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AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

## *To the Polls in Maryland*

**M**ARYLAND may not be the lead player in the Super Tuesday presidential contests, but voters throughout the state face important choices this week. Besides selecting candidates for U.S. Senate and House races, Marylanders will choose candidates for a seat on the Montgomery County Council, five Circuit Court judgeships in Prince George's County and school board seats in several jurisdictions.

In Prince George's, residents who care about their criminal justice system have an important task at the polls. Five Circuit Court judges—all approved by the judicial nominating commission, endorsed by the Maryland State Bar Association's board of governors and top elected officials in the county—are seeking full 15-year terms and are on both the Democratic and Republican ballots. They deserve to be retained. But one challenger who has not undergone judicial commission review must be defeated if the five are to be retained. Because the ballots will not indicate which are incumbents and because the challenger is listed first, voters should select the last five: Herman C. Dawson, G. R. Hovey Johnson, Maureen Lamasney, Ronald D. Schiff and Michael P. Whalen.

In the Prince George's school board contests, the two top vote-getters in each district will go on to elections in November. How well the candidates support the good efforts of Superintendent Iris Metts is critical in these contests. In District 6, incumbent Kenneth E. Johnson's experience should win him one of the two general election ballot spots. In District 9, incumbent Marilyn Bland has been challenged by three opponents (one a write-in). Longtime PTA leader Minerva Sanders has been especially effective in her ability to

work with others should stand her in good stead.

In Montgomery, the special election for the County Council seat being vacated by Republican Betty Ann Krahnke, limited to voters in District 1, begins with party primaries to choose nominees for a general election April 18. Of the five Republicans, Howard Denis is the best qualified: a former state senator in the popular Mathias-Gude-Morella tradition with balanced views of transportation, growth, education and fiscal responsibility.

The Democratic field of four is led by Roger Berliner and Patricia Baptiste. Mr. Berliner's support for transportation improvements—including the intercounty connector—is an important plus, and he enjoys business as well as labor support. Ms. Baptiste, a former planning board member, has been endorsed by Ms. Krahnke; she prefers an emphasis on transportation alternatives to roads, opposing the ICC as well as other key road projects. How Democratic voters see the issues of transportation and growth in the county should be the primary determinant in this contest.

For Montgomery School Board, the two top vote-getters in a field of nine candidates seeking an at-large seat being vacated by Beatrice Gordon will compete in the November elections. Here too, support for a new superintendent's promising agenda is important. Sharon Cox, a former president of the county PTA who has children in traditional as well as magnet schools, is knowledgeable and independent. Luella Mast, another past county PTA president, has worked well with competing interests and has sought more openness in the system's bureaucracy. Two other candidates, Lauri Rodich and Charles Haughey, offer solid experience in education and civic activities.