

# Huckabee appoints DeLay to prosecuting attorney post

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Gov. Mike Huckabee on Tuesday named former lawmaker and attorney general candidate Gunner DeLay of Fort Smith to be Sebastian County prosecuting attorney.

The appointment, part of a shuffling of judges and attorneys in the 12th Judicial Circuit, makes DeLay the first among the five Republican candidates defeated in statewide races this month to take public office since the election. "Gunner has shown a commitment to justice without regard to giving anyone preferential treatment, and will do an excellent job as prosecutor," Huckabee said through a spokesman. DeLay, a 43-year-old former state senator and representative who lost the race for attorney general to Democrat Dustin McDaniel of Jonesboro, said, "I'm very excited about it, and extremely grateful to the governor for the opportunity to serve the people." He succeeds Republican Prosecuting Attorney Steve Tabor. Tabor will assume the bench vacated by Circuit Judge Jim Marschewski, who in June was named a federal magistrate. The Arkansas Constitution mandates that the governor fill vacancies in most statewide offices. It requires that seats held by the governor's appointees be filled during the next general election if the appointee holds office more than four months. The Constitution prohibits most of those appointed officials, including prosecuting attorneys, from running to succeed themselves. DeLay said Tuesday that he'll run to replace Tabor in 2008 for the circuit judgeship. "It puts me on a career path," DeLay said of the \$106,398-a-year prosecuting attorney job. A private practice attorney since 1988, DeLay said, "I'll roll up my sleeves and get involved in some of the cases myself." DeLay was unopposed for the Republican Party's nomination in the attorney general's race, then trailed McDaniel, a state representative, for the length of the campaign. While much of DeLay's late strategy focused on denouncing illegal immigration and on painting McDaniel as a liberal on gay issues, DeLay

offered several law-and-order proposals over the summer. He suggested creating a team of state prosecutors who would fight local political corruption and called for increasing the amount of prison time convicted methamphetamine dealers must serve before they're eligible for release. He called for life sentences for rapists and people convicted of having sex with young children and for legislation that would allow authorities to prosecute people suspected of preparing online to lure a child for sex. Other unsuccessful candidates for statewide office who were reached Tuesday congratulated DeLay and said they are adjusting to life after the campaign. Asa Hutchinson, a former Bush administration appointee who was defeated in the governor's race by Democratic Attorney General Mike Beebe, said he is building his homeland security consulting business and living in Little Rock. He said his wife, Susan, had just been called for jury duty. "My home is here," Hutchinson said. "I have my business here, and we're going to continue to develop and expand that, and continue to be supportive of the political process here, and work for good government, from the sidelines, as a citizen." State Sen. Jim Holt, 41, who was defeated in the lieutenant governor race by Democrat Bill Halter of North Little Rock, said he may pursue lobbying-policy changes from outside state government. During the campaign, the Springdale Republican said he wanted to prohibit lobbyists from buying legislators, state officials and their employees even "a cup of coffee." Former secretary of state candidate Jim Lagrone of Benton, who was defeated last month by incumbent Democrat Charlie Daniels of Benton, said he's assessing his career options. He said he went deer hunting right after Election Day. "I'm having a great time, man, life is good," said Lagrone, a 49-year-old Baptist minister. During his four years each in the state House and Senate, DeLay didn't always get along with Huckabee. In 2001, for instance, when DeLay represented Fort Smith in the Senate, he pushed legislation aimed at restricting state officials' appearances in state-funded advertisements. The bill seemed to target Huckabee, who lent his image to media advertisements touting government programs, for instance a children's health insurance initiative. DeLay sponsored the bill, which passed the Senate but died in the House.

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