

Taylor shuffles House leadership

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The new speaker of the House of Delegates said he will replace the House majority leader and give more leadership positions to lawmakers from areas that supported his bid to replace R. Clayton Mitchell.

Giving leadership positions to Anne Arundel and Baltimore counties and to Delegate John Wood of St. Mary's County will restore a balance that was missing in the leadership team assembled by Mr. Mitchell, said Delegate Casper Taylor, D-Allegany.

Regional balance was the reason given by Mr. Taylor for removing D. Bruce Poole of Washington County as majority leader.

To correct the situation, he proposed switching positions between Mr. Poole and Kenneth Masters of Baltimore County, who is chairman of the Administrative, Executive and Legislative Review Committee. But Mr. Poole turned down the AELR post, and it was offered to Delegate John Hurson, a Montgomery Democrat who supported Mr. Taylor when Mr. Mitchell announced he was leaving the General Assembly.

There were no other changes in top leadership positions.

Mr. Taylor found positions to reward his supporters by creating a sixth major committee, the Committee on Commerce and Government Matters. Delegate Gerald Curran, D-Baltimore, will be chairman of that committee, and Mr. Wood will be vice chairman.

Mr. Taylor appointed Anne Arundel Democrat Michael Busch to take his old position as chairman of the Economic Matters Committee. Mr. Busch lined up solid support of Anne Arundel Democrats for Mr. Taylor in a one-day fight for the speakership won by Mr. Taylor.

The House had six committees until Mr. Mitchell cut it back to five by abolishing the old Constitutional and Administrative Law Committee.

Many lawmakers complained last session that the change put too much work on just five committees. Mr. Taylor said members overwhelmingly supported creating a sixth committee.

With Mr. Masters as majority leader, Richard Rynd as vice chairman of Ways and Means and Connie Galiazzo as a deputy majority whip, Baltimore County was the big winner. Anne Arundel also picked up a second spot when W. Ray Huff was appointed to the largely ceremonial post of deputy majority whip.

Nancy Kopp, a former speaker pro tem who lost her job when she challenged Mr. Mitchell for the speakership in 1992, will be vice chairperson of the Capital Budget Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee.