

O'Hair praises staff, defends office record

Incumbent Wayne County Prosecutor John O'Hair was the lone candidate to attend a political forum Monday night.

O'Hair, 65, admitted he is in a "crucial race" this year, and that he is taking the challenge seriously. "It, indeed, would be tragic," he said, "if this administration would be voted out of office due to what he called 'falsehoods and fabrications' brought by his critics."

O'Hair faces Democratic challenger and state Sen. Virgil Smith, 40, who was expected to attend Monday's candidate forum at Plymouth City Hall, sponsored by the Plymouth-Canton Journal.

O'Hair's office has a record of 13 years in office, and he has defended himself against charges of law conviction rates from his office, field questions from the audience and share his philosophy about the office he has held for the past 13 years.

O'Hair said he had several political commitments on that same evening. The winner in the Democratic primary race next Tuesday will face off in November against the winner in the Republican primary, in which 30-year-old Thomas Ruffalo faces off against Donald Ruffalo Jr.

O'Hair was unable to attend Monday's forum due to a prior commitment, said Ruffalo, although later on the ballot, he reportedly not running an active campaign.

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He filed questions from the audience, including some in the following areas:

- On the drug "life" law, which mandates a life sentence for possession of more than 50 grams of cocaine: O'Hair said that the law is fine for drug lords, but that "it's most appropriate for the political leadership to get together and review the wisdom of such a law."
- On using a "super majority" jury system in criminal cases: "I'm not sure that we should change to a system other than unanimity. We're talking about unanimity. We're talking about unanimity. We're talking about unanimity."

Progress made

Commenting on how he has improved the prosecutor's office, O'Hair said he is proud of how his office handled the first Everdine trial, and other high-profile cases in the county.

"We did not have the hospital, and the circus-like atmosphere," he said.

Iverson family increases reward in effort to help solve doctor's murder

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