

Moving may be required for lawmakers to run in 2012

By Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

For some sitting legislators, preparing to run for re-election in 2012 includes packing up boxes and hunting for a new home.

California's new district lines, drawn for the first time by an independent redistricting commission, have shaken up the political landscape for next year's election. As a result, candidates and incumbents across the state are "diving and dodging" into districts that will give them the best shot at victory, said Paul Mitchell, a Democratic consultant who has tracked the redistricting process.

By Mitchell's count, the maps left at least 60 current elected officials either outside the district they were eyeing or in the same district with a competitor. "It's happening all over the place," he said.

Unlike members of Congress, state legislators are required to reside in the district they represent. That means physically relocating can be part of the equation as candidates scramble to settle on a seat before the nominating period starts next spring.

"After redistricting, Realtors will be among the most popular phone calls placed by legislators," Justin Levitt, an election law expert at Loyola Law School, said of this year's decennial map-drawing.

The Sacramento region is expected to see as many as five incumbent legislators move to run for re-election.

The new lines left Assemblywoman Beth Gaines in her current district, but put her husband, state Sen. Ted Gaines, in the

same seat as Sen. Doug LaMalfa, R-Richvale. Now the Roseville couple are considering relocating just a few miles away, to a home in a vacant Senate district, so both can run for re-election and live under the same roof.

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