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Ethics report recommends censure of Md. Senator Currie

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A committee of Maryland lawmakers has recommended that the state Senate censure, but not expel, Sen. Ulysses Currie (D-Prince George's) for failing to disclose outside consulting work that prompted the federal bribery and corruption charges of which Currie was acquitted last year.

The state Senate will consider the censure Friday, potentially making Currie — who was once chairman of the powerful Senate Budget and Taxation Committee — the first sitting Maryland lawmaker punished by the body in nearly 15 years.

If the recommendation is approved, Currie could be stripped of his Senate and Democratic Party leadership roles. However, he would be permitted to retain his seat on the budget committee.

The recommendation for censure was approved unanimously by members of the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics, which convened at the request of Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. (D-Calvert).

The committee has met for several hours at a time behind closed doors over the past month. In addition to removing Currie from leadership positions, the committee of delegates and senators suggested Miller ask Currie to “consider making a public apology” to his colleagues.

Currie was acquitted in November of bribery and conspiracy charges stemming from nearly \$250,000 in payments he received from Shoppers Food Warehouse for consulting services. Prosecutors alleged Currie had sought to use the influence of his office to do favors for Shoppers.

The report recommends that Miller introduce a “resolution of censure expressing the Senate’s disapproval.” In a statement Thursday, Miller said the Senate will take up the ethics committee’s recommendations Friday.

Currie has been a member of the Senate since 1995.