

McClure in tight race for leadership

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WASHINGTON— U.S. Sen. James A. McClure, R-Idaho, said Wednesday he is in a tight race for Republican Conference chairmanship and the issue won't be decided until the party vote Monday.

McClure, who styles himself as moderate and his opponent, Sen. Robert Packwood of Oregon, a liberal, are vying for the position which compares with the caucus chairmanship in the state Legislature.

McClure said there are still a number of senators who have not returned and a number who refuse to commit themselves.

McClure said he believes he has 17 certain votes, or four short of the 21 necessary for election. There are 41 Republican senators.

"We are working on this, but



U.S. Sen. James A. McClure

it looks like a close vote," McClure conceded.

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If he were to win, he would rank just below Senate Minority Leader Sen. Howard Baker, R-Tenn., who is unopposed for reelection, and the assistant majority leader or whip, Sen. Ted Stevens, of Alaska, who may be opposed by Sen. Jack Schmidt, of New Mexico.

Other Republican Senate contests are for conference secretary between Utah Sen. Jake Garn, Rhode Island Sen. John

Chaffee and Delaware Sen. Bill Ross; for Republican Policy Committee chairman between Sens. John Tower, of Texas and John Danforth, of Missouri, and for Republican Campaign Committee chairman between Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch and Pennsylvania Sen. John Heinz.

McClure said that Tower will win easily and Stevens will be re-elected whether Schmidt runs or not.