

NORTH

# State Rep. Pedone leaving office

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Mr. Pedone Telegram & Gazette

State Rep. Vincent A. Pedone said yesterday he will leave his post within two weeks to begin a job as executive director of the Council of Presidents of the Massachusetts State University System.

Mr. Pedone, 44, will succeed Frederick Clark, who left the position in November to become executive vice president of Bridgewater State University.

Mr. Pedone has represented the 15th Worcester District since 1993. He has risen to become chairman of the Committee on Bills in Third Reading and has been one of the most influential state representatives in Central Massachusetts.

The salary range for the new job is \$120,000 to \$140,000, according to Patricia Maguire Meservey, chair of the Council of Presidents and president of Salem State University. She said the exact salary is being negotiated.

His salary as a state representative is \$61,000 plus \$7,500 leadership pay.

“We are very pleased that Rep. Pedone will be joining the state university system,” she said. “His experience, leadership and understanding of the educational needs of Massachusetts students and families will be of great value to our organization.”

The council represents presidents of the state university system comprising nine campuses of four-year bachelor’s and master’s degree-granting teaching universities. It does not include the University of Massachusetts or the two-year community colleges.

Mr. Pedone was chosen following a nationwide search that began in September. The council said it was looking for ability to provide advocacy for the system in government, media, business and industry and extensive knowledge of policy to assist the system with its legislative agenda.

Within minutes of the announcement yesterday afternoon that he accepted his new job, School Committee member Dianna L. Biancheria announced her candidacy to replace Mr. Pedone. Three others also are known to be considering a run.

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They are city Councilors-at-Large Michael J. Germain and Kathleen M. Toomey and Candice Mero Carlson, a former District 2 city council candidate.

But whether there will be a special election to fill the job for the rest of the year is in question. That question is decided by the House of Representatives. and a spokesman for House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo declined to comment.

Secretary of State William F. Galvin said, “It will be almost impossible to hold a special election” now. The state has undergone redistricting. Not only has the 15th Worcester District been extensively redistricted, but even its individual ward and precinct lines have been redrawn. The courts have long ruled that a special election must be from the original district, Mr. Galvin said, and cities have already mailed directions to voters on where to vote for the March 6 presidential primary — which in many cases would be incorrect for a special election.

“That district no longer exists,” Mr. Galvin said.

There is a minimum 14-week wait from the date of a resignation until a special election can be held, he said. That means a new representative would conduct legislative business for less than three months before the Legislature recesses in July until the next session, the secretary of state said.

“I don’t know what’s going to happen,” Mr. Galvin said, but “if asked my opinion I’m going to recommend against holding a special election. Let every candidate run against each other in September for an open seat.”

Mr. Pedone is best known for his leadership in the effort to fund a new \$302 million state psychiatric hospital and have it located in Worcester. Asked why he is taking the new job, he said, “As someone who has been in public office for nearly two decades and has worked hand in hand with people in Worcester and across the Commonwealth to build a better place, I felt it was time for a new challenge.”

A graduate of the then-Salem State College, he said, “I am a product of the state university system. Public higher education is a system here in Massachusetts that I feel I can help carry a message for in the community and with policy makers in Boston.

“At some point in everyone’s professional career they have to make a decision whether or not a move is right at a certain time, and I feel it’s the right time for me and my family.”

Mr. Pedone and his wife, Toby, have three children, ages 5, 6 and 8.

House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo congratulated the Worcester Democrat and said he “has both expertly served as the chairman of the Committee on Bills in Third Reading and been a strenuous advocate for the people of the 15th Worcester District. He has served his district in good times and bad, tragedy and triumph, and I thank him for his outstanding service to the House.”

Worcester School Committee member Dianna L. Biancheria had already announced this afternoon that she will run for the seat being vacated by Mr. Pedone.

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