

Beat: Politics

Close to a verdict in the Leopold Trial

Leopold: Criminal or Colorful Politician?

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USPA NEWS - A verdict is expected this afternoon at the misconduct trial of Anne Arundel County Executive John R. Leopold.

Leopold is charged with 4 counts of misconduct in office and 1 count of misappropriation by fiduciary.

Retired Howard County Circuit Court Judge Dennis M. Sweeney, who is presiding over the case, expects to deliver his verdict by days end.

In a 90-minute closing argument, State Prosecutor Emmitt Davitt told Judge Sweeney that Leopold's requests to have his executive protection officers change and empty his urine bag after surgery, drive him to sexual encounters, and using them to collect campaign checks, manage the cash box at political fundraisers, as well as having them place, maintain, and remove his campaign signs, is illegal, and a blatant abuse of power.

Davitt argued that this abuse was beyond anything that might be found or detailed in Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or any conduct manual for Executive Protection Officers.

During closing arguments, Judge Sweeney often interrupted Davitt with questions, noting that the law regarding misconduct in office, a common law offense, might be vague. Davitt stated in response, "that will be a matter for this Court to determine."

In a close to two hour long closing argument, defense attorney Bruce Marcus pointed out that none of Leopold's assigned Executive Protection Officers asked for a transfer, none of them quit, and none of them left.

He further argued that Leopold's behavior amounted to "boorish" behavior, but not "illegal" behavior. Marcus proceeded to argue that the judgement for "boorish behavior" by an elected official, is made by voters at the ballot box, and not by prosecutors in the courtroom.

In rebuttal, Deputy State Prosecutor Thomas McDonough argued that Leopold "abused" the most vulnerable members of his staff by performing various "humiliating tasks."

McDonough also pointed out that Judge Sweeney had portions of Leopold's medical records which showed that he did not need help emptying his urine bag after April, 2010, but he continued to have one of his assistants perform the task well beyond that time. This is abuse your honor, clear and simple, and it is illegal, McDonough said.

If convicted on all counts, Leopold could face up to five years in prison.

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<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-467/close-to-a-verdict-in-the-leopold-trial.html>

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