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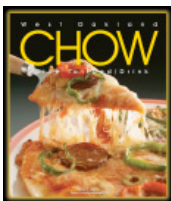
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Tue, May 20, 2008 11:34 AM

2008-04-16 ▶ state and county ▶ E. Kowall will be challenged in GOP primary

Andrew Sawmiller

April 16, 2008 - Highland Township resident Pat Sullivan has filed paperwork with the state to challenge Oakland County Commissioner Eileen Kowall for the Republican nomination in the 44th House District race.

The seat is currently held by state Rep. John Stakoe (R-Highland, White Lake), now serving his third and final two-year House term. The 44th House District also includes Springfield and Independence townships outside the lakes area.

Calls to Sullivan seeking comment weren't returned prior to press time.

Michigan Secretary of State Office Spokesman Ken Silfven said the filing deadline for state House candidates is 4 p.m. on May 13.

Kowall, who announced her intention to campaign for the seat last summer, said she was somewhat surprised about Sullivan's filing, but said she remains focused on her own campaign while balancing her duties at the county government level, where she represents White Lake Township and a portion of Waterford Township.

"I don't know who he is; I'm quite involved with the Republican Party, and I don't know who he is or anything about him," she said. "I'm busy running my campaign right now. I'm out there, and it's a free country and anyone can jump in there and run, but I'm busy doing my thing."

Kowall, chairwoman of the county commission's GOP caucus, also serves as vice chair of the commission's Finance Committee and as a member of the General Government Committee and Jail Overcrowding Task Force.

She obtained her associate's degree in dental hygiene from the University of Detroit, and practiced dental hygiene from 1974 until 1989. She is part-owner, designer, and a sales representative for Accurate Woodworking of Waterford Township.

Kowall is the wife of former state representative and current White Lake Township Supervisor Mike Kowall.

The 44th House District "very solidly" leans to the GOP, according to Oakland County Republican Party Chairman Dennis Cowan.

The 2008 general election will be held on Nov. 4. The primary election is scheduled for Aug. 5.

State representatives serve up to three two-year terms and are currently paid an annual salary of \$79,650.

County commissioners serve two-year terms and are currently paid about \$33,000 a year.

Andrew Sawmiller is a staff writer for the Spinal Column Newsweekly

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