

Murphy, Wolfram split on 'privatization'

By Tim Richard
staff writer

P RIVATIZATION. It's a key card in Republican Dan Murphy's deck as he seeks a new term as Oakland County executive.

But Democratic challenger Bill Wolfram opposes Murphy's increasing pressure to use private contractors to replace governmental employees.

"I'm an attorney, and I've represented organized labor," Wolfram said during a fund-raiser in the Northville home of retired UAW president Douglas Fraser.

"I still negotiate labor contracts and handle grievances," said Wolfram, a Franklin lawyer making his first bid for office.

"THE ABSENCE of public works inspectors in Detroit at a few contracting jobs has been felt."

"The Joe Louis (Arena) steps were done without construction inspectors, and you know what they're like," Wolfram said.

"Privatization, they say, is faster, better, cheaper." The idea sounds good to businessmen. A perfect example is a jail.

Wolfram cites the cost of hiring jail guards compared to hiring private contractors to run jails. He says the \$50 an hour vs. \$18 an hour com-

parison is invalid.

"The minimum security prisoners (guarded by private companies at \$18 an hour) are not the ones that cost money," Wolfram said. He said that those awaiting trial for murder and convicts awaiting transportation to state prison are costlier to guard.

"The savings is not there. The most efficient way is to use public employees."

"The response to my candidacy among rank and file (employees) has been very gratifying," Wolfram said.

PRIVATIZATION WAS Murphy's chief issue in his run for the Republican nomination for governor in 1986. It's his theme now, and Oakland County can expect more if he wins a fourth term.

"Look at the transportation bill that passed the Senate," he begins.

The bill calls for replacing the Southeastern Michigan Transportation with its 15-member board with a Regional Transportation Commission run by the Big Four — the mayor of Detroit, two county executives and the Macomb County board chairman.

"That's when things will happen," Murphy said.

Union employees are guaranteed control over existing transit lines, but private contractors will be able to bid on new east-west suburban lines if Murphy is part of the Big



DANIEL T. MURPHY, 64, Republican of Sylvan Lake, Oakland County executive since 1974, re-elected three times, Wayne State University, 1946-50. Appointed registrar of deeds, 1958, elected in 1958; appointed chairman of the Board of Auditors, 1963.



WILLIAM G. WOLFRAM, 43, Democrat of Birmingham, lawyer with practice in Franklin, with emphasis on appellate litigation, Michigan State University, 1967; University of Michigan Law School, 1970. Assistant prosecuting attorney, 1971.

Four in 1989. "They can try to unionize those new guys if they want," he said.

"IF WE CAN show we can serve more people with the same amount of money, who's gonna argue with that?" Murphy asked.

"We're looking at other areas," he said, pointing to private operation of Camp Oakland and promising new initiatives at the county level.

Murphy points to studies in other states where private contractors have saved taxpayers 30 percent in some functions. The beauty of it, he says, is that if a private contractor performs badly, it can be replaced at the next round of bidding.

WOLFRAM WOULD end the separate existence of a security force, controlled by the executive, that patrols county buildings and parks.

The Democratic candidate would transfer supervision of that unit to the Sheriff's Department, saying Republicans originally set it up to keep the jobs away from the deputies' union.

Murphy and Republicans have resisted Democratic efforts to shift the security force to the sheriff's jurisdiction. Usually there is no debate. The GOP majority on the county Board of Commissioners simply votes down the Democratic budget amendment every time the minority party brings it up.

Oakland County executive

Oakland was the first county in Michigan to adopt a county executive form of government.

Under it, the executive prepares the annual budget for approval by the Board of Commissioners, appoints and supervises heads of county departments and has veto power over actions by the Board of Commissioners.

Term of office is four years. Current salary is \$39,223.

Familiar names lead court race

It helps to have a familiar name if you're running for judge. And it doesn't hurt if the name is Irish.

Those messages emerged from a statewide poll and a newsletter editor who studied the state Court of Appeals race.

Four candidates with prominent political names may already have locked up election to new seats on the appeals court, according to a poll commissioned by Inside Michigan Politics (IMP), the newsletter, and the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce.

THE RESULTS:

• Mark Cavanagh, a 34-year-old Rochester Hills attorney, is leading a field of more experienced judges and lawyers in the 2nd District appeals court race. The district includes Oakland County. He is the son of the late Detroit mayor and nephew of a former appeals court judge who moved on to the state Supreme Court.

• Maureen Reilly and Thomas J. Brennan, both Wayne County circuit judges, are leading in the race for 1st District appeals court. The district includes Wayne County.

• Richard A. Griffin, son of Supreme Court Justice Robert Griffin, is running ahead of the competition in the 3rd District appeals court race. The district covers the northern and western parts of the state.

IGNORANCE AND indecision about the candidates and their qualifications are widespread among those polled, according to IMP editor William S. Ballenger.

Reilly, 58, and Brennan, 66, who finished first and second in the Aug. 2 primary in the 1st District, a six-county enclave that includes Detroit, are running ahead of two other Wayne County judges.

The poll was drawn from 800 households statewide and stratified by city and community, based on 1984 presidential general election turnout. Statistical margin of error can be reliably set at 6 percent within a 95-percent degree of confidence.

and all of the Upper Peninsula.

But ignorance of the candidates for the \$96,000-per-year jobs was reflected by the high incidence of voters who said they didn't know whom to vote for, ranging from 43 percent in the 2nd District to as high as 76 percent in the 3rd.

Some 15 percent of the voters in the 1st District listed Reilly as their first choice, and another 15 percent indicated they would choose her for the second slot. Brennan was first choice of 15 percent of the voters, and second choice of 8 percent. Close behind was another Wayne circuit judge, Richard P. Hathaway.

IN THE 2ND District, Cavanagh was first choice of 23 percent of the voters, second choice of 11 percent. Cavanagh finished first by a narrow margin among 15 candidates in the Aug. 2 primary.

Other nominees are Circuit Judges Richard Kuhn of Oakland County and Kathleen Janssen of Macomb County and attorney Marilyn Kelly, a former member of the state Board of Education.

Griffin was a runaway leader in the sprawling 3rd District with 23 percent of those polled listing him as their first choice compared with only 8 percent for runner-up Judy Hughes, Barry County prosecuting attorney.

THE POLL, commissioned by IMP, a Lansing-based political newsletter edited by Ballenger, a former state senator, and the Institute of Studies of the Michigan State Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

It was conducted Sept. 20-25 by Marketing Resource Group, Inc.

The poll was drawn from 800 households statewide and stratified by city and community, based on 1984 presidential general election turnout. Statistical margin of error can be reliably set at 6 percent within a 95-percent degree of confidence.

Brickley, Levin win high ratings

The Detroit Bar Association rated two incumbent state Supreme Court justices "outstanding."

Lesser ratings were given to two other high court candidates, and the final two names on the ballot received "no rating."

Called outstanding by the bar's public advisory committee were Justices James H. Brickley, a Republican nominee, and Charles Levin, an independent endorsed by the Democratic Party.

Candidate Marvin F. Stempien, a Wayne Circuit judge from Livonia, was rated well qualified. Stempien is the Democratic Party nominee.

Richard C. Johnston, a former Macomb probate judge and the second GOP nominee, was called qualified.

Jerry J. Kaufman, a Huntington Woods attorney and Tish Independent Party candidate, received no rating, as did Donald Warmbler.

Outstanding is the highest rating a candidate can receive, followed by well qualified, qualified, not qualified and no rating.

The committee said its ratings were based on information acquired from a questionnaire submitted by each candidate, interviews and the candidate's professional reputation as an attorney or a judge.

"These ratings reflect only the candidate's qualifications for the position of justice of the State Supreme Court," said John J. Ronayne III, co-chair of the committee. The Detroit Bar Association has some 3,800 members.

Lotus class open at OU

Lotus 1-2-3 skills for beginners will be offered by Oakland University's Division of Continuing Education beginning Oct. 22.

The course covers Lotus computer software coming out in 1989. Spreadsheets and financial functions, printing and saving data, database,

graphics and special functions will be covered in the four-session class.

It will be conducted four Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on campus near Rochester.

Registration information is available from OU at 370-3130.

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