

Harris knocks out Boozer for state Senate

Del. Frank faces primary upset, too

BY LOU PANOS

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The unseating of Towson Republican state Sen. Vernon Boozer in a bitter abortion-focused battle highlighted Tuesday's primary, but two other lawmakers teetered on the brink of defeat.

The fate of this pair, Democratic Dels. Robert Frank of Reisterstown and John Arnick of Dundalk, hinged on absentee ballots. That process began two days later.

In Tuesday night's tally of votes cast at county polling places, Arnick looked like a survivor by 12 votes and Frank seemed to have missed by 75 votes.

Arnick was reported just ahead of William C. Batton, with 5,053 votes to 5,041 in the race for the third of three slots in the district.

Nearly complete, unofficial returns indicated victory of all other county incumbents seeking renomination.

The jolt of the night was the quashing of Boozer's 25-year legislative career by Dr. Andrew Harris, a Cockeysville physician.

Harris painted Boozer as "too liberal" for the rural 9th Legislative

District stretching from Baltimore City to the Pennsylvania line.

The challenger drew heavy support from the anti-abortion lobby, opponents of gun control and the conservative Maryland Business for Responsive Government.

Boozer indicated shortly before the polls closed at 8 p.m. he sensed defeat. "It's all abortion," he said in a late-afternoon interview.

Later, he read the handwriting on the wall when results poured in from "church precincts," an expected source of Harris strength.

Nearly complete returns showed Harris, a first-time candidate, with 4,350 votes to 3,737 for Boozer.

Harris supported his "too liberal" accusation by citing Boozer's legislative votes in a manner resulting in a Boozer charge

that he was guilty of "blatant lies."

"If I had to lose," said Boozer, citing the abortion issue in the race, "I couldn't have picked a better issue to lose on."

Even in conceding defeat, however, the senator bristled over Harris' campaign statements and said he would withhold any congratulatory call to the winner.

"I don't want to sound like a sore loser," Boozer said, "but you know that a lot of things he said weren't true."

Harris will be facing Democrat Anthony O. Blades in the Nov. 3 General Election. Blades ran unopposed in the primary.

Referring to his absence from the legislative scene when the General Assembly convenes in January, Boozer said, "It looks like I'll be getting a good tan this winter."

Harris lashed out at Boozer's votes against a bill to ban so-called "partial birth" abortion, against mandatory 15-year terms for carjackers and for drug needle exchanges.

Boozer parried point by point.

He noted that the attorney general had found the abortion bill to be vague and of doubtful constitutionality. Leading successful opposition to the measure, he said it could have led to the banning of all abortions in Maryland.

He also said his vote on the carjack bill helped save it from defeat because of heavy opposition to the mandatory-sentencing provision.

In the races for House of Delegates, major attention was drawn to the 11th District contest, where Democratic Dels. Mikel Finifter and Dan Morhaim, both of Owings Mills, were renominated, and Zirkin appeared to have beaten Frank for the third slot on the Nov. 3 General Election ballot.

Unofficial figures showed Finifter with 7,188 votes, Morhaim with 5,526 and Zirkin with 5,069. Frank had 4,974.

Trailing these four were Robyn Stevens of Owings Mills, with 3,585 and Theodore Levin of Pikesville, with 2,794. Stevens had been heavily backed by state Sen. Paula Hollinger, with whom she had worked.

Finifter, speaking by telephone from his home Tuesday night, said he was pleased not only because he topped all vote-getters but also "because the people obviously like what I did in Annapolis."

All three incumbents ran independent campaigns after failing to unite as a ticket.

In the early phase of his drive for renomination, Frank alienated some Democrats, including County Executive Dutch Ruppertsberger.

The source of their displeasure was a campaign ad painting Frank as a leader in obtaining state funds for Baltimore County school construction, an effort spectacularly led by Ruppertsberger and supported by every other legislator in the county.

The three top vote-getters will square off against Republicans Christian Cavey, Virginia Schuster and Grant Harding on Nov. 3. The last in that field was Mineko Nakazawa.

In the western county 10th District, Sen. Delores Kelley will return to the Statehouse after surviving a challenge by Robert Dashiell, a fellow Randallstown resident and member of the Baltimore County Board of Education.

Kelley had 5,681 votes to 2,458 for Dashiell.

Dashiell couldn't be reached for comment the night of the election.

Dashiell had criticized Kelley's decision to abstain from voting on the expulsion of Sen. Larry Young from the state General Assembly.

But Kelley contended that as a professor at Coppin State College it would have been a conflict of interest. One charge against Young was that he took fees from Coppin State for services he never performed. Kelley has made a name for her self in the Senate for her work on women's issues and domestic violence.

With many incumbents and challengers unopposed in their primaries and others surviving this preliminary test, this is how the remaining Senate contests shape up for Nov. 3:

▶ 6th District Democrat incumbent Mike Collins of Essex vs. Republican Ken Holt of Bradshaw.

▶ 8th District Democrat incumbent Tom Bromwell of Perry Hall vs. Republican William Rush of Putty Hill.

▶ 12th District Democrat incumbent Ed Kasemeyer of Columbia vs. Republican David Maier of Elkridge.

Besides Kelley, unopposed senators on Nov. 3 are Norman Stone of Dundalk in the 7th District, Paula Hollinger of Pikesville in the 11th, Barbara Hoffman of Mt. Washington in the 42nd, Perry Sfikas of East Baltimore/Baltimore County in the 46th, and George Della of Southwest Baltimore/Baltimore County in the 47th.