Grand jury good — 'with limits'

Prosecutor candidates advocate use

Both candidates for Oak-land County prosecutor regard the citizens grand jury as a viable weapon in the continuing war on crime.

But the candidates — Republi-can David Gorcyca and Demo-crat Steve Kaplan — both insist the grand jury should be used in limited circumstances.

"I would use the grand jury in some drug cases and for unsolved homicides," said Gorcy-co, who was an Oakland County assistant prosecutor for two years. "And I'd use it in cases with extenuating circum-stances."

Kaplan, who has been a Macomb County assistant prose-cutor for about 10 years, said he would reserve grand juries for high-level drug cases, unsolved

homicides and serial crimes.

"I would not use the grand jury system as a substitute for good police work," he said.

The prosecutor Goreyca or Kaplan will replace, Richard Thompson, revived the citizens grand jury in Oakland County in 1990, after an absence of olmost two decades, to review drug cases and homicides.

The prosecutor insisted the grand jury was needed because of its power to compel witnesses to testify or face the possibility of going to jail for contempt of court.

Over the next five years, dozens of people were indicted by the grand jury on felony charges, and many were convicted.

"The grand jury can be very helpful in criminal prosecution," said Kaplan. "But it can be expensive, and it can be abused."

Convening a grand jury requires approval from a majority of the Oakland Circuit Court judges and financing from the county bonrd of commissioners. The grand jury proceedings are secret, with jurors usually seated for a designated period of time—usually six months—although that can be extended.

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Oakland currently has a sitting grand jury, convened in June with an allocation of \$50,000 from the board of commissioners. At the time, some jurors were concerned the grand ury would be used to again Indiet Dr. Jack Kevorkian.

"Some commissioners thought using the grand jury to indict Kevorkian would have been abu-sive," said Gorcyca. "That review (by commissioners) is part of the checks and balance system."

While six months is the usual length of time the Oakland





grand jury convened, Kaplan and Gorcyca each said a shorter period of time might be useful.

"I would use the grand jury sparingly and whenever it was needed," sald Kaplan, 43, a resi-dent of West Bloomfield.

Goreyen said he would use the grand jury for specific cases, "ones involving reluctant wit-nesses or difficult testimony."

Goreyca, 34, is a resident of Royal Oak who practices law from his office in Bingham Farms.

Nichols' health questioned

Sheriff John F. Nichols has not appeared at three consecu-tive candidate forums, as scheduled, again giving rise to questions about his health and

scheduled, again giving rise to questions about his health and vitality.

Nichols on Sunday appeared at a fashion show sponsored by the Republican Women of Western Oakland County at the Novi Hillon.

But the sheriff did not appear at a Saturday Veterans of Foreign Wars' candidate ses-

sion in Ortonville, and he sent a surrogate to a forum aponsored by the Multi-Lakes Conservation Association inst Wednesday.
Nichols also rescheduled an Interview with The Spinal Column, a weekly newspaper in western Oakland County, after not being available as scheduled.
Nichols turns 78 in November and frequently carries an oxygen tank in his car because of respiratory problems.



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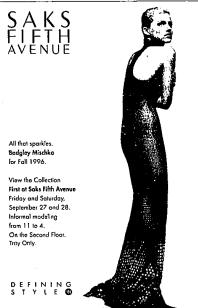
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