

College student announces bid for House of Delegates

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by Dennis Carter
Staff Writer

Jon Black, a student and resident of College Park, announced Thursday that he will run for the Maryland House of Delegates representing District 21, which includes Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties.

Black, a 21-year-old philosophy major at the University of Maryland, said he hopes to represent the large student block of the College Park population and bring new perspectives to the state level on issues such as infant health, education, crime and public transportation.

"I look forward to serving all the residents of my community and ensuring every voice is heard," said Black, who recently finished a session in Annapolis as an aide for Del. Herman Taylor (D-Montgomery). It was during his time with Taylor that Black decided to give the House of Delegates a shot next fall.

"Towards the end of session, I thought, I really want to do this," Black said. "Once I learned that Del. Taylor would support my campaign, I realized this was an opportunity I had to take."

The seat opened after Del. Pauline Menes (Dist. 21) announced her retirement from the Maryland legislature on March 9. Considered by many as the dean of the state house, Menes will retire after serving 40 years as a lawmaker, the longest serving state delegate in Maryland history.

Black was credited with helping push through House Bill 507 – a prenatal care measure designed to create a folic acid distribution program – during the 2006 General Assembly. The law, which was signed on April 2, provides folic acid, a critical prenatal vitamin, to women of childbearing age. Black said he was shocked to learn that Maryland, one of the richest states in the country, had the fourth worst infant mortality rate.

"This is an appalling statistic for a state as wealthy as ours," he said. "And, unfortunately the numbers are no better in our district. ... This abysmal situation must be turned around before we lose anymore of our youngest citizens."

Black said he would also campaign on more affordable education options for residents of District 21.

"Education has always been our nation's greatest asset. In District 21, we must continue this tradition and provide for affordable and accessible opportunities for all our residents," he said. "In Maryland, educating our children must be a top priority. Higher education should be available to all students, regardless of their social or economic status."