

Dems ask attorney general to probe prosecutor's office

By RALPH R. ECHTINAW
STAFF WRITER

Rebuffed by Oakland County Republicans, the Oakland County Democratic Party has petitioned State Attorney General Frank Kelley to launch an investigation of the county prosecutor's office under prosecutor Richard Thompson.

Attorney general spokesman Chris DeWitt said he doesn't know if Kelley will investigate, and he doesn't know when a decision will be made. "We'll have to look at the concerns that are raised," he said.

Thompson has been criticized of late by two former assistant prosecutors, James Marcinkowski and Michael Modelski, for allegedly conducting overzealous criminal investigations and deceiving evidence in regard to the now-defunct Centerfold prostitution business. Thompson says he has done nothing wrong. No one has produced any evidence of wrongdoing.

The Democrats say the Republicans oppose an investigation because Thompson is Republican.

COUNTY

The Republicans say they oppose an investigation because there is no evidence. "As far as I'm concerned, it has nothing to do with politics," said Larry Crake, chairman of the county board of commissioners.

But Oakland County Democratic Party chairman Don Tucker said: "The refusal of Larry Crake to open an investigation is a purely political move. Thompson has intimidated the county commission, and therefore deflected any chance of a legitimate inquiry from inside the county."

In a July 14 letter to Tucker, Crake said he "will not call for an investigation into the baseless allegations of improper conduct leveled against (Thompson). Despite emotional statements by two disgruntled former employees with questionable motives, there has been no evidence of any corruption or improper activity."

Oakland County Democratic Party executive director Darlene Berent said the motives of the Democrats are not political at all.

"(Republicans) are the ones that are making it a political event," she said. "I like to believe we would have done the same thing if we had a Democratic prosecutor."

Larry Pernick, a Democratic county commissioner from Southfield, said the Republicans are blindly trying to protect one of their own. "The reality in Oakland County is that, if you have an R after your name, you can do no wrong," he said.

Pernick was particularly critical of Thompson's policy against making plea-bargain deals with defendants, which tends to crowd court dockets with relatively minor cases. "The criminal justice system in Oakland County is breaking down without any question," he said. "We're wasting the time of a very expensive court system. We can't afford anymore to be spending thousands of dollars on a \$10 shoplifting case."

Marilyn Gosling, a Republican county commissioner from Bloomfield Hills, said she sees no "clear-cut reason for a charge" against Thompson, and the Democrats "are working on hearsay."

Oakland's young Dems gather

The Oakland County Young Democratic Party will hold its general membership meeting at 7 p.m. Aug. 5 at the Bloomfield Township Library.

Prospective members must be

no older than 35.

The organization's goal is to encourage political interest among relatively young people and provide a county-wide environment for political action within the

Democratic party.

The Bloomfield Township Library is on the south side of Lone Pine just east of Telegraph.

For more information, call Melanie Brown at 357-0309.

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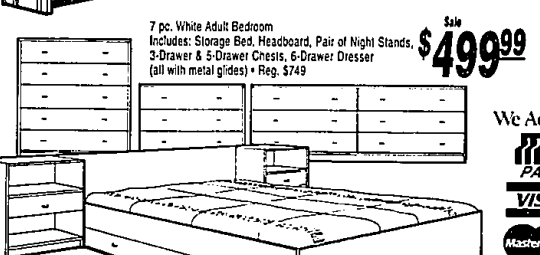
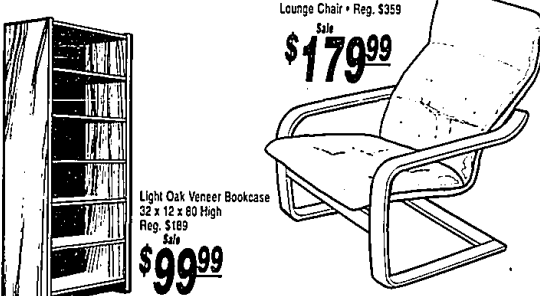
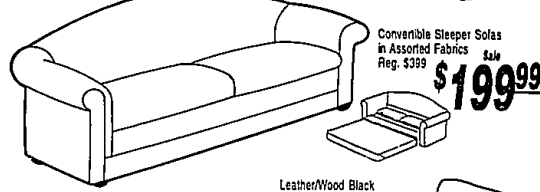
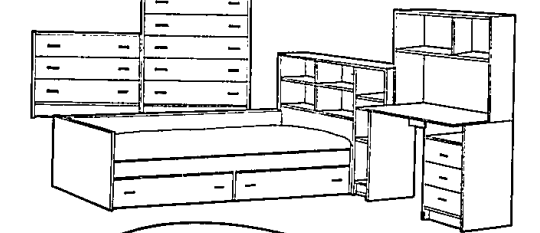
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