

Raggio's retirement leaves void in Nevada Legislature

By Bill Hagar, Reno Gazette-Journal

Bill Raggio, Nevada's longest-serving state senator, said Wednesday that he is resigning because he can no longer navigate the lengthy hallways of the Nevada Legislature due to a torn Achilles tendon in his left ankle.

The departure of Raggio, an 84-year-old Reno Republican, will further diminish Northern Nevada's clout in the Legislature and could doom any chances of the expansion of the Legislature in the redistricting of Nevada's legislative districts later this year, political experts said.

Raggio, whose resignation is effective at 5 p.m. Jan. 15, had championed the idea of expanding the Legislature to keep up the representation of northern and rural Nevada in the face of the state's overwhelming population base in Clark County.

"There is absolutely no question that the single-most powerful force for Northern Nevada in the state Legislature is now gone," said Reno's Pete Ernaut, president of government affairs for R&R Partners.

"This makes things kind of interesting for the north because here's the guy who has been cutting deals for them for 30 years or so," said Dave Damore, an associate professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. "So obviously in that sense, it creates a void."

Without Raggio, expansion of the Legislature is probably a moot issue, some experts said. Raggio also tried and failed to add seats to the Assembly and state Senate 10 years ago.

Read the whole story