

## **Assemblyman, An Active-Duty Reservist, Won't Seek Re-Election**

State Assemblyman Daniel Hooker has announced he will not seek re-election this fall because of his military obligations.

Hooker, R-Saugerties, is a major in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve and has been on active duty at Camp LeJeune, N.C., since last April.

"At this point, I have no definite discharge date," Hooker said in a prepared statement. "In light of this uncertainty, I have decided not to run for re-election from the 127th (Assembly) District."

Hooker's district comprises the Ulster County town of Saugerties; parts of Greene, Columbia, Delaware, Otsego and Chenango counties; and all of Schoharie County.

"I believe this is in the best interests of the citizens of this district and will ensure they have full-time representation in Albany during the next term," Hooker, a two-term incumbent, said in his statement.

"I think his absence is perfectly justified. He's serving his country," said fellow Republican Assemblyman Joel Miller. "But representative government is only representative when you're here to represent people. If it were me, I would have quit."

Miller, R-Poughkeepsie, said Hooker attended the governor's annual budget address on Tuesday but otherwise hasn't been seen around Albany lately.

Phil Oliva, a spokesman for Assembly Minority Leader Jim Tedisco, said Hooker is "someone to be respected."

"It was a real juggling act," Oliva said of Hooker's legislative and military duties. "It must have been very difficult for him."

Hooker, 42, lived in Sharon Springs when he first was elected to the Assembly in 2002 but moved to Saugerties last year.

A leading conservative in the Assembly, Hooker often was criticized for what some, including Assemblyman Kevin Cahill, D-Kingston, considered extremist views on gay rights, prisoners' rights and school prayer.

Word of Hooker's decision to leave the Assembly led Mathew Tully, an attorney from Hunter, to announce on Wednesday that he'll seek the Republican nomination for the 127th District seat.

Tully, 32, is a major in the U.S. Army Reserve and recently returned from duty in Iraq. A first-time office seeker, he has served on the governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee.

