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White appointee joins Texas Republican Party

The Associated Press

AUSTIN — State Board of Insurance member Carole Rylander, an appointee of Democratic Gov. Mark White, jumped to the GOP Saturday.

The former Austin mayor is considering a 1986 challenge of U.S. Rep. J.J. (Jake) Pickle, a Democrat who has represented the Central Texas district since 1963.

But Mrs. Rylander told the State Republican Executive Committee that she was not ready to talk about that race.

"I am not making any political announcement beyond what I just said — that I consider myself to be a Republican and feel philosophi-

cally and personally comfortable within the GOP," said Mrs. Rylander, the former Carole McClellan.

Republican leaders consider Mrs. Rylander's switch a double victory — an embarrassment to White and a big gain in traditionally Democratic Central Texas. Texas GOP Chairman George Strake said the Saturday switch marked the 50th time since 1981 that a Texas Democratic officeholder or former officeholder had switched to the Republicans.

The White administration had no immediate reaction to the move, which had been rumored for several weeks.