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### 'House of Cards' to take over State House

Erin Cox

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Crews from the political thriller "House of Cards" began transforming the Maryland House of Delegates chamber Thursday to resemble the U.S. Senate. The television series will take over the State House next week.

The more than 230-year-old building will be closed to the public Monday and Tuesday during filming for the second season of the Netflix drama, which stars Kevin Spacey as a fictitious and scheming Majority Whip Francis Underwood.

"House of Cards" began filming in Maryland in May and held a casting call in Annapolis several weeks ago.

Thursday, portraits of the former Speakers of the House were taken from the walls of House chamber and sent to archives, while new curtains and faux marble columns were added to the dais. Blank facades were placed over the voting boards that display the names of Maryland delegates.

"What have you guys done to my dias," House Speaker Michael E. Busch told the crew as he inspected their stagecraft work Thursday. "It looks much better."

Since the State House can not be rented, the "House of Cards" producers have given donations to various Maryland groups, said Sam Cook, director of Annapolis facilities for the Department of General Services. Cook said he did not know which organizations received the grants.

Set construction will continue through the weekend. State House workers, including Governor Martin O'Malley, the lieutenant governor and their staffs will be allowed in the building during filming next week. According to the governor's staff, there's no cameo roles expected for O'Malley.

This spring, lawmakers voted to more than triple film tax credits for the state, increasing the annual allotment from \$7.5 million to \$25 million. The Maryland Film Office estimates "House of Cards" brought a \$140 million economic impact to Maryland last year.

Among the hopefuls at the casting call held a few weeks ago was Anne Arundel County Councilman Chris Trumbauer, who said Thursday he hasn't been offered a part but he has one in mind.

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"I don't think I look enough like a real politician," said Trumbauer, who earns his living as a Riverkeeper and is still holding out hope. "I'm thinking maybe an environmental protester trying to antagonize Frank Underwood?"

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