



114 of 166 DOCUMENTS

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HEADLINE: Gov. Hughes Rebuffs P.G. Senators By Naming Del. Sheehan to State Job

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BODY:

Gov. Harry Hughes, accused of bending to the will of the state senators from Prince George's County on a variety of political appointments, delivered an intentional rebuff to them today by selecting Del. Lorraine M. Sheehan as secretary of state over six persons supported by the senators.

During his successful reelection campaign, Hughes promised the county's all-Democratic Senate delegation, lead by Sen. Thomas V. Mike Miller, that because recently resigned Secretary of State Fred Wineland came from Prince George's, his successor would also come from there. But a week ago, when the seven senators, acting on that pledge, submitted the names of six Democrats, the governor, who has made a career of appearing to be politically independent, balked.

According to Hughes' staffers, Sheehan, 45, who represents the Suitland area of Prince George's, was selected for the cabinet-level job this week after word leaked out that the county's senators had delivered their list to Hughes.

After being told of the appointment, a chagrined and subdued Miller said, "He said there was the perception that Prince George's was running the governor's office and he wanted to dispel that notion. It was very cordial, very polite. What could I say?" Miller said.

"On the merits she was a good choice," said another county senator. "But my understanding was that the governor was going to work with us on appointments. But to simply ignore us . . . It's a snub to Prince George's County. It could've been handled without such an affront, but he appeared to be wanting to slap us back into line."

"They backed him into a corner," a Hughes' aide said. "It's not that he's trying to stick it to them, but if they do dumb things the way they did--handing him the list and say pick one--and try to make it look like he's in their pocket, he's going to go the other way. It's just how Harry operates."

According to Sheehan, a Democrat who has been in the House of Delegates since 1974 and a leader of the prochoice abortion forces there, Hughes' appointments secretary Constance Beims called last week and asked Sheehan

Gov. Hughes Rebuffs P.G. Senators By Naming Del. Sheehan to State Job The Washington Post January 27, 1983,
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to put her name in for the largely ceremonial, \$45,000-a-year position.

Sheehan, who two weeks ago began her third four-year term in the House, said Hughes' secretary "said they didn't want to select from the list and they want someone who philosophically he would be comfortable with."

The senators' list included the names of State Racing Commission Chairman Bob Banning, Sen. B.V. Mike Donovan, former County Council member Roy Dabney, Register of Wills Calle Mae Heffron, Mary Conroy, wife of the late Sen. Edward T. Conroy and former Sen. Meyer Emmanuel.

One of those reportedly displeased with the appointment was Donovan, who dumped Sheehan from his reelection ticket last fall. Sheehan, however, beat one of Donovan's ticketmates, Marty Weber, to keep her seat.

Sheehan has been an advocate on women's issues and for rights for the handicapped, and has been vocal in seeking to have Metro's Green Line end at Branch Avenue instead of at Rosecroft race track, as has been the plan.

In doing so, Sheehan has earned the enmity of county Democratic political powerbroker Peter F. O'Malley, an attorney for Rosecroft. O'Malley was one of those who supported Donovan's move to dump Sheehan from the ticket.