Area Senate seats up for grabs in '90

By Tim Richard staff writer

For seven years, Oakland County has seen the same four men in the Michigan Senate. After next year, it might be differed to the form of th

Here's the status of senatorial pol-

17th State Senate District

Senate District

RICHARD FESSLER, R-Commerce, has served eight years in the flouse and the last seven in the Senate, but he will be challenged in the next Republican primary by Rep. David Honigman, R-West Bloomfield, who took the unusual step of announcing his candidacy two years—"I'm serious about staying in," said Fessler, 46, an attorney, He acts in He has hired Tom Greene, an agressive former TV newsman, as his chief assistant. Another key aide is Fel Brown, longtime secretary to former Oakland Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson.

An active committee chalrman in the fields of traffic safety and road construction, Fessler had a mild challenge in 1986 from businessman High Brotherton, who charged the sensor he had be practice.

Since then Fessler has been highly wisible pushing road funding bills (partial success) and public transit reorganization fisuccess).

The last four years have been personally difficult for Fessler — a messy divorce, a drunk driving arrest that became a media speciate, a fourth-place finish in a four-man contest for prosecutor to succeed Brooks Patterson. He dipped heavily not be the sensor when the prosecutor is succeed.



the prosecutor race.

Both Fessler and Honigman have dead ober from life" — against Medicald abertions and for a parental consent bill. Their position causes gossip that a third, "pro-choice" candidate — perhaps a woman — will challenge them in the hope they will split the pro-life vote.

Honigman, 34, after a brief flurry of activity, has been politically quiet. In 1988 he had no challenge in either the primary or general elections, giving him a chance to accumulate a bankroll.

Honigman has had notable success

Sen. Rudy Nichols



Sen. Doug Cruce





8th State Senate District

RUDY NICHOLS has announced for one of the two new circuit judge-ships Oakland County will have after

for one of the two new circuit judge-ships Oakhand County will have after the 1990 election.

A former city attorney, a one-year veteran of the House and a seven-year veteran of the Senate, Nichols, H-Waterford, chairs the Senate Judi-ciary Committee. He's known for ad-vancing a variety of bills, keeping the work flowing rather than bot-tling things up, and cooperating with bemoerats on matters of common concern.

"I'm thinking about it (the judge-ment of fire and the second of the Some in the State Capitol are un-happy at the prospect of losing him. After redistricting in 1982, the seat was won by Democrat Phil Mastin, who was recalled a year later in a revolt against an income tax in-crease. Nichols' victory helped give his party 20-18 control of the Senate

for the first time since the 1960s.
"My figures show a Republican should carry it \$2-48." said Nichols. Who actually won 56 percent of the vote in 1986.
Republican staff members are more nervous about his leaving than fellow senators, he said. Those staffers hold news office, legal couse and committee research job..." I'm tired of the partisanship." said Nichols, who, though politically conservative, is a low-key, scholarly. Bestites, circuit, judgeships don't open up every day. The pay is more than double a legislator's, and room of the partisanship."
Lining up to succeed him are:

• Mat Dunaskies, 38 of Lake

Mat Dunaskiss, 38, of Lake Orion, a five-term Republican repre-sentative and former county com-

sentative and forms Comp.

Claude Trim, 54, of Waterford, in his third House term as a Republican after four terms as a Democrat.

Linda Ferrens, Nichol's Democratice opponent in 1986.

Many other local Democratic officials in this northern Oakland

district, which includes the Roches-ter area

16th State Senate District

DOUG CRUCE, R-Troy, said he's planning to run for a third term in the Suns, but it's no secret the 42-year-uld real estate broker has accumulated a host of political IOUs. He managed Dick Thompson's successful run for Oskhand prosecutor. He was among the few legislators vocal on the Nov. 7 Proposals A and B (against). He is active in local acces. One of these years, Cruce may ask that the favors be returned.

Cruce chairs a special investigat-ing committee tooking at Proposal A campaign funds. Clearly he's a key friend of majority leader John En-gler, the probable gubernatorial can-didate next year.

How about No. 2 on the Engler ticket, which needs a metro area person to balance the former farmer from Isabella County?

"It depends on what others ahead of me intend to do," Cruce said of his plans.

"Others"? County executive Dan Murphy? He may bow out in 1992. Congressman Bill Broomfeld? At 67, he has shown no indication of retiring, although Cruce would rank near the top of a tong list of possible successors. Early in 1988. The rumor mill had Cruce as a U.S. Senate prospect.

pect.

Cruce has a good position in the state Senate, where he won his seat with 58 percent of the vote. He's on the Appropriations Committee, which spends the money. He has been a visible and often-quoted critic of the Commerce Department budget, which he says is used to promote Democratic Gov. James Blanchard politically.

"No one has approached me on lieutenant governor." Cruce said. "Engler is a good enough party man where he wouldn't endanger Repub-tican control of the Senate" by ask-ing Cruce to run.

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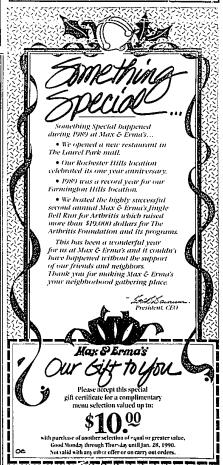
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