

# Brinkley eyes lead GOP role

## Mooney opposes fellow senator's bid

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FREDERICK — Sen. David Brinkley's pursuit of a leadership position among Senate Republicans has led to a split between him and Sen. Alex Mooney, Frederick County's senior senator.

Mr. Brinkley has quietly jockeyed behind the scenes to become minority whip, second-in-command to the minority leader. The 14 GOP senators will meet in Annapolis at 3 p.m. today for the leadership vote.

Sen. E.J. Pipkin, who represents Caroline, Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's counties, is challenging Eastern Shore Sen. J. Lowell Stoltzfus for minority leader.

Baltimore County Sen. Andrew Harris is defending his minority whip post against Mr. Brinkley.

Mr. Pipkin and Mr. Brinkley are running separately, rather than as a team.

News of the leadership fight leaked out last week in several news reports. Traditionally the Republican caucus maintains a tight hold on its inner deliberations.

Contacted Monday, Mr. Brinkley said, "I'm not going to comment on it. It's an internal caucus affair. After all is said and done we'll be able to talk about it."

Mr. Mooney will not back Mr. Brinkley's bid. He will support Mr. Pipkin's leadership attempt, but will vote to retain Minority Whip Harris.

Mr. Mooney said he nominated Mr. Harris and led his campaign to secure the minority whip position. He continues to support him out of loyalty, noting that he sat next to Mr. Harris at the back of the Senate for three years, until Mr. Harris moved to the Senate's front benches, a perk of leadership.

"Andy's doing a very good job, and I think Brinkley understands, and others, that while he's my county mate and I think he's got a good future in the senate, I'm loyal," Mr. Mooney said. "I think people understand that."

Senators are split 7-7 over replacing Mr. Harris,

but 8-6 in favor of Mr. Stoltzfus. In the case of a tie, ballots are recast until the tie is broken.

A staunchly conservative anti-abortion senator, Mr. Mooney said he would have no trouble supporting Mr. Pipkin, who is for some abortion rights, over Mr. Stoltzfus, who is solidly pro-life.

Mr. Mooney said Mr. Pipkin had stood by the caucus in many of its stands, including stiffer penalties for killers of pregnant women because of the death of the fetus, and against partial-birth abortion.

"There's disagreements with every senator on issues," Mr. Mooney said. "You're not going to agree with everybody on every issue."

He supported Gov. Robert Ehrlich, he said, even though they differ on abortion rights.

The challenge is rooted in what GOP senators see as lost trust after Mr. Stoltzfus flipped a vote on a bill to expand Maryland's gambling laws to include slot machines.

The minority leader changed his opposition to a vote of support, which caused several senators to go along with him. He then flipped his vote back to opposition.

Many senators who opposed slots, but went with Mr. Stoltzfus, said they thought the minority leader made a deal with the Senate's Democratic leadership to pass the slots measure.