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Critic vows continued recall effort

By PAT MURPHY
STAFF WRITER

Efforts to oust Oakland County prosecutor Richard Thompson are down, but not out, according to the West Bloomfield resident who initiated a recall last month.

"We're going to rework the wording. Then we'll resubmit the recall, but I can't say when," said Susan Levine, who claims the prosecutor should be ousted from office because he continued to press charges against Dr. Jack Kevorkian under a state law that is being appealed.

Levine made her pledge Friday shortly after three members of the Oakland County Election Commission unanimously voted to dismiss Levine's recall petition.

"It was a simple decision," said Probate Court Judge Sandra Silver, chairwoman of the commission. "The wording on the proposed recall petition was simply too vague."

In her petition submitted Dec. 21, Levine contended that Thompson "engaged in a witch hunt against Dr. (Jack) Kevorkian" by continuing to press charges under Michigan's law against assisted suicide when the ban had been ruled unconstitutional by two circuit court judges.

Thursday heard oral arguments in the case calling into question the constitutionality of the law, passed last year, making it a felony to assist in a suicide.

Levine and other backers of Kevorkian — who insist assisted suicide should be a matter of choice — contend the law is vague, restrictive and unconstitutional.

While the law is being challenged, they contend Thompson is being vindictive and punitive — as well as wasting tax dollars — by continuing to press charges against Kevorkian, who has been present at 20 assisted suicides.

'We're going to rework the wording. Then we'll resubmit the recall, but I can't say when.'

Susan Levine
West Bloomfield

The attorney who represented the prosecutor before the election commission, however, said the recall effort is misguided and doomed to failure.

"Mr. Thompson believes in the right of the people to recall a public official," said Gerald Polson, the prosecutor's former chief deputy who is now the county's corporation counsel. But in this case — the continued prosecution of Kevorkian — the law is clear and the prosecutor is fulfilling his legal obligation, he said.

Three days before the election commission threw out the recall petition, the prosecutor seemed to defy his critics by filing yet another charge against Kevorkian, again claiming he violated the state's ban on assisted suicide.

At a press conference Tuesday, Thompson announced he was filing a fourth felony count against Kevorkian, this one for his role in the Nov. 22 death of Ali Khalili, 61, an Oak Brook, Ill., physician who inhaled carbon monoxide gas in Kevorkian's Royal Oak apartment.

At that news conference, Thompson reiterated his vow to prosecute anyone who violates existing state law.

"I make no apologies," Thompson said. "Open defiance and disregard of the law can not be condoned and must be resisted."

Kevorkian's attorney, Geoffrey Fieger, called the prosecutor's filing charges an "unbelievably stupid thing."

YRs to welcome
Ronna Romney

Republican senatorial candidate Ronna Romney will be guest speaker at tonight's meeting of the Oakland County Young Republicans.

The meeting is at 7 p.m. at Oakland County Republican headquarters on Adams Road, three blocks south of Maple in the Adams Square shopping center, Birmingham.

Friend of Court hearing in Livonia

Area residents who have had dealings with the Friend of the Court are invited to give their opinions on the kind of service they got.

A state Senate subcommittee on this subject has scheduled several public hearings to record these opinions. The subcommittee is chaired by state Sen. Robert Geake, R-Northville, who also represents Livonia, Redford Township, Plymouth, Plymouth Township and Canton Township.

The first public hearing will be

1-6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 15, at the Livonia Civic Center Library, 32555 Five Mile at Farmington Road.

The second hearing will be 1-6 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 22, at the Oakland County Commissioners Auditorium, 1200 N. Telegraph Road in Pontiac.

Six subsequent hearings will be held out-state.

Each circuit court in Michigan has at least one Friend of the Court. The duties of the Friend of the Court are as follows:

- Investigate, report and make recommendations to the court on matters concerning custody, visitation and amounts of child support.
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