

# 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 appeal 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 reinstated 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 Gilbert.

"We (Citizens for Capital Punishment) 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 Punishment** were affected by the 180-day limitation in 1986, 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 ballot after officials ruled that the signatures had not been gathered within a limit of 180 days.

The 180-day limit, passed into law in 1973, 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 unreasonable infringement on the

petition rights of citizens who should have four years in which to gather signatures.

The 180-day limitation was reinstated during a utility rate dispute in the mid-1980s, but subsequently ruled unconstitutional in 1987 by Judge Gilbert.

It was Gilbert's decision that was reversed by the Court of Appeals ruling last month. Gilbert said she would not comment on the reversal until she reviewed the appeals court ruling.

## A tradition of excellence.

Oxford Clothes. The utmost in polished elegance. Tailored to exacting standards, and finished with unmistakable refinement. In made-to-measure and ready-to-wear selections. Classic distinction, suiting today's modern man.



Join us in Troy to view Oxford Clothes' complete fall 1988 collection and preview the spring 1989 designs, this Thursday, September 15, from 10 to 9. Oxford Clothes representative Rick Barkowitz will be on hand to assist you with your selections. For a personal appointment, call 643-9000, ext. 374. Men's Collections.

Somerset Mall, Big Beaver at Coolidge, Troy. Open weekdays, 10 am to 9 pm; Saturday 'til 6 pm; Sunday, 12 to 5:30