

Cryor was 'caught in the storm' in bid to keep House seat

■ **GOP incumbent says she expects a loss once all ballots are counted**

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After 12 years, Republican Del. Jean B. Cryor expects that her days as the senior member of Montgomery County's District 15 delegation in Annapolis are over, swept away in a Democratic wave.

Absentee and provisional ballots still need to be totaled, but Cryor said Thursday that she doesn't expect anything to change.

"I was just caught up in a storm, just a bystander in a national picture," she said.

With Tuesday's ballots counted, Cryor, a ranking member of the House Ways and Means Committee, trailed Democratic newcomer Craig L. Rice by 666 votes for the third delegate seat in the district. Incumbent Democrats, all of whom just completed their freshman terms, retained the other district seats — Brian J. Feldman and Kathleen M. Dumais in the House and Robert J. Garagiola in the Senate.

The remaining seat will be decided by the roughly 5,300 absentee and provisional ballots cast in the sprawling district, which spans from Bethesda and Potomac to the far reaches of upper Montgomery County.

Cryor, 67, the only Republican member of the county's state delegation, said her campaign staff sent cards to the District 15 voters who requested absentee ballots before the election, and she believes most of them were Democrats.

While the outstanding ballots will change the tally, Cryor said she expects the final "percentages will stay the same," and Rice will likely be the one going to Annapolis in January.

Marjorie Roher, spokeswoman for

the county Board of Elections, said about 3,900 absentee ballots had been received from District 15 voters, and about 1,300 provisional ballots were cast in the district at the polls on Tuesday.

Election officials began counting absentee ballots Thursday morning. Almost 39,000 were requested county-wide, and more than 27,000 had been returned so far, Roher said.

It will likely take through Saturday to complete the first absentee canvass, she said. Election officials will begin counting provisional ballots Monday and that could take several more days. The second, and final, canvass of absentee ballots postmarked by Nov. 6 will begin next Friday, Roher said.

Cryor said well-wishers have kept her phone ringing since election night and that nearly every elected official in the county has talked with her.

"It's very heartwarming. It means so much that people care about you on that personal level," she said.

Cryor said she has yet to shed a tear. "Maybe that will come next week." But

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for now, she can't get past the uplifting feeling of knowing how much she enjoyed every day she had in Annapolis.

"That's that," she said, "but I can't get past having done it so much and loved it so much."

Maybe there will be more days in Annapolis for her after the final count, but if not, Cryor said she knows she will find another role for her skills.

"One that I hope will include public service," she said.