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Headline: GOP SHAKE-UP MADDY GETS TOP POST FRESNO REPUBLICAN
NAMED SENATE MINORITY LEADER

Body Text:

Senate Republicans, still reeling from their poor showing in a special Senate election in Southern California, asked Sen. Kenneth L. Maddy, R-Fresno, on Thursday to lead them out of their minority-party malaise.

The Senate's GOP caucus voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Sen. James W. Nielsen of Rohnert Park as minority leader and replace him with Maddy, 52. The Republicans also named conservative Sen. John Doolittle of Citrus Heights to replace Sen. John Seymour of Anaheim as caucus chairman.

Although Maddy was not formally elected minority leader until Thursday morning, the end for Nielsen actually came Wednesday evening when the Fresno Republican made an appointment to see him. Maddy left his third-floor Capitol office and headed for the minority leader's quarters to tell Nielsen, 42, that he had no choice but to step down.

Maddy said he had mixed emotions about the news he was going to deliver. Maddy and Nielsen, both graduates of the Fresno State University School of Agriculture, have been longtime friends.

"He was very gracious," Maddy said of Nielsen's response. "He pledged his full support and indicated he would step aside. At the caucus meeting, he nominated me and moved to make it a unanimous vote."

Maddy becomes the highest-ranking senator from the valley since Democrat Hugh M. Burns of Fresno and Republican Howard Way of Exeter each served as president pro tem of the Senate almost two decades ago.

Burns held the Senate's top post for 12 years until a bipartisan coalition ousted him in 1969 and installed Way as president pro tem. Way held the post only 10 months before Republican Sen. Jack Schrade of San Diego put together the votes to get the top job.

Maddy hopes the GOP one day can become the majority party in the Senate, giving him a shot at president pro tem. Serving as Senate minority leader will give Maddy a higher

public profile and possibly aid him politically if he decides to run for statewide office in 1990.

Maddy made an unsuccessful run for governor in 1978 and is now considered one of the GOP's top possibilities for a statewide campaign.

On Wednesday, little legislative work was completed by Senate Republicans as Maddy lined up support and Nielsen attempted to block the impending coup. Maddy said that by the end of the day, he had "nine or 10 solid votes" out of the 15-member Republican caucus.

Nielsen and Seymour had been under fire because of the GOP's poor performance in a primary two months ago and in Tuesday's runoff, in which Democrat Cecil Green defeated Republican Wayne Grisham in the 33rd Senate District.

The defeat was a major blow to Republicans, who thought the seat would help them capture control of the Senate by the 1990 reapportionment. They thought winning the 33rd District seat would begin building momentum that would carry into the 1988 election year, when half the Senate terms are up.

The party that controls the Legislature will be able to draw Assembly, Senate and congressional districts to maximize the number of seats it holds in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

But with Tuesday's result, the Republicans are outnumbered 24-15, with one independent member of the Senate.

Maddy insisted that Grisham's disappointing loss was not the deciding factor in his winning the GOP leadership post.

"Tuesday was not the best day for us," Maddy said. "We're going to sit down and analyze what happened in the 33rd. We're going to look at the entire situation."

Shortly after emerging from the GOP caucus meeting, Maddy announced that the GOP would step up its efforts to win control of the Senate.

"Certainly 1990 is our goal, if not sooner," Maddy said. "I think the caucus is unified."

Maddy said Senate Republicans will work closely with the Deukmejian administration and attempt to strike a balance with Senate Democrats.

"We are still in the discussion stage of how we are going to operate," Maddy said. "But we will play a role in the major issues before us and we will keep the caucus together in terms of responsible positions."

Joining Maddy outside the caucus room was Nielsen, who said: "I have no regrets. The important thing is the integrity of the caucus."

Maddy said his leadership will be characterized by working out compromises with his colleagues, a trait for which he is well-known. On Thursday, the Fresno Republican wasted little time in offering an olive branch to Democrats during Senate floor debate on proposed limits on campaign spending.

The subject is timely considering that more than \$3 million was spent by both parties on the Green-Grisham Senate race. Nielsen, who represents nine rural Northern California counties, and Maddy have close ties to California agriculture.

Nielsen won his leadership post four years ago in a coup that removed Maddy from the party's second-ranking Senate position and Sen. William Campbell as minority leader.

One of Maddy's supporters in the leadership fight was Sen. H.L. Richardson, R-Glendora, a conservative who played a key role in toppling Maddy and Campbell in 1983.

In putting together the votes needed to take power, Maddy, a moderate Republican, made a conciliatory gesture toward the upper house's conservative wing in teaming with Doolittle as the new caucus chairman.

"It's clear that we have a wide divergence of opinion on certain issues in our caucus," Maddy said. "As long as we respect each other's opinions, we will get along."