor did not want to give the impression that Johnson's arrival influenced his decision.

Cop shot near scene where teen was gunned down

City police searched today for a gunman who fired at least six shots at a patrolman — wounding him in the hand and thigh — before escaping in a car that pulled up next to the officer's patrol car during the shooting.

Officer Charles Benjamin II was listed in good condition at Johns Hopkins Hospital following surgery, police said.

Benjamin was shot about 8:15 p.m. Tuesday by a man who flagged down his patrol car on Sinclair Lane in East Baltimore. Police said the gunman attempted to rob Benjamin of his two-way radio and his service revolver.

The gunman fired at least six shots through a paper bag, two of which struck Benjamin, police said.

Police said Benjamin managed to pull his gun and fire two shots, but the gunman was not hit.

The gunman was picked up by the driver of a car that pulled up alongside the officer's patrol car during the robbery attempt.

McGee is stable cond. but paralyzed.

When a spokesman for the Police Department was asked if the policeman shot and the Ja-Wan McGee case were related, Mike Bass, a spokesman for the department told the AFRO "There is always a possibility but nothing at this point to say the cases are related. They both happened in generally the same area.

McGee, 17, was shot in the back March 20 by an off duty detective Stephen McCowan, 33, who was dressed in plain clothes. The incident was in a pizza parlor on Erdman Ave. McGee is now paralyzed from his chest on down and confined to City Hospital in stable condition.

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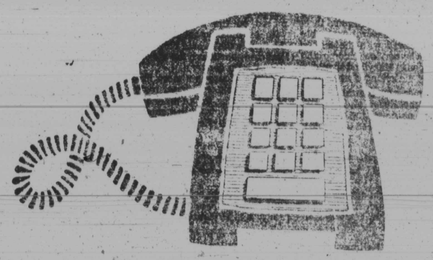

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