

# Taylor's reach might stretch farther east

## Speaker's district could expand beyond current Allegany border

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**CUMBERLAND** — Some Washington County residents could be represented by House Speaker Cas Taylor Jr. when state redistricting occurs in 2002.

Based on estimates of population growth in Eastern Maryland and a population decrease in the western portion of the state over the past decade, Taylor's District 1-C may soon expand beyond Allegany County's borders.

"I feel pretty sure that the population changes statewide are going to force us to move east to take care of our declining population," said the Allegany County Democrat.

Although actual U.S. Census figures won't be available until April, the state's overall population is expected to have grown by about half a million people between 1990 and 2000, from 4.7 million to 5.2 million.

But over the same period Allegany County's population has dropped from nearly 75,000 in 1990 to a projected 72,650 this year, according to statistics from the Maryland Office of Planning.

"For 12 years I had a district that went all the way to Hagerstown, but that was changed two terms ago," Taylor said. "Now the population downstate has increased so much that I expect we're

going to have to redistrict into Washington County."

Republican Sen. John Hafer agrees that the political boundary may change in 2002.

"It's just a matter of how many people they put in each district," he said. "It's a very political process. District 1 would probably end at Clear Spring. We don't have much choice because it's divided up by the Democratic Party."

But Hafer admitted that he'll probably pick up additional Republican votes if the district is extended eastward.

"They should be moving the boundaries east, but as to where and how far, we don't know right now," said Del. Kevin Kelly, a Democrat and resident of Cumberland.

"My concern is that you live in a community but those people can't vote for you," he said. "Last time, redistricting hurt me badly. I was bumped out of Cumberland except for Bowman's Addition and the Bedford Road area. We also went from two delegates to a single-delegate district."

"On the positive side, a move east should help me, but I really can't say until the census figures come in," he said.

Kelly noted that extending District 1-C into Washington County would in turn move his District 1-B into Taylor's territory and Republican Del.

George Edwards' District 1-A would extend east into Kelly's district.

Edwards, who represents

all of Garrett County and a portion of Allegany County, says moving eastward would have little effect on his district.

"I don't see District 1-A changing a whole lot," he said. "To me I would probably pick up the Vale Summit area again."

But Edwards isn't completely convinced that population changes in Garrett and Allegany counties will require redistricting.

"A lot depends on how much Garrett's population increases," he said. "Also underlying all this is how many prisoners will be added to the census figures in Allegany County."

Residents of the county's state and federal prisons were not counted in the last census because those facilities did not exist in 1990.

"It will be close, but the key will be how much Garrett has grown," said Edwards.

The 1990 census showed Garrett County's population at 28,138. It is projected to increase this year to 30,200.