

Agnew Voting Right Queried

By Edward Walsh

Washington Post Staff Writer

ANNAPOLIS, Jan. 30—The administrator of Maryland's Board of Election laws has asked the state attorney general's office to rule on whether Spiro T. Agnew should lose his right to vote in the state he once headed as governor.

Willard A. Morris, the administrator, told the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee today that the question of Agnew's voting rights arose because of a state law that strips the right to vote from anyone who is convicted of "larceny or other infamous crime."

Morris said the former vice president is still a registered voter in Baltimore County, where he began his spectacular political career.

Agnew resigned as vice president Oct. 10, the same day he pleaded "no contest" to a federal charge of income tax evasion. The judge in the case, Walter E. Hoffman, said Agnew's no contest plea was "the full equivalent of a plea of



SPIRO T. AGNEW

... ruling is requested

guilty, and under the law Agnew is a convicted felon.

Deputy Attorney General Henry R. Lord said later today that the term "infamous crime" is not defined in Maryland law, but that the state Court of Appeals has ruled that one test in determining what is an infamous crime is whether it involves moral turpitude.

Because the term is not defined, Lord said that the Board of Election Laws, after consulting with the attorney general's office, periodically circulates a list of "infamous crimes" to guide local election officials in determining which convicted felons should be removed from voting lists.

The current list, which is not binding on the local officials, consist of 38 crimes, but does not include income tax evasion, the crime of which Agnew is convicted. The current list of "infamous crimes" ranges from murder, rape and treason to shoplifting and injuring a race horse. Some states have similar provisions.

Under the existing Maryland law, convicted felons who lose their right to vote may not regain it unless pardoned by the governor or other appropriate official, even if they have completed a prison term.

Morris testified before the committee on a bill sponsored by Sen. Clarence W. Blunt (D-Baltimore) that would restore voting rights to convicted felons after they had completed their sentences.