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HOME/NEWS

Renuart would run for Thrasher's Senate seat; Shoar wouldn't

By Jim Sauders and Dara Kam/News Service of Florida Thu, May 29, 2014 @ 5:57 pm | updated Thu, May 29, 2014 @ 6:10 pm

TALLAHASSEE | Sen. John Thrasher hasn't been named president of Florida State University. At least not yet.

But in Tallahassee circles, it's widely assumed Thrasher will get the top job at his alma mater, and that means behind-the-scenes discussions already have started about who will run for Thrasher's solidly Republican Northeast Florida Senate seat.

A large part of the talk focuses on House members Ronald "Doc" Renuart and Travis Hutson, whose districts overlap Senate District 6, which stretches from Ponte Vedra Beach to Daytona Beach and includes St. Augustine, Palm Coast and Palatka.

Renuart, a Ponte Vedra Beach Republican and physician, said he intends to run for the Senate seat if it becomes open and pointed to his health-care background.

"As a physician, my knowledge and experiences have me prepared to add my voice to the discussion," Renuart said in an email. "Its been about 12 years since a practicing physician has held a seat in the Florida Senate."

Hutson, R-Elkton, was not as committal when reached by phone, but he said he will consider running for the Senate seat if the opportunity arises.

It's clear Tallahassee lobbyists and groups are preparing for a race in the district. St. Johns County Sheriff David Shoar said his name was included in a poll that tried to gauge the popularity of possible candidates. Shoar said he has no plans to run for the Senate.

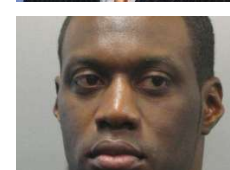
"I'm a cop, really, so I'm not sure that would be the life for me, running back and forth to Tallahassee," Shoar said.

The race could have implications outside the district, as Sen. Joe Negron, R-Stuart, and Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater, wage a battle to become Senate president in 2016. Both are trying to line up support among Senate Republicans, and Thrasher, a savvy insider, has been a key supporter of Negron.

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