

Dorman

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By David Nitkin and Michael Dresser

Marked differences lead to a very public parting

Split: Sen. Delores G. Kelley bumps Del. Emmett C. Burns Jr. from her ticket.

Political Game

May 28, 2002

POLITICIANS typically treat each other with respect, at least in public. Today's opponent can be tomorrow's swing vote, so it's best to leave bridges intact.

But two western Baltimore County lawmakers have tossed that rule aside.

State Sen. Delores G. Kelley has parted ways with a former political partner, informing Del. Emmett C. Burns Jr. that he will not be included on her ticket in the 10th District -- which includes Woodlawn and much of the Liberty Road corridor -- during elections in the fall. The breakup includes ugly charges and countercharges.

Senators almost always run on a ticket with three delegate candidates to unify support and share campaign costs. Kelley said she is dumping Burns from her slate because they're "ideologically at opposite ends of the pole."

She said she was offended that Burns worked against a bill this year that would have prevented police from administering polygraph tests to rape victims. She also criticized Burns for voting against gay rights legislation a year ago.

Kelley called Burns "homophobic," and said he launched into a profane tirade on the Senate floor when she informed him that he wouldn't be on the ticket. (Burns denies using profanity, but said the two exchanged words.)

"I was embarrassed in front of colleagues," she said. "He was following me around."

Burns accuses Kelley of trying to grab power and quash dissenting voices.

"I'm the top vote-getter in the district," said Burns, a Baptist minister and former NAACP official. "She used me. Now she doesn't need me. ... We cannot have one person controlling Baltimore County."

Burns said he supports polygraph tests because men sometimes are falsely accused of rape. He said he voted against the gay rights bill in part because he was offended by proponents who compared the status of homosexuals and African-Americans.

"Gays and lesbians of the majority race have always had rights that I didn't have," he said. "They are not a minority like I am. I think it's more choice."

Kelley said she will run again with Dels. Adrienne A. Jones and Shirley Nathan-Pulliam (who is moving from Baltimore to Baltimore County after redistricting placed the 10th District entirely within the county). Newcomer N. Scott Phillips, a lawyer, will round out the slate.

Burns said he will run for re-election without Kelley's support.

Dorman named chairman of finance -- for now

Moving to fill the void left by the resignation of Sen. Thomas L. Bromwell, Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller has named veteran Sen. Arthur Dorman acting chairman of the powerful Finance Committee.

The appointment does not necessarily mean that Dorman, 75, will be given the post on a permanent basis when the General Assembly meets next year. Miller said no decisions will be made on committee assignments until after the fall election.

Dorman, a 38-year lawmaker from Prince George's County, has been vice chairman of the committee -- which deals with a wide variety of business and health issues -- for seven years. He is known as a quiet legislator who was a loyal lieutenant to Bromwell,

who resigned to become chairman of the Injured Workers' Insurance Fund.

Dorman missed most of this year's session after having back surgery, and appeared to be in frail health when he returned. He said last week that his health has improved and that he has been on the campaign trail, where he faces a Democratic primary challenge from a state delegate half his age -- 37-year-old John A. Giannetti Jr.

As part of new 8th District, Pr. George's voters courted

For decades, Maryland's 8th Congressional District lay entirely within the confines of Montgomery County, but this year 19,000 Prince George's County voters have been drawn into the district.

Sen. Christopher Van Hollen Jr., one of the three leading contenders in the Democratic primary, received a boost in his effort to win over Prince George's residents last week when he won the endorsements of the three state senators from the county whose districts overlap the 8th.

Sens. Nathaniel Exum, Paul G. Pinsky and Arthur Dorman announced that Van Hollen is their choice in the race for the nomination to oppose GOP Rep. Constance A. Morella.

Van Hollen also won the endorsement of a leader of the district's potentially important Hispanic voting bloc, CASA Maryland leader Gustavo Torres. (The organization itself does not make endorsements.)

Van Hollen made a subtle dig at his best-known primary opponent, Del. Mark K. Shriver. "Our support comes from the people of this community, not from outsiders and celebrities who don't know Prince George's," Van Hollen said.

Shriver had campaigned in a Prince George's neighborhood the week before with hip-hop producer Russell Simmons and former NAACP President Benjamin F. Chavis Muhammad.

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