

Campaign Finance Repeal Remains

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A vote to reinstate the county's \$100 campaign finance law could not be mustered this morning, after supervisors were told that reinstatement would kill a petitioning effort to get the issue on the ballot.

The board has until April 12 to repeal its earlier repeal of the ordinance before it is no longer in effect.

The initial repeal came March 8 and it was only after the board's action that it was disclosed that repeal of a county ordinance means that violations discovered later are no longer punishable.

It also was feared the repeal would hamper an ongoing grand jury investigation of the June 1978 primary. On that basis, Supervisors Dan Forbus and Pat Liberty said they would change their vote this morning.

However, after the board was told there were more than 7,000 signatures to put the issue on the ballot, and that a reinstatement of the ordinance would prevent the petition from forcing the board to put the issue on the ballot, Supervisor Gary Patton refused to reinstate the ordinance this morning.

Supervisor Chris Matthews thought he had found the solution and moved that the board reinstate the ordinance and also set it for the ballot, a motion that Patton supported.

However, Forbus and Liberty said the existing ordinance discriminates against county officials because state and city officials are not held to contributions of \$100 each from supporters.

Liberty said the ballot issue on a campaign ordinance should include a restriction of volunteer time, if it restricts contributions of money.

Forbus indicated the ordinance may return to the board in the future for repeal, but clarified his support in reinstating the ordinance now was not just to set it up for repeal at a later date.

Robley Levy, speaking for the Committee for Clean Elections which has gathered the 7,000 signatures in two weeks (6,650 valid signatures of registered voters are needed to get it on the ballot), encouraged the board to put it on the ballot.

Patton also moved the ordinance be put on the next election's ballot, but his motion failed 2-2, with Supervisor Marilyn Liddicoat absent.

Forbus said he would support reinstating the ordinance now, and then at later meetings discuss it as a ballot issue.

However, Patton appeared unwilling to accept the pledge and moved to have the issue come back to the board at its April 10 meeting.

The two weeks' delay could give the petition gatherers enough time to come up with sufficient signatures to force an election.

Patton's two week delay was turned down by Forbus and Liberty.

Forbus said the board would discuss the ordinance next week, still in time to have it reinstated on an emergency basis before the effective date of the repeal.

However, should Liddicoat join Forbus and Liberty in repealing the repeal, it will end the chance for the campaign ordinance to go before the electorate through the petitioning effort.

Repeal