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Two more Democrats switch parties in Burlington County

February 17, 2011

By Shai Ben-Yaacov

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Burlington County's political landscape is shifting red. The county clerk and surrogate, both elected as Democrats, have switched to Republican. They join three other county Democrats who switched parties last year.

County Clerk Timothy Tyler and Surrogate George Kotch say their political views are aligned more with the Republican Party than the Democrats. They believe in lower taxes and smaller government.

But John Weingart says political aspirations may be more of a motivator than ideology. The associate director of the Rutgers Eagleton Institute says all of the defectors may be capitalizing on the surge of Republican power in the state, particularly Governor Chris Christie.

"Some of these people may, for one thing, agree with what he's doing and, for another, see that that may lead to some kind of Republican wave in the legislative elections this coming fall," he says.

County Freeholder Chris Brown, who switched parties last year, is up for re-election this year. It's rumored he may run for a seat in the state Assembly.

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