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# State Rep. Christopher Donelan to challenge Frederick Macdonald for Franklin County sheriff

By **Dwight B. Shepard**

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Christopher J. Donelan

By **DAN RING**  
[dring@repub.com](mailto:dring@repub.com)

BOSTON - State Rep. Christopher J. Donelan said Thursday he will run for Franklin County sheriff next year, giving up a virtual sure seat on Beacon Hill.

Donelan said he plans to challenge Franklin County Sheriff Frederick B. Macdonald in next year's Democratic primary in September. The sheriff's post is a six-year term and carries a salary of about \$124,000.

"It's an exciting new opportunity," Donelan, 44, said in an interview at the Statehouse. "My career is public safety."



Frederick B. Macdonald

Donelan, who is in his fourth term as a legislator, is a former patrolman in Orange and South Hadley and a former probation officer. He was re-elected last year with 79 percent of the vote.

Macdonald, 71, first elected sheriff in 1992, said he has been aware of Donelan's challenge. Macdonald said Donelan would likely pose his most serious competition.

"Quite naturally, I wish he would stay in Boston," the sheriff said. "Everyone is free to do what they want."

The sheriff oversees the 300-inmate Franklin County Jail and House of Correction in Greenfield and other programs such as the Community Corrections Center in Greenfield, an alternative for mostly non-violent offenders.

Macdonald said he has done a good job at sheriff and is not ready to retire.

His wife is a juvenile probation officer.

"I don't think I want to stay home and talk to the dogs," Macdonald said. "I enjoy what I am doing."

Donelan's decision is expected to spark a race for his House seat. The district includes Greenfield, Orange, Erving, Gill, Warwick and Athol.

Donelan declined to criticize Macdonald. He said he would seek opportunities for saving money in public safety such as regionalization of E-911 call centers.