Death penalty backers will fight ruling

By Pat Murphy staff writer

A county-based group that backs the death penalty says it stands ready to assist an appear to the state Supreme Court challenging the constitutionality of a 180-day limit on gathering petition signatures to put the issue before state voters.

Oakland Prosecutor L. Brooks Patterson said Citizens for Capital Punishment, a group he orga-

nized to advocate the death penalty, is ready to help test the constitutionality of the 180-day limit which was relastated recently in a decision handed down by the Michigan Court of Appeals.

Grosse Pointe Republican John Lauve has indicated he would appeal the decision which overruled Oakland Circuit Judge Alice Glibert.

"We (Citizens for Capital Pun-ishment) aren't the major party in this dispute," Patterson said.

'We are ready to help John Lauve when he files his challenge.'

-Brooks Patterson.

"But we are ready to help John (Lauve) when he files his challenge."

Lauve has been involved in a number of disputes, including an unsuccessful attempt to recall

Gov. James Blanchard.
He was unavailable for comment about his possible challenge. But Patterson said Lauve told him that he would likely challenge the appeals court decision in the Supreme Court.

CITIZENS FOR Capital Pun-ialment were affected by the 180-day limitation in 1985, when its members gathered some 350,000 signatures, about 50,000 more than the minimum required, to

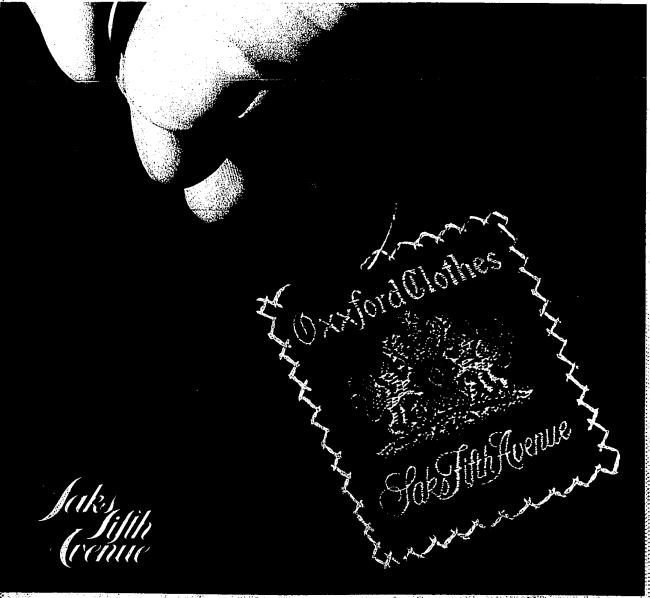
put the death penalty on the 1986 ballot. The issue was kept off the bal-lot after officials ruled that the signatures had not been gathered within a limit of 180 days. The 180-day limit, passed into law in 1972, has been the object of several legal interpretations over

law in 1972, has been the object of several legal interpretations over the years, including an opinion by Attorney General Frank J. Kelley who struck it down. Kelley said the 180-day limitation was an un-reasonable infringement on the

petition rights of citizens who should have four years in which to gather signature. The life of the l

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